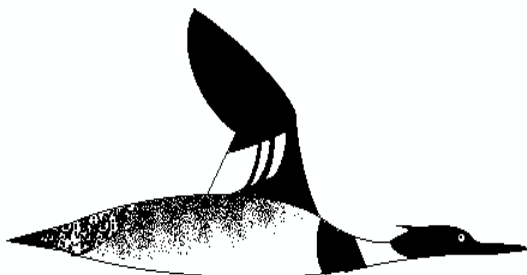


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## **CAPE COD LAKE & POND WATERFOWL SURVEY**

### **1998 SUMMARY**



The 16th annual Cape Cod Lake and Pond Waterfowl Survey was conducted on the weekend of December 5-6, 1998. For the third year in a row, the weather preceding the count was colder than normal: November's temperatures were about 3°(F) below average. However, December began very mild, and ice-free conditions prevailed during the survey weekend

Forty-eight observers censused 376 ponds, just four ponds less than last year's record number. Twenty-nine species of waterfowl were found, totaling a record **13,637** individuals, almost a thousand birds more than the previous high in 1987 and almost three thousand birds over the 14-year average!

#### **SPECIES RESULTS:**

Amazingly, eight species were found in record high numbers, with another three species achieving their second highest totals in fifteen years! No species were in record low numbers, though two were in the second lowest numbers ever.

**Pied-billed Grebes** continued their sharp increase following their 1996 low, and set a record high this year with 204 birds, 141% over the survey average.

**Mute Swans** continued their recent rebound, this year's 249 birds just shy of the 14-year record, and 44% above average.

**Canada Geese** also continued their sharp recovery from the 1996 low; this year's 1066 birds was very close to the 14-year average.

**Green-winged Teal**, though never numerous on this survey, established a new record with 75 birds, 127% above average.

**Black Ducks** also established a new high, with 2500 birds, 97% above average. They were found at 114 sites, making them the third most widespread species on the survey.

**Mallard** numbers returned to a bit above normal, following their sharp decline in 1996. They were found at 169 sites, making them the most widespread species on the Cape.

**American Wigeon** totaled 164 birds, the second highest ever and 92% above average.

**Canvasbacks** continued their sad decline, this year's 127 birds being the second lowest ever and less than a quarter of the 14-year average.

**Ring-necked Ducks** have generally been found in highest numbers during cold years, but this year's record of 374 birds, 93% above average, provides a striking exception.

**Common Goldeneye** is another species that is often found in higher numbers during cold years and this year's 157 birds, the second lowest ever, is consistent with that tendency.

**Buffleheads** totaled 2361 birds, the second highest ever, 39% above average. They were found at 154 sites, making them the second most widespread species on the Cape.

**Hooded Mergansers** established yet another record: 933 birds representing a 93% increase over the survey average.

**Ruddy Ducks** far exceeded their previous high, totaling 258 birds – more than seven times the 14-year average! Nonetheless, they remained very local: only six sites hosted this appealing little diver.

**American Coots** shattered their previous high with 484 birds, more than four times the survey average. Over 80% of these were at just four sites: Mashpee-Wakeby Pond (143 birds); Ashumet Pond (107); Hinckley's Pond (77); and Seymours Pond (70).

Black Ducks (2500 birds) outnumbered all other species, followed by Bufflehead (2361), scaup (both species combined; 2217 birds), and Mallard (1748)). These five species combined comprised about 65% of the overall total.

Among the more unusual species found this year were four Red-throated Loons, a Horned Grebe in Bourne, a Red-necked Grebe in Mashpee (the first ever on this survey!), a Snow Goose in Truro, three Blue-winged Teal in Yarmouth, at least four Eurasian Wigeon in Chatham, and a Common Eider in Falmouth.

## TOWN RESULTS:

As always, Falmouth out-distanced all other towns by a wide margin, with 3553 birds or 26% of the Capewide total. The perennial battle for runner-up between Barnstable and Yarmouth was won this year by Barnstable with 1852 birds (14%), barely besting Yarmouth's 1799 birds. Three towns,

Barnstable, Falmouth, and Harwich tied for the best variety with 20 species each. Well-fleet, the perennial doormat, remained mired at the bottom of the heap with just 35 birds of seven species.

## POND RESULTS:

Salt Pond in Falmouth traditionally harbors a large flock of scaup and consequently takes top honors every year for the largest number of birds: This year 1201 individuals of 9 species included 1100 scaup (500 less than last year). Second this year was Hinckley's Pond in Harwich with 723 birds. The best variety was again on Hinckley's Pond, where an amazing 15 species were found, followed by Mill Pond in W. Barnstable and Mashpee-Wakeby Pond in Mashpee with 11 species each.

## PARTICIPATION:

Participation was again superb; thanks to each and every one of the 48 people who took part. Peter Trimble again took the time to organize the four Upper Cape towns, and we were joined once again by off-Cape birders Dennis Oliver and Polly Stevens.

