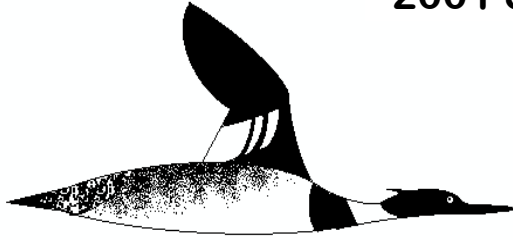


Cape Cod Lake & Pond Waterfowl Survey

2001 SUMMARY



The 19th annual Cape Cod Lake and Pond Waterfowl Survey was conducted on the weekend of December 1-2, 2001. The weather preceding the count was exceptionally mild (+3.9°F in Boston in November) and on the first day of the count weekend, temperatures soared well into the 60's! Although icing was not a problem, water levels were extremely low following near drought conditions all fall, and some small, shallow ponds were completely dry.

Over 50 observers censused 383 ponds, three ponds more than the previous record. A below average 25 species of waterfowl were found, and the total of 9,020 individuals is the third lowest ever, 1082 less than last year and about 18% below average. An average of 24 birds per pond was the lowest ever.

SPECIES RESULTS

No species were found in record high numbers, and only two species achieved their second highest totals in eighteen years. Two species were in record low numbers and two others were in the second lowest ever.

Common Loons, though never common on freshwater ponds, totaled 11 birds this year, the second highest number in the survey's history..

Pied-billed Grebes, totalling 57 birds, were up slightly from last year, but still 37% below average.

Canada Goose numbers took a dive this year, with only 496 birds (-47%) the 4th lowest total in the surveys history.

No **Eurasian Wigeon** were found this year, the first time the species has been missed since 1987.

Mallards totaled 2115 birds, the third highest total in 18 years. They were also found at 179 (47%) of the ponds, far more than any other species.

Green-winged Teal totaled 186 individuals, the second highest on record. Unlike the record count in 1999, when almost 70% of the birds were found at just one site, this year's birds were found at 19 sites, perhaps a reflection of the mild conditions and low water levels.

Canvasbacks continued to plummet locally, with a measly eight birds found this year. During the first five years of this survey, this handsome duck averaged almost a thousand birds annually! Reasons for this sad decline remain a mystery.

Scaup (both species combined) numbered just 1251 birds, the second lowest total on record.

Common Goldeneyes continued their steady decline, dropping below the century mark for the first time in 18 years.

Hooded Mergansers dropped dramatically to 549 birds, only about half the number found in the past two years.

Common Mergansers numbered only 95 birds, the fourth lowest on the survey, likely a result of ice-free conditions inland and to the north.

Ruddy Duck numbers dropped sharply following three straight years of high numbers. Only 67 birds were found this year, a below-normal total.

American Coot numbers have proven to be the most variable of all species censused. After six straight years of good numbers from 1994-1999, totals dropped sharply last year and plunged to a pitiful seven birds this year, the second lowest on record.

Mallards (2115 birds) outnumbered all other species, followed by Bufflehead (1825), Black Duck (1416), and scaup (both species combined, 1251 birds). These five species comprised a whopping 73% of the overall total. The first three species were also the most widespread, with Mallards occurring on 179 ponds, Buffleheads on 129 ponds and Black Ducks on 97.

The most unusual species of waterfowl recorded this year were a Long-tailed Duck in Harwich, the third record for the survey, and a White-winged Scoter in Brewster, the fifth survey record.

TOWN RESULTS

As always, Falmouth out-distanced all other towns by a wide margin, with 2302 birds or 26% of the Capewide total. Barnstable was runner-up with 1287 birds (14%), followed by Yarmouth's 1140 birds (13%). The best variety was in Yarmouth where 18 species were found, followed by Barnstable with 17 species. Truro brought up the rear with 43 birds of five species.



POND RESULTS

An average of 24 birds/pond was recorded, the lowest in the survey's history. About 31% (118) of the ponds had no birds at all, in some cases because they were completely dry. 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 815 individuals of 6 species there included 750 scaup. Second this year was Hinckley's Pond in Harwich (346 birds), followed by Long Pond in Centerville (269 birds). The best variety was on Hinckley's Pond with 11 species, followed by Long Pond in Centerville, Mill Pond in West Barnstable, Miss Thatcher's Pond in Yarmouth, and Tom Matthew's Pond in Yarmouth with nine species each.

