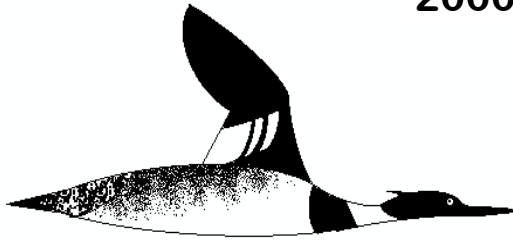


Cape Cod Lake & Pond Waterfowl Survey

2000 Summary



The 18th annual Cape Cod Lake and Pond Waterfowl Survey was conducted on the weekend of December 2-3, 1999. For the first time in several years, the weather preceding the count was colder than normal (-1.5°F in Boston) and there was some icing of the smaller, shallower ponds.

Over 52 observers censused 379 ponds, just one pond less than the record number. Only 24 species of waterfowl were found, one more than last year's record low. The total of 10,102 individuals, was 2321 less than last year and about 9% below average. An average of 27 birds per pond was the second lowest ever.

SPECIES RESULTS

Only one species, Eurasian Wigeon, was found in record high numbers, although five other species achieved their second highest totals in seventeen years. Two species were in record low numbers.

Pied-billed Grebes totaled just 41 birds, one less than the previous low in 1989, and less than half of the survey's average.

Mute Swans took a dive this year, with a below average 156 birds (-15%) representing a drop of almost 100 birds over the previous two years.

Six **Eurasian Wigeon** was one more than the previous high; two were in Orleans and four in Chatham.

American Wigeon totaled 184 birds, the second highest number ever and almost double the 17-year average.

Mallards totaled 2147 birds, down slightly from last year's record high, but still far above average. They were also found at 165 (44%) of the ponds, many more than any other species.

Green-winged Teal, although totaling only about a third of last year's record count, were still almost twice as numerous as usual with 95 birds recorded.

Canvasbacks continued in very low numbers, with just 61 birds, four above last year's record low. During the first five years of this survey, this handsome duck averaged almost a thousand birds per year! Reasons for this sad decline remain a mystery.

Scaup (both species combined) established yet another new low, with just 1088 birds, 58% below average.

Common Goldeneyes totaled just 121 birds, a record low and only about half of the sixteen year average.

Hooded Mergansers dropped slightly from last year's record high, but were still 82% above average. In 17 years, this lovely duck has gone from the tenth most common species on the survey to the fourth, with their numbers increasing by an order of magnitude!

Ruddy Duck numbers dropped sharply from last year's record, but were still almost three times the survey average. Although found at 17 sites last year, they were at just six ponds this year.

American Coots plummeted after six years of relatively high numbers, this year's total of 44 birds being 71% below average.

Mallards (2147 birds) outnumbered all other species, followed by Bufflehead (1970), Black Duck (1128), and scaup (both species combined, 1088 birds). These five species comprised about 63% of the overall total (identical to last year).

No unusual species of waterfowl were recorded this year, though a Common Black-headed Gull was seen on Seymour's Pond in Harwich. A Dovekie was seen on Mill Pond in Orleans, but it was later learned that it had been released there after becoming grounded.

TOWN RESULTS

As always, Falmouth out-distanced all other towns by a wide margin, with 2830 birds or 28% of the Capewide total. Barnstable was runner-up with 1501 birds (15%), followed distantly by Yarmouth's 1116 birds (11%).

The best variety was found in Barnstable and Harwich with 18 species each, followed by Falmouth at 17 species. Wellfleet regained its position at the bottom of the heap with just 17 birds of two species!

POND RESULTS

An average of 27 birds/pond was recorded, though 135 (36%) ponds had no birds at all, though in some cases because they were frozen. Salt Pond in Falmouth traditionally harbors a



large (though recently diminishing) flock of scaup and consequently takes top honors every year for the largest number of birds: This year 683 individuals of 6 species there included 550 scaup. Second this year was Little Pond in Falmouth with 378 birds, followed by Herring Pond in Eastham (355 birds) and Hinckley's Pond in Harwich (346 birds). The best variety was on Hinckley's Pond as well as Pilgrim Lake in Orleans, with 10 species each, while several ponds hosted eight species.

PARTICIPATION

At least 52 people took part in this year's survey. Many thanks to each and every one.