## Participants:

*Ron Ayotte, Mary Beers, Elizabeth & John Berg, Carl Bergfors, Dede Breed, Keith Brunell, Frank Caruso, Kathleen Casey, Sally Clifton, Dick Comeau, Ruth Connaughton, Don Dyer, Betty Erickson, Kirk Gentalen, Green Brier Nature Center, Arnold Henson, Seward Highley, Art King, Phil Kyle, Joanne McGuire, George Martin, Kathy & Rives McGinley, Stauffer Miller, Blair Nikula, Tom Noonan, Dennis Oliver, Alida Pellegrini-Toole, Barbara Perryclear, Bob Prescott, John Redfern, Diane Reynolds, Alison Robb, Carol & Don Scott, Dick Stacy, Betsy Stepney, Polly Stevens, Bill Swift, Jim Talin, Aurele Thomas, Charlie & Susan Thompson, Peter Trimble, Jean Turnbull, Mark Tuttle, Bob Vander Pyl, and Dennis Wiehe*

# 1998 Cape Cod Lake and Pond Waterfowl Survey

Species:	Town:																TOTAL	% OF TOTAL	# OF PONDS
	BOUR	FALM	SAND	MASH	BARN	YARM	DENN	BREW	HARW	CHAT	ORLE	EAST	WELL	TRUR	PROV				
Red-throated Loon	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	4	
Common Loon	0	0	2	3	1	0	0	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	10	0.1	9	
Pied-billed Grebe	3	22	12	30	28	6	5	24	37	15	4	4	5	7	2	204	1.5	72	
Horned Grebe	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	
Red-necked Grebe	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	
Mute Swan	11	55	5	64	11	70	11	3	5	6	6	2	0	0	0	249	1.8	45	
Snow Goose	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	
Canada Goose	0	291	13	20	128	167	36	196	99	32	53	18	0	13	0	1066	7.8	51	
Wood Duck	0	3	0	0	12	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	18	0.1	7	
Green-winged Teal	0	0	0	2	35	4	15	0	6	2	0	0	4	0	7	75	0.5	11	
Black Duck	16	189	140	55	273	439	83	255	64	83	536	116	10	83	158	2500	18.3	114	
Mallard	12	238	196	137	353	299	117	52	89	106	91	24	7	25	2	1748	12.8	109	
Northern Pintail	0	0	0	0	2	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	19	0.1	2	
Blue-winged Teal	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	
Gadwall	0	10	11	0	52	90	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	167	1.2	12	
Eurasian Wigeon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	4	
American Wigeon	1	2	4	0	62	2	0	0	0	73	10	10	0	0	0	164	1.2	12	
Canvasback	0	28	0	0	1	6	0	0	92	0	0	0	0	0	0	127	0.9	6	
Ring-necked Duck	7	15	9	1	81	161	0	11	45	0	15	19	0	10	0	374	2.7	22	
Greater Scaup	0	4	0	0	218	0	0	0	2	24	0	12	0	8	0	268	2	8	
Lesser Scaup	0	4	0	0	1	21	14	0	44	0	4	0	0	2	0	90	0.7	10	
scaup species	0	1441	0	0	53	44	0	60	261	0	0	0	0	0	0	1859	13.6	13	
Common Eider	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	
Common Goldeneye	1	4	0	53	13	6	0	3	70	0	0	4	1	2	0	157	1.2	17	
Bufflehead	25	632	60	245	339	322	146	123	237	45	103	44	6	3	31	2361	17.3	154	
Hooded Merganser	24	298	24	90	183	54	8	27	53	34	19	114	0	4	1	933	6.8	73	
Common Merganser	0	0	25	0	3	0	0	49	150	0	0	0	0	2	0	229	1.7	10	
Red-breasted Merganser	0	120	0	31	0	80	25	1	1	3	0	1	0	0	0	262	1.9	24	
Ruddy Duck	0	160	0	4	0	0	0	8	45	0	0	41	0	0	0	258	1.9	6	
American Coot	0	35	0	257	3	8	0	6	157	2	6	5	0	0	5	484	3.5	25	
<b>TOTAL NUMBER</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>3553</b>	<b>501</b>	<b>995</b>	<b>1852</b>	<b>1799</b>	<b>462</b>	<b>820</b>	<b>1460</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>847</b>	<b>415</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>13637</b>		<b>287</b>	
% of Total	1	26	4	7	14	13	3	6	11	3	6	3	0	1	2				
Number of Species	10	20	12	16	20	18	11	15	20	14	11	15	7	12	7	29			
Number of Ponds Censused	11	58	19	17	62	26	17	27	26	28	29	11	20	16	13	376			
Birds per Pond	9	61	26	59	30	69	27	30	56	15	29	38	2	10	16	36			
Number of Observers	2	11	4	4	5	3	1	2	6	4	7	2	2	2	1	47			