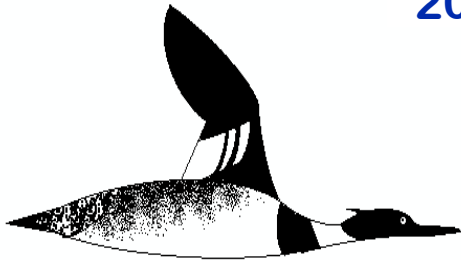


## Cape Cod Lake & Pond Waterfowl Survey

### 2011 SUMMARY



The 29<sup>th</sup> annual Cape Cod Lake and Pond Waterfowl Survey was conducted by members of the Cape Cod Bird Club on the weekend of December 3-4, 2011. Forty-six observers surveyed 330 ponds, recording 30 species and 8,308 individual ducks. The latter total is 20% below the long-term average, and the fourth lowest in the history of the survey. One species was recorded in record high numbers, and two species established new lows.

The weather leading up to the survey was extremely warm, with November temperatures in Boston averaging the second highest on record! The weather on the survey weekend was also mild, and icing was non-existent.

Many waterfowl appear to be what ornithologists term “facultative migrants.” These are species that move only as far south as necessary to find suitable conditions for survival. For many species this simply means an adequate food supply. For example, American Robins (or at least some populations of robins) migrate only far enough to find ample supplies of berries. They’re hardy enough to survive very cold conditions, so long as there is enough food.

For ducks, especially those species that feed primarily on aquatic plants, food may be present at the bottom of ponds throughout the winter, but access to that food will be shut off when everything ices over. Thus, one might expect that here on relatively mild Cape Cod, waterfowl numbers on this early winter survey would

be lower following a warmer than normal late fall as the birds linger to our north. To date no one has crunched the numbers, but in a very broad sense, this seems to have been the case over the past nearly three decades of this effort.

### SELECTED SPECIES RESULTS

**American Wigeon** numbered 231 individuals, the third highest total since 1984 and more than double the survey average.

After a sharp uptick last year, **American Black Ducks** plummeted to a record low 527 birds this year, 60% below average. Whether this was related to the mild weather or some other factor is anyone’s guess. However, this species winters mostly in tidal habitats, so this primarily fresh-water survey probably does not provide a reliable index to the overall population levels.

**Northern Pintail** continued at an anemic level, with just six individuals (77% below average).

**Canvasbacks** went unrecorded, for just the second time since 1984 (the first time was in 2005). However, a few were recorded on the Christmas Bird Counts 2-3 weeks later, so apparently there was a small influx when the weather turned a bit cooler. The high count for this species was 1,169 individuals in 1985, so its paucity over the past decade has been striking.

**Ring-necked Ducks** continued at an elevated level for the sixth consecutive year, this year’s total of 417 birds being 40% above the norm.

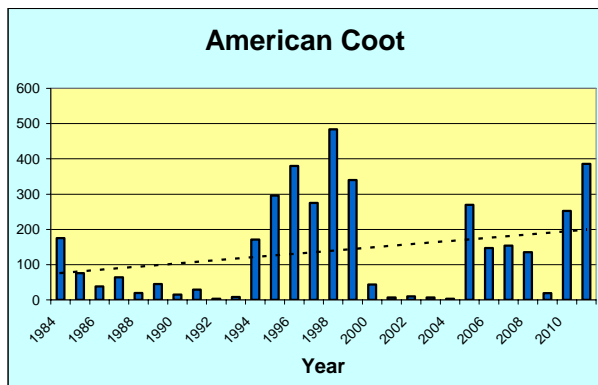
**Scaup** (both species combined) continued to plummet, this year’s total of 1000 birds being the lowest ever (53% below average) and less than a quarter of the record high of 4362 birds.

**Common Goldeneye** rebounded this year, the 200 birds being the highest in 10 years, though very close to the survey average.

**Barrow's Goldeneye** has been found only twice before on this survey, both times single birds (2003 & 2010), so three individuals this year was noteworthy. Rare anywhere on the Cape, this species is more often found in large salt water bays.

