

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

Species Data Sheet: King 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

King Eiders have been selected as secondary targets for the survey because some Canadian breeders migrate to Greenland and Iceland to overwinter, where they may encounter European species of waterfowl or other birds carrying avian influenza strains.

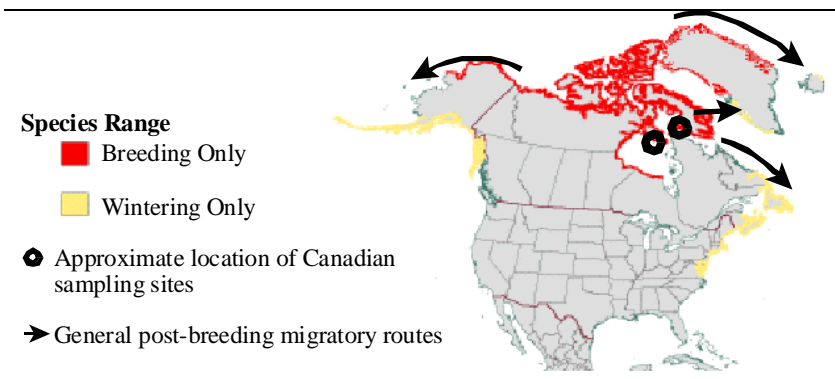
Migratory range

Canadian-breeding King Eiders summer in the High Arctic, and in winter they migrate to the eastern and western coasts of North America, to Greenland, and also to Iceland.



Species: *Somateria spectabilis* King Eider

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Dates in Canada

King Eiders leave the southern edge of the sea ice for their Arctic tundra nesting grounds in late March to April, following open leads (polynyas) to their breeding areas. They leave their breeding areas only when the sea ice returns to push them off the coast, between October and December.

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