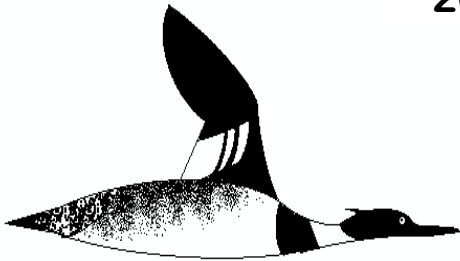


Cape Cod Lake & Pond Waterfowl Survey

2008 SUMMARY



The 26th annual Cape Cod Lake and Pond Waterfowl Survey was conducted by members of the Cape Cod Bird Club on the weekend of December 6-7, 2008. Thirty-seven observers surveyed 332 ponds, recording 10,968 ducks, totals that are remarkably close to the 24-year averages. If any year can be considered “normal,” then 2008 fits the bill. No species were recorded in record high numbers, and only a few were found in numbers that deviated much from the norms.

For the second year in a row, the weather leading up to the survey was rather cold. November temperatures averaged almost two degrees below normal in Boston, and included a very cold stretch near the end of the month that lead to freezing of many smaller ponds. However, the icing was temporary and by the count weekend, only a few of the smallest ponds had any ice. The weather on the survey weekend was good on Saturday, but rainy on Sunday.

SELECTED SPECIES RESULTS

Pied-billed Grebes continued last years slide, dropping to just 25 birds, the second lowest total ever and 67% below the long-term average.

Mute Swans increased for the third straight year, erasing a several-year decline beginning this decade, and rebounded to a near-record 232

birds, the highest total since 1999 and 31% above average.

Gadwall is another species that’s been on a bit of a roller-coaster ride for the past 25 years. After increasing steadily during the first 12 years of this survey, numbers then declined steadily to a record low of just 26 birds in 2003. However, this handsome dabbling has been rebounding since and the 181 birds found this year was almost double last year’s total, the third highest total every, and 84% above average.

American Wigeon dropped a bit from last year, but this year’s 202 birds was still the third highest ever and 89% above the 24-year mean.

Canvasbacks were represented by just a single individual this year (though a few more arrived later in the month). It’s hard to believe that well over a thousand of this popular duck were counted in 1985!

Ring-necked Ducks were well below their record high of last year (916), but the 518 total was still the third highest ever and 89% above average.

Hooded Mergansers also dropped from a record high last year (1200 birds), but the 979 birds this year was still 52% above average.

Ruddy Duck is another species whose numbers have fluctuated greatly throughout the survey’s history, with totals ranging from just two birds in both 1989 and 1990 to a peak of 444 in 1999! In fact, no other species has demonstrated such dramatic variability. Following three years of fairly high numbers, only 66 birds were tallied this year, 34% below the 24-year mean.

Bufflehead was the most common species this year, with 1962 individuals (18% of the total), closely followed by Mallard (1953 birds; 18% of the total), American Black Duck (1692 birds; 15% of the total), and scaup (both species combined = 1634 birds; 15% of total). These five species comprised about 64% of the overall total. The most widespread species, by a wide margin, was Mallard, which was found at 188 ponds (over 56% of the sites), followed by Bufflehead at 112 sites (34%), and American Black Duck at 94 sites (28%).

The most unusual species on this year's survey was Brant, a species that has been recorded only twice previously on this survey (despite being common along the coast), and Eurasian Wigeon, singles of which were found at three sites (in Barnstable, Yarmouth, and Eastham).

RESULTS BY TOWN

As always, Falmouth out-distanced all other towns, this year with 2597 birds or 24% of the Capewide total. Orleans was a surprising (and distant) second with 1486 birds (well over half of them American Black Ducks), followed by Barnstable with 1200 birds, and Yarmouth with 1172 birds. Barnstable took top honors for best variety with 19 species, followed by Falmouth with 18 species, and Sandwich and Yarmouth with 17 species each.



RESULTS BY POND

An average of 33 birds/pond was recorded, down slightly from last year, but exactly matching the long-term mean. Of the 332 ponds surveyed, 73 (22%) had no birds at all; of these, only four were frozen. Sider's Pond in Falmouth again hosted by far the largest number of birds (1016), thanks, as usual, to a large flock of scaup (1000 birds). Swan Pond in Dennis took top honors for variety with a dozen species, followed by Mill Pond in West Barnstable and Tom Matthew's Pond in Yarmouth with 11 species each.

Last year we commented on the striking increase in waterfowl usage of Pilgrim Lake in Truro since the National Park Service began increasing tidal flow into the lake a few years ago, noting that the site had averaged about 89 birds/survey prior to 2003 then increased to 300 birds/survey the past three years (2005-2007). The diversity also increased from an average of just three species/survey to 11 species/survey. Those totals were down this year to 204 birds of just six species. Is this just a one-year blip, or will numbers continue to drop with additional salt water inflow?

PARTICIPATION

At least 37 people took part in this year's survey. Many thanks to each and every one!

