

Species Data Sheet: Snow Goose

Canada's Inter-Agency Wild Bird Influenza Survey — 2006

The goal of the survey is twofold: to characterize the strains of avian influenza viruses and to ensure early detection of highly pathogenic avian influenza strains in wild birds in Canada. Expanding on the 2005 nation-wide survey of influenza virus strains of wild ducks, this survey places a greater focus on birds that migrate regularly between Canada's North Atlantic region and Europe or that spend some part of their year in close proximity to birds that winter in Europe. The expansion of the survey complements work being carried out in the United States, which is surveying western (Pacific Flyway) populations.



Species: *Chen caerulescens*  
Snow Goose

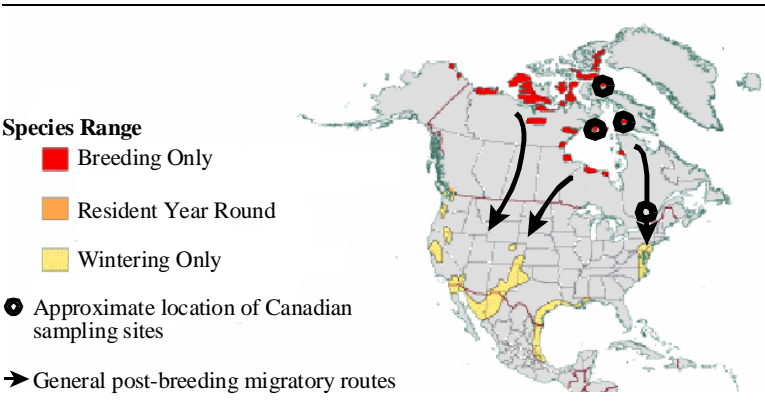
Photograph © E. Reed

Reason for inclusion in the Wild Bird Influenza Survey

Snow Geese are a secondary target species for the survey because they may contact Canada Geese on the Canadian breeding areas that have migrated from Greenland. Because Snow Geese breed in large groups (colonies), there may be increased likelihood of transmission of viruses or other diseases.

Migratory range

Snow Geese migrate through all continental flyways and overwinter in distinct groups in the southern United States and eastern Mexico. Some western populations travel to Wrangel Island in Russia to breed.



Dates in Canada

Most populations are in Canada from mid-April to late September, but a small population overwinters in British Columbia; therefore, there are Snow Geese in Canada year round.

Canada's Inter-Agency Wild Bird Influenza Survey Partners

The survey is coordinated by the Canadian Cooperative Wildlife Health Centre. Partners include the Public Health Agency of Canada, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, Environment Canada, provincial/territorial representatives of public health, animal health, and wildlife, the Centre for Coastal Health, Ducks Unlimited Canada, and the government of Iceland.

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The Snow Goose is protected in Canada under the *Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994*, administered by the Canadian Wildlife Service.