

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

Species Data Sheet: Common Eider

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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.

Reason for inclusion in the Wild Bird Influenza Survey

Because they may encounter trans-Atlantic migrant geese at breeding colonies, Common Eiders are secondary targets for the survey. Some Canadian breeders also overwinter off the Greenland coast, where they may encounter Eurasian waterfowl and other birds.

Migratory range

Common Eiders are very hardy birds that are found along the coasts of all Arctic nations. They do not migrate far from their breeding areas to overwinter, but some from Canada do move to Greenland, where they intermingle with flocks that originated in Greenland.



Species: *Somateria mollissima* Common Eider

Photograph © Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada (G. Gilchrist, Environment Canada).

Species Range

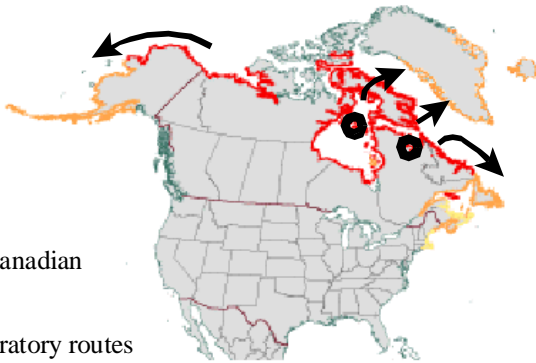
■ Breeding Only

■ Resident Year Round

■ Wintering Only

◆ Approximate location of Canadian sampling sites

➔ General post-breeding migratory routes



Dates in Canada

Many Common Eiders remain in Canadian territorial waters year round. Those that migrate to Greenland or Alaska move with the edge of the sea ice and arrive at their wintering areas by December. They usually return in mid-March, although some do not reach their nesting grounds until June.

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 Common Eider is protected in Canada under the *Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994*, administered by the Canadian Wildlife Service.