

## **Gadwall** (*Anas strepera*)

These handsome subtly-coloured ducks are mostly found on inland waters. Although their populations in eastern Canada are much less than those in the Prairie Provinces, we are fortunate to observe them regularly along the lakeshore in Toronto. Look for the black rumps of the males and for the white wing ***speculum*** (coloured wing patch) of both sexes for clues to identification.

Gadwalls are ***dabblers***, or, in other words, ducks that often flip upside down to feed in shallow waters. Their diet consists mainly of aquatic plants along with some crustaceans, molluscs and insects.

After building a nest, females may lay 2-11 eggs. As with all ducks, the young leave the nest soon after hatching and are called ***precocious*** since they are responsible for feeding themselves. Most often the young are raised solely by their mother.

Gadwalls tend to be quiet birds and are commonly observed amidst flocks of other waterfowl. As they are quite adaptable, their numbers have been increasing since the 1980's. They are a popular target for duck hunters.