Participants:

Ron Ayotte, Joanne Baldauf, Peter Bono, Randy Buckner, Frank Caruso, Kathleen Casey, David Clapp, Molly Cornell, Al Curtis, Mike Dettrey, Mark Faherty, Peter Flood, Karen Goggins, Ben Hoopes, Ed Hoopes, Leah Hoopes, Mary Keleher, Art King, Matt Malin, Kathy & Rives McGinley, Priscilla Moor, Blair Nikula, Tom Noonan, Ginie Page, Alida Pellegrini-Toole & John Toole, Kelly Sattman, Beth Schwarzman, Don & Carol Scott, Betsy Stepney, Jim Talin, Aurele Thomas, Peter Trimble, Jacqueline Trow, and Ellie Winslow.

Compiler: Blair Nikula, 2 Gilbert Lane, Harwich Port, MA 02646. 508-432-6348.

2008 Cape Cod Lake and Pond Waterfowl Survey

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	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	2
Common Loon	0	0	1	3	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	9	0.1	9
Pied-billed Grebe	0	8	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	2	5	3	0	1	0	25	0.2	19
Canada Goose	0	97	182	6	76	71	61	9	100	96	32	51	0	0	0	781	7.1	48
Brant	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	1
Mute Swan	4	32	12	41	17	32	54	0	11	16	13	0	0	0	0	232	2.1	50
Wood Duck	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	3
Gadwall	6	18	8	0	21	96	32	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	181	1.7	15
Eurasian Wigeon	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	3
American Wigeon	11	34	1	3	51	16	4	0	0	61	19	2	0	0	0	202	1.8	15
Black Duck	48	100	2	13	82	153	156	48	54	69	858	5	0	39	65	1692	15.4	94
Mallard	50	226	250	91	448	273	93	72	52	96	137	113	19	10	23	1953	17.8	188
Northern Shoveler	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	1
Northern Pintail	2	0	0	0	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	0.1	3
Green-winged Teal	0	0	11	0	7	2	2	0	14	3	0	0	0	0	0	39	0.4	8
Canvasback	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Ring-necked Duck	37	41	89	34	119	55	7	79	2	3	20	20	0	12	0	518	4.7	54
Greater Scaup	0	32	0	12	0	0	12	4	143	0	0	0	0	0	0	203	1.9	8
Lesser Scaup	0	1	56	1	0	0	2	10	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	82	0.7	8
scaup species	0	1169	0	0	4	0	4	5	64	0	0	1	2	100	0	1349	12.3	13
Bufflehead	22	413	180	228	128	307	106	46	72	17	302	42	39	56	4	1962	17.9	112
Common Goldeneye	0	3	12	85	5	0	0	4	19	7	1	4	0	4	4	148	1.3	18
Hooded Merganser	26	237	51	54	163	103	0	38	26	48	79	146	3	5	0	979	8.9	90
Common Merganser	0	1	51	7	47	25	0	9	16	0	3	0	0	0	0	159	1.4	16
Red-breasted Merganser	0	165	0	16	0	24	0	0	0	5	14	0	0	0	0	224	2	22
Ruddy Duck	0	15	7	0	20	0	4	0	0	0	0	20	0	0	0	66	0.6	6
American Coot	0	4	1	82	5	1	0	0	4	4	3	31	0	0	0	135	1.2	21
TOTAL NUMBER	206	2597	915	676	1200	1172	540	327	590	427	1486	442	66	228	96	10968		259
% of Total	2	24	8	6	11	11	5	3	5	4	14	4	1	2	1			
Number of Species	9	18	17	15	19	17	14	13	14	13	13	15	6	9	4	25		
Number of Ponds Censused	14	42	18	19	41	30	21	28	17	26	29	13	16	7	11	332		
Birds per Pond	15	62	51	36	29	39	26	12	35	16	51	34	4	33	9	33		
Number of Observers	2	6	3	1	5	4	1	1	2	3	4	3	1	2	1	37		

