

# Belted Kingfisher



## What Does the Belted Kingfisher Look Like?

The Belted Kingfisher is a large bird that is bigger than a pigeon. It can grow up to 13 inches long. It looks top-heavy because of its large head. The head looks big because of the very large crest of feathers on the top that resembles a shaggy

Mohawk. It also has a large beak that is long and sharp. The bird is colorful with a bluish-gray body, white belly, and white collar around its neck. Both males and females have a bluish breastband, but the females have another chestnut-colored breastband, as well.



Which of these kingfishers is a female?



Unlike many birds, the female kingfisher is more colorful than the male! Most male birds are more colorful than female birds. However, unlike many birds, the female kingfisher is more colorful than the male.

## What is the Belted Kingfisher's Habitat?

The Belted Kingfisher is a bird that frequents water ways and shorelines. It can be found patrolling the banks of streams, rivers, and lakes looking for food. It sits on favorite perches watching for food and defending its territory from other kingfishers.



The kingfisher's shelter is along the banks of streams and rivers. Both the male and female dig a nest burrow that tunnels in the bank of sand, clay or gravel. This tunnel may be as long as 8 feet with a nesting chamber at the end. The tunnel slopes upwards from the entrance to keep it from flooding during heavy rains. The female lays 5-8 white, glossy eggs in its tunnel nest.



## What Does the Belted Kingfisher Eat?

The Belted Kingfisher eats mostly fish, but other water animals as well such as crayfish, salamanders, and mollusks. The kingfisher has an unusual style of hunting for food. It watches for prey from favorite perches along the bank or patrols over certain areas of water looking for prey. When it spies its prey, it flies above the prey and then hovers in place. To catch its prey, it plunges headfirst into the water. It catches the prey in its bill and then returns to its perch. Once on the perch, it pounds the prey on its perch to kill it. Although the kingfisher eats mostly aquatic animals, it may also eat land animals such as lizards, mice, insects, and sometimes berries.

## Cool Facts about the Belted Kingfisher

How is a kingfisher like an owl? Belted Kingfishers regurgitate pellets of bones, scales and indigestible materials like owls.

Kingfishers escape from predators such as owls, and hawks by diving into the water at the last minute.