Participants

Ron Ayotte, Courtney Armentraut, Mary Beers, John & Elizabeth Berg, Keith Brunell, Frank Caruso, Kathleen Casey, Sally Clifton, Dick Comeau, Ruth Connaughton, Don & Nathan Dyer, Susan Frawley, Green Brier Nature Center "Conservation Action Teens", Sue & Ned Handy, Seward Highley, Dick & Sylvia Jurkowski, Art King, Phil Kyle, Joyce Leary, Louise Luckenbill, Joan McGuire, George Martin, Kathy McGinley, Stauffer Miller, Priscilla Moor, Jim Morrissey, Blair Nikula, Tom Noonan, Ginny Page, Alida Pellegrini-Toole, Bob Prescott, Ruth Rabinow, John Redfern, Alison Robb, Kanoi Roberson, Don & Carol Scott, Dick Stacy, Betsy Stepney, Sandy Sutherland, Bill Swift, Jim Talin, Aurele Thomas, John Toole, Peter Trimble, Mark Tuttle, Bob Vander Pyl, Dennis Wiehe, and Ellie Winslow.

If you wish additional copies of this summary, send a large S.A.S.E. to the compiler: **Blair Nikula, 2 Gilbert Lane, Harwich Port, MA 02646.**

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Species	BOURNE	FALMOUTH	SANDWICH	MASHPEE	BARNSTABLE	YARMOUTH	DENNIS	BREWSTER	HARWICH	CHATHAM	ORLEANS	EASTHAM	WELLFLEET	TRURO	PROVINCETOWN	TOTAL	% OF TOTAL	# OF PONDS
Common Loon	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	6	0.1	5
Pied-billed Grebe	0	14	2	6	4	0	1	4	7	0	2	1	0	0	0	41	0.4	19
Canada Goose	1	199	116	61	148	17	102	111	17	0	31	0	0	10	24	837	8.3	43
Mute Swan	8	23	3	15	15	50	13	1	7	10	6	5	0	0	0	156	1.5	44
Wood Duck	0	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	6	0.1	4
Gadwall	5	3	0	2	67	44	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	128	1.3	8
Eurasian Wigeon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	2	0	0	0	0	6	0.1	2
American Wigeon	7	9	0	0	111	13	0	0	1	15	3	25	0	0	0	184	1.8	13
Black Duck	12	131	23	53	88	261	27	36	51	108	255	47	13	7	16	1128	11.2	105
Mallard	71	281	102	186	459	267	44	73	172	76	135	263	0	10	8	2147	21.3	165
Northern Shoveler	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	1
Northern Pintail	0	2	0	0	6	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	0.1	4
Green-winged Teal	0	0	48	0	27	0	2	0	1	0	14	3	0	0	0	95	0.9	11
Canvasback	0	0	0	0	20	13	0	6	22	0	0	0	0	0	0	61	0.6	7
Ring-necked Duck	3	37	18	0	66	18	0	5	23	12	1	19	0	0	1	203	2	20
Greater Scaup	0	740	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	743	7.4	3
Lesser Scaup	0	0	0	4	1	0	0	0	27	0	0	0	0	0	0	32	0.3	3
scaup species	0	81	0	0	94	0	33	11	94	0	0	0	0	0	0	313	3.1	9
Bufflehead	6	508	55	372	220	333	24	67	67	75	191	32	4	0	16	1970	19.5	117
Common Goldeneye	0	7	1	38	0	8	0	0	67	0	0	0	0	0	0	121	1.2	9
Hooded Merganser	4	367	25	17	141	74	0	25	10	49	26	255	0	0	0	993	9.8	75
Common Merganser	0	0	8	26	28	0	9	16	69	0	0	0	0	29	0	185	1.8	12
Red-breasted Merganser	0	365	0	0	4	9	15	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	394	3.9	14
Ruddy Duck	0	43	0	0	1	0	0	187	2	0	0	60	0	0	0	293	2.9	6
American Coot	0	16	0	0	1	0	0	0	14	9	4	0	0	0	0	44	0.4	9
TOTAL NUMBER	117	2830	405	780	1501	1116	270	542	660	360	671	710	17	56	67	10102		244
% of Total	1	28	4	8	15	11	3	5	7	4	7	7	0	1	1			
Number of Species	9	17	13	11	18	14	10	12	18	11	13	10	2	4	6	24		
Number of Ponds Censused	12	55	18	16	60	27	18	28	27	29	29	11	22	17	10	379		
Birds per Pond	10	51	23	49	25	41	15	19	24	12	23	65	1	3	7	27		
Number of Observers	5	13	4	5	8	3	3	2	4	3	4	3	1	1	1	52		