Cape Cod Lake and Pond Waterfowl Survey: 1984 - 2008 Totals

SPECIES:	YEAR:																								1984-2007 average	Change: 2008 vs. average		
	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007			2008	
Red-throated Loon	0	2	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	4	0	1	1	3	4	0	0	1	0	0	2	2	1	0	2	1	--	
Common Loon	3	8	5	4	5	13	7	20	6	10	5	11	7	7	10	0	6	11	8	0	3	4	6	4	9	7	--	
Pied-billed Grebe	92	57	63	160	56	42	43	60	63	80	95	179	64	132	204	108	41	57	32	11	26	59	61	42	25	76	-67%	
Horned Grebe	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	--	
Red-necked Grebe	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	--	
White-fronted Goose	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	--
Snow Goose	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	--
Canada Goose	1246	1504	1165	973	1291	1676	961	659	476	757	792	1005	276	618	1066	474	837	496	742	615	689	344	671	915	781	844	-7%	
Brant	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	31	0	3	0	0	5	1	--	
Mute Swan	64	75	118	177	149	176	137	261	226	247	233	193	147	214	249	255	156	183	178	124	164	120	195	210	232	177	31%	
Tundra Swan	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	--
Wood Duck	0	1	2	2	7	20	0	3	1	0	2	3	0	5	18	11	6	6	6	5	1	3	4	50	4	7	-38%	
Gadwall	14	11	18	72	38	95	153	81	56	150	183	261	155	141	167	101	128	123	94	26	55	94	50	98	181	99	84%	
Eurasian Wigeon	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	5	1	1	4	3	3	1	4	2	6	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	3	2	--	
American Wigeon	35	23	38	51	95	159	86	92	63	61	121	176	125	69	164	253	184	102	71	86	84	105	85	243	202	107	89%	
Am. Black Duck	1497	1044	1006	1325	1160	1461	2004	1047	668	685	2184	1067	1049	1613	2500	1929	1128	1416	911	653	1384	831	1171	1003	1692	1281	32%	
Mallard	1745	1731	1617	1789	1596	1901	1911	1626	1180	1256	1462	1619	1037	1640	1748	2228	2147	2115	1982	1580	1549	1085	847	2085	1953	1645	19%	
Blue-winged Teal	1	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	1	--	
Northern Shoveler	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	5	2	3	0	0	2	0	0	4	0	3	0	0	2	1	--	
Northern Pintail	49	91	67	61	35	25	42	32	27	5	26	35	5	29	19	16	14	19	25	5	21	21	6	8	12	29	-58%	
Green-winged Teal	31	38	32	43	47	15	30	11	14	37	56	55	5	50	75	298	95	186	47	32	18	7	7	28	39	52	-26%	
Canvasback	812	1169	983	981	933	486	727	141	213	238	115	175	506	221	127	57	61	8	39	1	2	0	24	3	1	334	-100%	
Redhead	0	2	37	26	14	17	7	6	2	4	0	1	3	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	6	--	
Ring-necked Duck	201	168	155	175	73	310	109	272	52	295	107	358	247	187	374	362	203	281	565	410	216	195	349	916	518	274	89%	
Tufted Duck	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	--
Greater Scaup	30	151	368	2756	250	322	907	473	293	170	1245	438	3	1633	268	1053	743	125	1749	15	811	170	155	85	203	592	-66%	
Lesser Scaup	10	6	94	28	15	2	4	12	25	161	46	24	8	24	90	49	32	40	10	0	15	59	35	37	82	34	138%	
scaup (species?)	1787	2645	3237	1578	3395	3021	1963	1732	2370	1782	590	1682	2030	258	1859	319	313	1086	303	2533	283	865	1041	1586	1349	1594	-15%	
scaup (total)	1827	2802	3699	4362	3660	3345	2874	2217	2688	2113	1881	2144	2041	1915	2217	1421	1088	1251	2062	2548	1109	1094	1231	1708	1634	2221	-26%	
Common Eider	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	7	0	1	--	
Surf Scoter	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	10	0	0	1	--	
White-winged Scoter	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	70	112	0	8	--	
Black Scoter	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	--	
Long-tailed Duck	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	--
Bufflehead	939	819	1149	1632	1724	1362	1645	2173	1736	1772	2078	2784	1926	1979	2361	2279	1970	1825	1498	1264	1407	1129	1425	1704	1962	1691	16%	
Common Goldeneye	145	178	234	241	170	241	267	338	186	322	292	325	258	197	157	221	121	94	314	73	150	95	84	161	148	203	-27%	
Barrow's Goldeneye	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	--
Hooded Merganser	100	324	112	383	381	310	720	567	469	444	718	867	518	866	933	1037	993	549	1160	546	795	776	676	1200	979	644	52%	
Common Merganser	85	291	84	102	171	470	143	515	243	88	424	285	244	244	229	246	185	95	912	535	204	258	277	237	159	274	-42%	
Red-breasted Merganser	24	82	62	41	112	191	105	506	86	190	99	287	466	500	262	340	394	126	195	461	141	62	91	144	224	207	8%	
Ruddy Duck	10	18	14	28	7	2	2	13	3	7	59	47	180	87	258	444	293	67	130	26	55	199	282	177	66	100	-34%	
Common Moorhen	1	1	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	--
American Coot	175	76	38	64	20	45	15	29	3	8	171	296	380	275	484	340	44	7	10	7	3	270	147	154	135	128	6%	
TOTAL NUMBER	9097	10521	10702	12695	11747	12364	11996	10678	8466	8777	11111	12186	9652	11004	13637	12423	10102	9020	10981	9044	8078	6782	7774	11212	10968	10419	5%	
Number of Ponds	213	239	239	263	284	285	327	317	305	341	343	354	357	380	376	375	379	383	354	298	356	367	357	313	332	325	2%	
Birds/Pond	43	44	45	48	41	43	37	34	28	26	32	34	27	29	36	33	27	24	31	30	23	18	22	36	33	33	0%	
Number of Species	23	29	25	26	26	25	28	27	28	27	26	29	29	28	29	23	24	25	22	23	23	31	28	27	25	26	-5%	
Number of Observers	25	31	26	32	35	35	39	38	37	38	43	47	39	49	47	60	52	50	54	38	54	39	35	45	37	41	-10%	