

**Dora Duck**  
by Marilyn Alexander

**Dora:** (sings “Old MacDonald Had a Farm” with the following words:) “I’m a duck and not a goose; I have a short neck.”

**Mrs. T.:** Dora Duck! You sound happy today.

**Dora:** Why, certainly! “This is the day that the Lord has made. I will rejoice and be glad in it.” (sings “Old MacDonald Had a Farm” with the following words:) “I’m a duck and not a goose; I have a short neck.”

**Mrs. T.:** Is that the only sound you can make—“quack”?

**Dora:** Oh, no! My cousin, the wood duck "squeals" instead of quacking. Some ducks don't even quack. But I can whistle too.

**Mrs. T.:** Whistle?

**Dora:** Well, I don't do it so much, but some of my 120 kinds of cousins, especially those who migrate, do it. This probably helps them all stay together even if they're flying at night or in fog.

**Mrs. T.:** I was wondering how those flocks of ducks stay together. Did you say they fly at night?

**Dora:** Oh, yes, Mrs. T. They have to in order to get South—or North—before winter—or before summer.

**Mrs. T.:** How far do they fly?

**Dora:** Oh, maybe a few hundred miles. Some fly more than 5,000 miles each way, Mrs. T.

**Mrs. T.:** That's a loooong way. I can't go that far without a good map.

**Dora:** But ducks know exactly where to fly without a map. Scientists are trying to figure out how we do it. They say that maybe we are like living compasses, using the earth's magnetic field to guide us. Others say we use the sun and stars or landmarks to guide us. But we know Christ, our Creator, put our guidance system in us when He made us. Do you know how fast we can fly?

**Mrs. T.:** No. Tell me.

**Dora:** About 50 miles per hour.

**Mrs. T.:** That's pretty fast.

**Dora:** Yep, sure is. Some of my cousins like to take their time when they migrate, and they often stop after a few hours to rest and eat. They fly just a few miles each day. Others fly a

couple thousand miles a day! But I'm a farm duck. I'd rather stay here and swim. In fact, I'd rather swim than walk.

**Mrs. T.:** I can tell from watching you walk. —Oh, excuse me, Dora. But you really do look funny when you waddle—uh, walk.

**Dora:** Of course I do. My feet are webbed. My Designer made them to work like paddles when I swim. I don't need them much for walking. Uh, excuse me, Mrs. T., but you really do look funny when you swim.

**Mrs. T.:** Okay, okay, Dora. Say, I've seen you swim—even in icy water. Do you keep your feet warm with a wonder web in your legs like Caleb Caribou?

**Dora:** Oh, no, Mrs. T. Ha! I don't even have any nerves or blood vessels in my feet.

**Mrs. T.:** What!? No nerves or blood vessels in your feet? Another design by the Master Designer for living in the cold? How smart is your Creator anyway?

**Dora:** Surely you know, Mrs. T., that God knows everything. How else could He make so many different designs for so many creatures that perfectly fit them to their environment. Oh, He is a great God.

**Mrs. T.:** Yes, He certainly is, Dora. Now, when I swim, I get all wet. Why don't you?

**Dora:** Because of another perfect design. I have two layers of feathers. The thick top layer helps me fly. Under that layer is down.

**Mrs. T.:** Down where? Down on the farm? Down in the water? Down—

**Dora:** (interrupts) No! Not “down” anywhere. My feathers are called “down.”

**Mrs. T.:** Oh!

**Dora:** Well, anyway, my down feathers are small and fluffy. They keep me nice and warm.

**Mrs. T.:** Well, I have hair. It kind of keeps me warm, too, but it doesn't keep me from getting wet when I swim.

**Dora:** If you'll be patient, I'll tell you all you want to know, Mrs. T. You see, I have a special oil gland near my tail. That oil covers the outer coat of my feathers, making me water-proof.

**Mrs. T.:** I put suntan oil on when I swim, but I'm not really water-proof.

**Dora:** You're not a duck, Mrs. T; you weren't designed to spend much of your time in the water.

**Mrs. T.:** Maybe I'm not a duck, but sometimes I'm a chicken.

**Dora:** No wonder you're not water-proof!! (slight pause) You haven't asked about my bill yet.

**Mrs. T.:** What!?! Are you going to charge me for this interview? None of the other animals do!  
(carry on)

**Dora:** (interrupting) No, no! I'm not giving you my bill. I need it for eating.

**Mrs. T.:** Oh, that bill!

**Dora:** Of course! Normally, our duck bills are broad and flat and have rows of fine notches along the edge called "lamellae" (pronounced LAM eh LAY). The lamellae help us to grip our food so that it will not slip away.

**Mrs. T.:** One of the kids says he heard that ducks' bills come in different shapes and sizes.

**Dora:** Right on, kids. Ducks with broad beaks sift their food for insects, snails, and seeds from the mud. These are called shovelers.

**Mrs. T.:** Because they shovel their food with their bill. That's not you, Dora.

**Dora:** Right. I'm not a shoveler. Other ducks have long, narrow beaks. The narrow beaks are covered with saw-like edges that help them to grab fish. Sea ducks usually have this kind of beak. They are also divers.

**Mrs. T.:** That's not you either, Dora. What kind of bill do you have?

**Dora:** (ignoring the question, speak in a "teaching" kind of voice) Some ducks do not dive for food. Their beaks are broad and short. They are called dabbling ducks or dabblers. They eat plants, seeds, grasses and other small insects and animals that they find on or under the water.

**Mrs. T.:** That's you, Dora! You're a dabbler! Show me how you up-end and stretch your head into the water to reach your food.

**Dora:** You mean like this? (head down, bottom up)

**Mrs. T.:** Yes! Do it again!

**Dora:** Okay. (head down, bottom up)

**Mrs. T.:** That's cute! You sure are ducky, Dora Duck!

**Dora:** Of course! I'm a duck. But I'll tell you something that's better than my great engineering: it's my great Engineer, Mrs. T.! He made me just right! What a wonderful God! "This is the day that the Lord has made. I will rejoice and be glad in it." (sings "Old MacDonald Had a Farm" with the following words:) "I'm a duck and not a goose; I have a short neck."  
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