

Breeding Birds of Ontario: Nidiology and Distribution

Volume 1: Nonpasserines (First Revision — Part A: Loons to Ducks)

by
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A decade has elapsed since the publication of Volume 1 of *Breeding Birds of Ontario* (Peck and James 1983) dealing with the nonpasserines, and during that period a number of changes and additions to their distribution and nidiology has occurred. For example, our largest database, the Ontario Nest Records Scheme (ONRS) has expanded to over 104,000 nest cards, and our file of provincial breeding records has also substantially increased. In addition to ONRS contributors, some of the sources responsible for these increases include: *American Birds*; Ontario Atlas nest cards (1981-85); more historical records from field notes of L.H. Beamer, R.C. Brooman, O.E. Devitt, J.A. Morden, P. Harrington, and W.E. Saunders; *CWS Progress Notes*; MNR district nest cards; ROM files (over 1100 nest records since 1984); and University of Guelph 1964 project (400 nest cards).

Some changes and additions to Volume 1 were published in Volume 2: *Passerines* (Peck and James 1987) as Appendix A of that volume. In this, the first part of our planned revision of *Breeding Birds*, we will outline more significant new information for those species for which we have acquired such data. Most of these changes and additions are current, but some reveal past information that has only recently

been reported. The term "nesting" implies the finding of an active nest, whereas "breeding", a less exact designation, usually refers to the observation of an adult with flightless or recently-fledged young away from the nest. For colonial species, the record (nest card) numbers indicate the number of cards of colonies rather than nests. In non-colonial species, where more than one nest is listed on cards, the actual nest total is given in brackets after the record (nest card) number. New early and late egg dates are given if they have been acquired. The revision will incorporate the order and new nomenclature as given in the current *American Ornithologists' Union Check-list* (AOU 1983) and its four supplements dating to 1 March 1991 (AOU 1985, 1987, 1989, 1991).

Although some provincial regions, for political expediency, have recently been grouped together (e.g. Leeds/Grenville, Stormont/Dundas/Glengarry), we have continued to list the 52 regions as mapped and described in both volumes of *Breeding Birds*. The four symbols used to qualify records on the breeding distribution maps of both volumes still apply, and it is understood that these revisional changes may add symbols, or alter existing symbols if documentation has been received with the record.

Breeding Bird Species

Red-throated Loon, *Gavia stellata*

5 nests representing 2 provincial regions. A nest was found 32 km (20 mi) south of Cape Henrietta Maria in 1984, and 2 nests in 1985 on the Cape itself, all in Kenora District. The details of these three nests are given in Appendix A, Volume 2.

EGG DATES 5 nests, 30 June to 3 August.

Pacific Loon, *Gavia pacifica*

20 nests representing 1 provincial region. Additional nests have all been confined to the Hudson Bay coast in Kenora District, with the most recent (1991) nest in a large slough near the mouth of the Brant River.

EGG DATES 20 nests, 19 June to 14 July.

Common Loon, *Gavia immer*

490 nests representing 29 provincial regions. Historical records from Kent and Lambton counties and a 1983 nest in Lennox and Addington were additions for southern Ontario.

Pied-billed Grebe, *Podilymbus podiceps*

439 nests representing 31 provincial regions. Nests were reported from Essex (1983), Grey (1986), and Niagara R.M. (1990). In 1983 a breeding record was noted at Wavy Creek, Cochrane District. The Niagara nest had an outside diameter of 44 cm (17.3 inches), inside diameter 13 cm (5.1 inches), outside depth 7 cm (2.8 inches), and inside depth 4 cm (1.6 inches).

EGG DATES 23 April to 22 August.

Red-necked Grebe, *Podiceps grisegena*

88 nests representing 8 provincial regions.

EGG DATES 12 May to 17 September.

American White Pelican, *Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*

38 records (colonies) representing 2 provincial regions. By 1991 the Lake of the Woods colony had increased to ca 7500 pairs. A second provincial colony (3 nests) was found on Pretty Island, Lake Nipigon, Thunder Bay District, in 1991 (Bryan 1991). In 1992 a third colony (10 nests) and a fourth (4 nests) were found, also on Lake Nipigon, but in the northern portion of the lake.

Double-crested Cormorant, *Phalacrocorax auritus*

346 records (colonies) representing 15 provincial regions. Nesting populations have been increasing on the Great Lakes in the last 15 years and 4,698 nests were counted on Lakes Erie and Ontario in 1990 (Blokpoel and Tessier 1990). New nesting regions were Haldimand-Norfolk R.M. and Simcoe, both in 1983.

American Bittern, *Botaurus lentiginosus*

255 nests representing 37 provincial regions. An historical nest record from Grey (1937), and nests from Nipissing (1982) and Peterborough (1987) were recent additions.

