

# Horned Grebe

*Podiceps auritus*

## STATUS

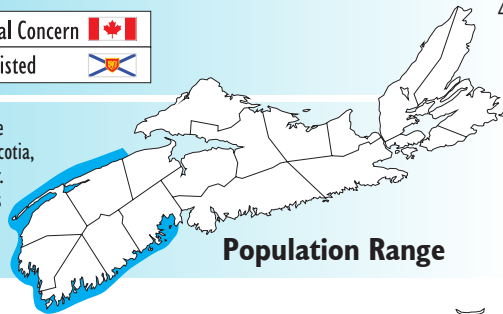
Special Concern 

Not Listed



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Occurs primarily along the coast of southwest Nova Scotia, where it spends the winter. Its breeding range extends from western Canada to Alaska.



## Population Range

## Habitat

The overwintering habitat of Horned Grebes in Nova Scotia is not well defined, but it likely primarily uses saltwater habitats located inshore. It may also less frequently utilize bodies of fresh water. It breeds west of Nova Scotia, primarily in Alberta and Saskatchewan, utilizing ponds, marshes, lakes and even human constructed wetlands.



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## Species Description

The Horned Grebe is a medium sized (31-38 cm) diving waterbird with a short, narrow, pointed bill and blocky head with red eyes. Its non-breeding plumage, seen in Nova Scotia, is a dull grey body with a white underside. Its breeding plumage consists of tufts of buff coloured feathers on the head, resembling horns. Its head and cheeks are black, with chestnut brown neck and breast.

Look for Horned Grebes along the coast from October to May.

## Interesting Points

- Nests are often attached to the stalks of aquatic plants growing from the water, allowing them to float in one place.
- Horned Grebes are not well adapted to life outside of the water and are only able to move short distances on land.
- Elaborate bonding rituals are performed by breeding pairs.



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## Similar Species

### Eared Grebe:

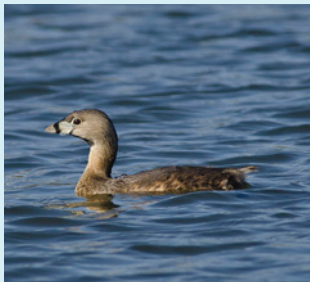
Slightly smaller (30-35 cm long), fluffy and tailless rear, black neck with fan shaped gold feathers on the head when breeding.



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### Pied-billed Grebe:

Thicker, shorter bill, light brown non-breeding plumage.



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## Threats to Survival

- Loss of wetland breeding habitat (conversion for agriculture).
- Increasing development of wind energy facilities (natural flying patterns make it particularly susceptible to collisions with wind turbines).
- Entanglement in fishing nets while diving for fish.



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Wind turbines

## How You Can Help

Learn to recognize this species and distinguish it from similar species. Document and report any sightings to eBird or iNaturalist. Participate in bird monitoring programs such as the Atlantic Canada Shorebird Survey.



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## Contacts, Information & Sighting Reports

**Contact:** NS Department of Natural Resources: [biodiversity@novascotia.ca](mailto:biodiversity@novascotia.ca)

**Info:** [www.sararegistry.gc.ca](http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca)

**Sighting Reports:** 1-866-727-3447, [www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org), [www.inaturalist.org](http://www.inaturalist.org)

**Stewardship:** Atlantic Canada Shorebird Survey: [shorebirds@ec.gc.ca](mailto:shorebirds@ec.gc.ca)