PARTICIPATION

At least 50 people took part in this years survey. Many thanks to each and every one.

Participants

Ron Ayotte, Betty Bagshaw, John & Elizabeth Berg, Carl Bergfors, Keith Brunell, Frank Caruso, Kathleen Casey, Sally Clifton, Dick Comeau, Ruth Connaughton, Fred Durr, Don & Nathan Dyer, Sue Finnegan, Peter Flood, Ed Foster, Karen Goggins, Green Brier Nature Center, Sue & Ned Handy, Kevin Harding, Seward Highley, Art King, Phil Kyle, Bill Loughran, Joan McGuire, George Martin, Kathy & Rives McGinley, Stauffer Miller, Jim Morrissey, Barbara Murphy, Blair Nikula, Tom Noonan, Bob O'Neil, Alida Pellegrini-Toole, Bob Prescott, Diane Reynolds, Mary Richmond, Alison Robb, Diane Silverstein, Dick Stacy, Betsy Stepney, Sandy Sutherland, Jim Talin, Jeremiah Trimble, Peter Trimble, Mark Tuttle, Bob Vander Pyl, and Dennis Wiehe.

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
Red-throated Loon	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Common Loon	0	1	1	2	3	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	11	0.1	9
Pied-billed Grebe	0	2	0	9	7	5	1	9	15	1	6	0	0	0	2	57	0.6	25
Canada Goose	11	122	141	25	57	2	37	14	0	48	6	28	0	0	5	496	5.5	38
Mute Swan	4	16	10	40	23	60	4	2	6	12	4	2	0	0	0	183	2	47
Wood Duck	0	0	0	0	1	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0.1	3
Gadwall	0	4	3	5	54	57	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	123	1.4	13
American Wigeon	0	13	0	2	37	6	0	0	0	26	4	14	0	0	0	102	1.1	13
Black Duck	22	89	3	27	86	167	93	125	89	59	285	117	50	17	187	1416	15.7	97
Mallard	26	262	154	131	407	403	85	33	115	123	139	169	63	0	5	2115	23.4	179
Northern Pintail	0	0	0	0	11	6	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	19	0.2	7
Green-winged Teal	0	0	0	13	83	3	0	0	70	3	11	0	0	0	3	186	2.1	19
Canvasback	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0.1	2
Ring-necked Duck	0	34	0	16	124	32	0	17	0	0	3	41	0	14	0	281	3.1	18
Greater Scaup	0	120	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	125	1.4	2
Lesser Scaup	0	0	0	0	13	0	0	14	12	0	0	0	0	0	1	40	0.4	5
scaup species	0	830	0	0	8	0	8	0	239	0	0	0	0	1	0	1086	12	9
Long-tailed Duck	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
White-winged Scoter	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Bufflehead	4	517	64	165	281	340	94	49	100	31	104	43	0	7	26	1825	20.2	129
Common Goldeneye	0	8	1	0	8	2	0	13	62	0	0	0	0	0	0	94	1	10
Hooded Merganser	18	171	9	34	83	35	0	28	37	16	21	95	2	0	0	549	6.1	59
Common Merganser	0	0	24	0	0	0	0	0	54	0	0	0	13	4	0	95	1.1	7
Red-breasted Merganser	0	112	0	0	0	13	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	126	1.4	9
Ruddy Duck	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	11	5	0	0	50	0	0	0	67	0.7	6
American Coot	0	1	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	7	0.1	6
TOTAL NUMBER	85	2302	410	470	1287	1140	324	317	819	321	584	559	129	43	230	9020		265
% of Total	1	26	5	5	14	13	4	4	9	4	6	6	1	0	3			
Number of Species	6	15	13	13	17	18	9	13	15	11	11	9	5	5	8	25		
Number of Ponds Censused	13	56	20	15	62	30	18	28	27	29	33	10	21	9	12	383		
Birds per Pond	7	41	21	31	21	38	18	11	30	11	18	56	6	5	19	24		
Number of Observers	2	13	5	5	6	3	3	2	7	3	6	1	3	2	1	50		