EGG DATES 4 May to 10 August.

Least Bittern, *Ixobrychus exilis*

344 nests representing 27 provincial regions. A nest was reported from Hamilton-Wentworth R.M. in 1983.

Great Blue Heron, *Ardea herodias*

594 records (colonies) representing 40 provincial regions. Earlier nestings for Lennox and Addington (1967) and Perth (1969) have been added.

EGG DATES 4 April to 30 June.

Great Egret, *Casmerodius albus*

37 records (colonies) representing four provincial regions. This species continues to nest in Simcoe County on Nottawasaga Island where there were 10 nests in 1991 and 8 nests in 1992, with most nests in dead or partially-dead White Cedar. Nesting reported on Chantry Island, Bruce County in 1990, provided a new provincial region and suggested a continuing northward expansion.

EGG DATES 28 April to 24 June.

Green-backed Heron, *Butorides striatus*

216 records (colonies) representing 32 provincial regions. Nesting was reported from Ottawa-Carleton R.M. in 1986.

Black-crowned Night-Heron, *Nycticorax nycticorax*

407 records (colonies) representing 17 provincial regions. Earlier nestings in Hamilton-Wentworth R.M. (1975) and Nipissing (1961) have been acquired and a 1984 nesting in Manitoulin.

EGG DATES 28 April to 9 September.

Tundra Swan, *Cygnus columbianus*

8 nests representing 1 provincial region. All nests and breeding records have been near the Hudson Bay coast in Kenora District. Three nests were on wet, sedge tundra; three were on the shores of coastal sloughs; and one was on an islet in a large, shallow slough.

One nest was a mound of vegetation in standing sedge. Another was formed of moss, and had an outer diameter of 2.4 m (7.8 ft.), inner diameter of 45 cm (17.7 inches), outer depth of 75 cm (29.5 inches), and inner depth of 20 cm (7.8 inches).

EGGS 2 nests: 1 with 5 eggs, 1 with 1 egg and 2 young.

EGG DATES 2 nests, 6 June and 25 June.

Trumpeter Swan, *Cygnus buccinator*

Recent attempts to return this species to Ontario (Lumsden, 1984) have resulted in sightings of free-flying birds, but as yet no nests from the wild have been reported.

Mute Swan, *Cygnus olor*

282 nests representing 8 provincial regions. A breeding record from Grey (1990) and nest records from Kent (1989) and Northumberland (1990) have been added. A dramatic increase in the number of nests in the past decade was largely due to the field work and contributions of H.G. Lumsden, and the resulting data is given below.

Most nests were formed of cattails, but other materials in order of preference were sticks and twigs including willow and alder; down and feathers; mud and bottom debris; sedges and grasses; loosestrife stems; leaves; and plant debris and stalks including beggar-ticks and pondweed. Outside diameters of 10 nests ranged from 1 to 2.4 m (3.3 to 7.9 ft.); inside diameters from 30 to 60 cm (11.8 to 23.6 inches); and outside depths of 10 to 60 cm (3.9 to 23.6 inches). Inside depths of 5 nests ranged from 0 to 45 cm (0 to 17.7 inches).

EGGS 220 nests with 1 to 11 eggs; 1E (2N), 2E (5N), 3E (8N), 4E (16N), 5E (41N), 6E (76N), 7E (40N), 8E (21N), 9E (8N), 10E (2N), 11E (1N).

Average clutch range 5 to 7 eggs (157 nests). Eggs were laid at 48 hour intervals. Re-nestings occurred if first clutch failed, and third clutches were reported twice. Second clutches were usually smaller.

INCUBATION PERIOD 3 nests: 1 of 34 days, 2 of at least 35 days.

EGG DATES 187 nests, 4 April to 7 July (314 dates); 94 nests, 25 April to 13 May.

Snow Goose, *Chen caerulescens*

13 records (colonies) representing 2 provincial regions. Three nests in 1983 and 2 nests in 1984 were reported from the Fort Severn area in Kenora District. The most southerly nest to date was found at Longridge Point, Cochrane District in 1991.

EGG DATES 2 June to 27 June.

Canada Goose, *Branta canadensis*

885 nests representing 27 provincial regions. Earlier records from Lambton (1968) and Northumberland (1953) have been added; as well as more recent records from Ottawa-Carleton R.M. (1990) and Sudbury (1988). In 1992 a Durham R.M. nest contained 10E.

Wood Duck, *Aix sponsa*

156 nests representing 26 provincial regions. Added nesting records are from Durham R.M. (1984), Middlesex (1944), Niagara R.M. (1991), Nipissing (1983), and Ottawa-Carleton R.M. (1985). The Lennox and Addington record in Appendix A was a breeding record, not a nesting record.