**Ruddy Duck** numbers have always been among the most variable of any waterfowl species — for no obvious reason. Totals have ranged from just two birds to a high of 444. This year's total of 130 was 33% above average.

**American Coot** has been another very erratic species, with numbers ranging from three birds to 484 over the survey's history. This year's total of 386 birds was the second highest ever and more than three times the survey average.



Bufflehead was again the most common species, with 1898 individuals (23% of the total), followed by Mallard (1263 birds; 15% of the total). The most widespread species once again was Mallard, which was found at 143 ponds (43% of the sites), followed by Bufflehead at 127 sites (38%), and Hooded Merganser at 89 sites (27%).

## RESULTS BY TOWN

As always, Falmouth out-distanced all other towns, this year with 2555 birds or 31% of the Capewide total. Barnstable was a distant second

with 1078 birds (13%), followed by Mashpee with 770 birds (9%), and Yarmouth with 708 birds (9%). For the first time ever, Harwich took top honors for best variety with 20 species, followed by Barnstable with 19 species and Falmouth with 17.

## RESULTS BY POND

An average of 25 birds/pond was recorded, well below normal (-23%). Of the 330 ponds surveyed, 81 (25%) had no waterfowl at all. Siders Pond in Falmouth hosted the largest number of birds (509; all but nine being scaup), followed by Pilgrim Lake in Truro (450 birds), Herring Pond in Eastham (267) and Bourne's Pond in East Falmouth (254).

Mill Pond in West Barnstable once again took top honors for variety with 12 species, although this year it was tied by Great Pond in Eastham. Dutchmans' Ditch in Falmouth and Pilgrim Lake in Truro followed with 10 species each.

## PARTICIPATION

At least 46 people took part in this year's survey. Many thanks to each and every one!

### Participants:

Peter Bono, Randy Buckner, Frank Caruso, Kathleen Casey, Babette Castle-Walsh, Flo Bodner, Linda Chambers, David & Fran Clapp, Andrew Cooper, Charles Cooper, Molly Cornell, Al Curtis, Joe Dwelly, Mark Faherty, Peter Flood, Karen Goggins, Arlene Hedlund, Ed Hoopes, Mary Keleher, Vicky Lowell, Matt Malin, Dereck McDonald, Nancy McDonald, Kathy & Rives McGinley, Blair Nikula, Tom Noonan, Ginie Page, Alida Pellegrini-Toole & John Toole, Bob Peterson, Alison Robb, Kelly Sattman, Carol & Don Scott, Will Sprauve, Dick Stacey, Betsy Stepney, Lou Turner, Jim Talin, Ellie Winslow, and Janet Zarate.

