

Barrow's Goldeneye

Bucephala islandica

STATUS

Special Concern 

Not Listed 

15



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Species Description

The Barrow's Goldeneye is a medium-sized (43-48 cm) diving duck. Males are black and white with a purplish black head and dark bill. Males have a crescent-shaped white patch near the base of their bill. Females have a grayish-brown back, whitish sides and belly, and a brown head. The bill of females is mostly orange in the winter/spring and is dark in the summer. Juveniles are brownish with tan eyes and a dark bill.

Approximately 550 individuals winter along the coast of the Maritimes. Breeds in Quebec.



Habitat

Occurs in sheltered areas along the coast and occasionally in ice-free inland rivers. Migrates in May to breed in the boreal forests of Quebec in small high elevation lakes and rivers. Males migrate further north in June to moult in areas such as Hudson Bay and Labrador. They return in November to winter along the Saint Lawrence estuary and gulf in Quebec and sheltered coastlines and harbours in the Maritimes where open water persists.



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Barrow's Goldeneye are typically observed from November to April in protected areas along the coast. Look for them in Pugwash, Pictou Estuary, Wallace Bay, Annapolis River, Sydney, Dartmouth and Louisburg.

Interesting Points

- Pairs are monogamous and indulge in a series of acrobatic courtship displays.
- Females nest in tree cavities that they line with downy feathers and grass.
- They feed on aquatic insects and crustaceans in the summer, and molluscs and crustaceans in the winter.



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Similar Species

Common Goldeneye:

Similar size (40-51 cm); less angled head; larger bill. Males: round white patch at base of bill; greenish head; less black on sides. Females: less rounded head; mostly black bill with an orange or yellow tip.



Male



Female

Threats to Survival

- Oil spills.
- Sediment contamination.
- Forest harvest and associated activities (altered nesting habitat and increased accessibility and disturbance).
- Fish stocking programs (food chain alteration).

How You Can Help

Learn to recognize this species and report sightings to eBird. Report oil spills to the Coast Guard by calling 1-800-565-1633.



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Contacts, Information & Sighting Reports

Contact: Environment Canada (506) 364-5044, www.ec.gc.ca

Info: www.speciesatrisk.gc.ca, www.qc.ec.ca/faune, www.mba-aom.ca

Sighting Reports: 1-866-727-3447 or www.speciesatrisk.ca/sightings, eBird.org