Green-winged Teal, *Anas crecca*

26 nests representing 12 provincial regions. New breeding records from Opinnagau Lake in Kenora (1984), and from south of Gogama in Sudbury (1986) have been reported. There was also a nest found at the mouth of the Shagamu River, Kenora District (1990).

American Black Duck, *Anas rubripes*

363 nests representing 39 provincial regions. Old nest records for Lincoln County (1937) and Middlesex (1941) were recently added. A 1983 nest record was received from Prince Edward County.

Mallard, *Anas platyrhynchos*

1379 nests representing 46 provincial regions. Lanark (1987) and Renfrew (1991) were recently added as nesting regions. Inside diameters of two nests were 24 and 25.4 cm (9.4 and 10 inches).

Northern Pintail, *Anas acuta*

61 nests representing 22 provincial regions. A new breeding record from Grey (1985), and nesting records from Carleton (1964), Renfrew (1991), Victoria (1986), and Welland (1969) are recent additions.

Blue-winged Teal, *Anas discors*

324 (332 nests) representing 31 provincial regions. A 1938 nest record (2 nests) from Whitefish Lake, Thunder Bay District has been included (Dear 1940).

Cinnamon Teal, *Anas cyanoptera*

1 nest representing 1 provincial region. In Appendix A of Volume 2 of Breeding Birds the 1984 nesting date given should have been 24 June 1983; the nest, containing 8 eggs was found at the Amherstburg sewage ponds (Essex). The nesting was unsuccessful.

Northern Shoveler, *Anas clypeata*

13 nests representing 7 provincial regions. Reports of breeding have been received from Grey (1985) and Oxford (1988), and also nests from Haldimand-Norfolk R.M. (1977) and from Attawapiskat (1983) and Shagamu (1990) rivers in Kenora.

American Wigeon, *Anas americana*

22 nests representing 8 provincial regions. Breeding records have been added from Hamilton-Wentworth (1989) and Opinnagau Lake in Kenora (1984); and a nesting record from Haldimand-Norfolk R.M. (1976).

Ring-necked Duck, *Aythya collaris*

31 nests representing 9 provincial regions. Additions were a breeding record from Bruce (1985), and nesting records from Carnarvon Twp., Manitoulin (1983), and Pary Sound (1986).

Greater Scaup, *Aythya marila*

5 nests representing 1 provincial region. A breeding record was reported from Opinnagau Lake in Kenora (1984), and a nest with 9 eggs at the Brant River, Kenora (1991).

EGG DATES 2 July to 14 July.

Lesser Scaup, *Aythya affinis*

10 nests representing 5 provincial regions. Breeding records from Haldimand-Norfolk R.M. (1986) and Opinnagau Lake in Kenora (1984) have been added. Two nests with 3 and 8 eggs were found at the Shagamu River, Kenora (1990), and a nest with 2 eggs at Kiruna Lake, Kenora District in 1981.

Common Eider, *Somateria mollissima*

6 records (colonies) (109 nests) representing 1 provincial region and 2 islands, one in James Bay and one in Hudson Bay, geographically in Ontario but administered by the Northwest Territories (NWT).

On Little Bear Island, NWT, near Ontario's Hudson Bay coast in Kenora, a total of 79 nests were recorded on 26 June 1981 (Cadman *et al.* 1987).

EGG DATES 26 June to 16 July.

Oldsquaw, *Clangula hyemalis*

5 (7 nests) representing 1 provincial region and an adjacent island in James Bay (NWT).

EGG DATES 26 June to 25 July.

Common Goldeneye, *Bucephala clangula*

125 nests representing 7 provincial regions. Because of nesting box studies, the number of nests for this species has more than tripled in the decade. A historical nest record for Missinaibi River, Algoma (1926), and a 1983 nest at Sioux Lookout in Kenora represent regional additions.

Bufflehead, *Bucephala albeola*

2 nests representing 2 provincial regions. Another undocumented sight record of a female entering a tree cavity near Winisk, Kenora District (1983) was received.

Hooded Merganser, *Lophodytes cucullatus*

137 nests representing 19 provincial regions. Nest box projects have added considerably to nest numbers in this species. Hastings (1984), Ottawa-Carleton R.M. (1983), Peterborough (1984), south of Gogama in Sudbury (1985), and Waterloo R.M. (1986), were all new nesting regions.

Red-breasted Merganser, *Mergus serrator*

37 nests representing 15 provincial regions. The map for this species in Volume 1 [p. 98] omitted to indicate a nest for Muskoka District. Two historical nest records, Abitibi River in Cochrane (1860), and Léeds (1896) have now been added.

EGG DATES 16 May to 6 August.

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