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## 2011 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	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
Common Loon	0	2	0	5	3	0	0	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	14	0.2	10
Pied-billed Grebe	1	8	7	3	7	1	0	14	11	5	3	7	3	3	1	74	0.9	42
Canada Goose	0	329	0	26	267	59	0	47	37	14	2	34	0	0	1	816	9.8	32
Mute Swan	3	130	16	9	10	31	0	5	10	6	2	3	0	0	0	225	2.7	45
Wood Duck	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1
Gadwall	0	11	0	0	26	46	0	8	4	0	0	1	0	0	0	96	1.2	9
Eurasian Wigeon	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
American Wigeon	0	28	3	0	171	0	0	0	15	0	14	0	0	0	0	231	2.8	9
Black Duck	16	83	15	18	24	84	22	2	31	58	62	8	1	60	43	527	6.3	57
Mallard	46	475	49	131	154	119	23	51	46	53	37	33	35	6	5	1263	15.2	143
Blue-winged Teal	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	2
Northern Pintail	1	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	6	0.1	4
Green-winged Teal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	1
Redhead	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Ring-necked Duck	1	96	103	32	106	0	1	19	13	35	0	7	0	4	0	417	5	41
Greater Scaup	0	3	0	0	5	8	2	91	78	0	0	1	0	0	0	188	2.3	12
Lesser Scaup	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	8	5	0	0	4	0	0	0	22	0.3	5
scaup species	0	620	0	0	24	6	0	30	23	0	0	7	0	80	0	790	9.5	17
Surf Scoter	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1
White-winged Scoter	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	70	0	70	0.8	1
Black Scoter	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1
Long-tailed Duck	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Bufflehead	23	482	164	290	137	261	54	26	127	45	24	32	15	218	0	1898	22.8	127
Common Goldeneye	0	18	0	45	0	0	0	9	111	1	1	0	0	15	0	200	2.4	13
Barrow's Goldeneye	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	3
Hooded Merganser	9	167	26	54	113	86	0	24	24	72	26	149	4	0	0	754	9.1	89
Common Merganser	0	0	46	14	15	0	0	0	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	89	1.1	11
Red-breasted Merganser	0	69	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	4	6	0	0	10	0	93	1.1	12
Ruddy Duck	0	25	0	47	0	0	0	7	5	2	0	44	0	0	0	130	1.6	13
American Coot	1	8	1	93	4	4	0	6	33	11	1	223	1	0	0	386	4.6	28
<b>TOTAL NUMBER</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>2555</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>770</b>	<b>1078</b>	<b>708</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>351</b>	<b>594</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>555</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>469</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>8308</b>		<b>249</b>
% of Total	1	31	5	9	13	9	1	4	7	4	2	7	1	6	1			
Number of Species	9	17	10	15	19	12	5	16	20	12	12	16	7	12	4			29
Number of Ponds Censused	10	47	19	19	43	29	20	30	25	28	19	12	15	7	7			330
Birds per Pond	10	54	23	41	25	24	5	12	24	11	9	46	4	67	7			25
Number of Observers	2	21	2	1	3	3	1	2	3	5	4	1	1	3	2			46

# Cape Cod Lake and Pond Waterfowl Survey: 1984 - 2011 Totals

SPECIES:	YEAR:																									1984-2010 average	Change: 2009 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			2009	2010	2011	
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	3	1	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	6	12	14	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	46	48	74	72	3%	
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	0	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	1	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	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	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	618	547	816	822	-1%	
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	16	26	0	3	--	
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	259	206	225	185	22%	
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	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	5	2	2	6	-67%	
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	132	102	96	103	-7%	
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	4	1	1	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	185	123	231	118	95%	
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	938	1774	527	1274	-59%	
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	1401	1408	1263	1625	-22%	
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	0	0	0	3	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	0	0	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	13	4	6	26	-77%	
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	11	14	4	47	-92%	
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	4	6	0	287	-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	0	0	1	2	5	--
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	417	512	417	302	38%	
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	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	29	326	188	534	-65%	
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	6	293	22	44	-50%	
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	1752	533	790	1524	-48%	
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	1787	1152	1000	2103	-52%	
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	3	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	0	1	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	2	6	70	10	--	
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	0	1	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	0	1	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	1900	2074	1898	1729	10%	
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	92	128	200	194	3%	
Barrow's Goldeneye	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	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	745	1014	754	676	11%	
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	117	393	89	262	-66%	
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	70	237	93	200	-53%	
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	71	103	130	99	31%	
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	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	19	252	386	138	181%	
<b>TOTAL NUMBER</b>	<b>9097</b>	<b>10521</b>	<b>10702</b>	<b>12695</b>	<b>11747</b>	<b>12364</b>	<b>11996</b>	<b>10678</b>	<b>8466</b>	<b>8777</b>	<b>11111</b>	<b>12186</b>	<b>9652</b>	<b>11004</b>	<b>13637</b>	<b>12423</b>	<b>10102</b>	<b>9020</b>	<b>10981</b>	<b>9044</b>	<b>8078</b>	<b>6782</b>	<b>7774</b>	<b>11212</b>	<b>10968</b>	<b>8862</b>	<b>10153</b>	<b>8308</b>	<b>10298</b>	<b>-19%</b>	
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	331	340	330	326	1%	
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	27	30	25	32	-23%	
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	29	29	30	27	13%	
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	45	44	46	41	11%	