

# Lesser Scaup Duck, Bluebill . . .



LESSER SCAUP DUCK  
© 1954 National Wildlife Federation

These birds belong to a genus of ducks that includes the Redhead, Canvasback, Ring-necked Duck and, of course, the Greater Scaup Duck. This species is the smallest of the group with a maximum length of 16½ inches and a weight of about 2 pounds. In contrast, the Greater Scaup has a length of 18½ inches and a weight of 3 pounds; the Ring-necked, a length of 23 inches and a weight of 3 pounds; and the Canvasback, a length of 24 inches and a weight of 3 pounds.

Bluebills are commonly found at least in the winter months in large flocks or rafts often out at sea. They may feed over the mussel beds in shallower water. In summer, they feed more commonly on water plants and as a result the birds have a better flavor early in the season than later. They may feed at night diving for their food. In flight, they form an irregular wedge-shaped flock.

Lesser Scaups breed from southern Alaska to southeastern Canada and south to Colorado and Ohio. They winter in general from southern British Columbia to New Jersey and south to Panama. Birds taken from inland waters almost invariably yield a more appetizing flesh than those taken from marine environments. Only rarely can they approach

the flavor of their relatives the Canvasbacks. The Greater Scaup is more common on the sea and on the Great Lakes in the winter in northern United States while the Lesser Scaup is the common bird on smaller bodies of water inland.

In general the scaups appear like small high-foreheaded Canvasbacks even though this is just a crude approximation. They appear light "amidships" and darker at the ends. The Lesser Scaup seems to be larger headed than the Greater Scaup and has the head with a purplish rather than a greenish cast. Both have broad white wingstripes but while this extends only about one-half way along the edge in the Lesser Scaup it is roughly 50 per cent longer in the Greater Scaup.

Scaups might be confused at a distance with Golden-eyes. However, in the Scaups the dark forward parts extend from the top of the head to the waterline while in the Golden-eyes the dark area is confined to the head at least forward and even then the dark of the head bears the light circle giving the birds its name "Golden-eye."

Lesser Scaups or Bluebills usually nest in marshes. Sometimes more than one female will share a nest with the result that a brood may seem to be excessively large. From 6-11 eggs are laid by a female. The eggs are 2¼ by 1½ inches in size and are olive brown in color. Incubation is by the female alone and requires 3 to 4 weeks. There is but one brood each year. A brood as large as 22 of course would represent the offspring of more than one female. Unlike most other American ducks the female has a light area around the base of the bill or on the face and while the dark areas forward may in the male appear to be black at least at a distance they are brown in the female.

Because of the abundance of these birds they are likely for a long time to provide a good share of the harvested duck population in many parts of the country. As such they figure in all plans aimed at maintaining the duck population at an optimum level. Because of this the National Wildlife Federation is interested in having their problems widely understood.

—E. Laurence Palmer

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## YESTERDAYS

### FIVE YEARS AGO

From The Eagle, Nov. 30, 1950  
A helicopter landed at the Washington school ground at noon to give the children a close-up look at it. It was being used by Crown Zellerbach in seeding work at Columbia Tree Farm and the landing was arranged by Glen Hawkins and Superintendent Paul Gordon.

The first steelhead to be reported this season was caught Sunday by Bob King and dressed eight pounds.

The Lower Columbia League championship cup awarded to the Vernonia Loggers was displayed this week at Kullander's Jewelry store.

### TEN YEARS AGO

From The Eagle, Nov. 29, 1945  
A heavy rain and wind storm Monday morning caused damage to electric lines and brought out a number of leaks in roofs and other trouble. The flag pole at the city park fell on power lines.

Water level in Rock creek was well above the summer level maintained by the dam.

Plans were announced for discontinuing the casualty station maintained here since 1942. Mrs. R. D. Eby, in charge of the wartime organization announced plans for disposing of equipment stored at the IOOF hall.

### FIFTEEN YEARS AGO

From The Eagle, Nov. 29, 1940  
The Christmas activities committee met at the Oregon Gas and Electric office to plan the annual Christmas party to be staged at the Washington grade school following the school program. Officers for the group were Harry Culbertson, chairman; George Baker, finance chairman; and J. W. Nichols, secretary.

The herd of 14 Holstein and Guernsey cows owned by Albert Schmidlin was listed as the highest milk-producing herd in Columbia county during October. They averaged 791 pounds of milk and 32.9 pounds butterfat.

Sell it with an Eagle Want Ad.

## Owners to List Cutover Land

Owners of cutover lands in six western Oregon counties will have the opportunity to list their land under the forest fee and yield tax law in time for the 1955 tax roll, the state board of forestry announced today.

Public hearings will be held in Douglas, Marion, Yamhill, Clackamas, Washington and Columbia counties early in March (1956) to consider classification. Applications to come under the law should be filed with the state forester prior to December 15, state forestry officials advised.

Lands coming under the forest tax act pay 5-cents per acre in lieu of the property tax. The low rate enable owners to retain title to cutover lands until they can grow a new tree crop. When the timber is harvested, the county is paid a 12½ per cent yield tax. This tax reimburses the county for any difference between the 5-cent rate and the regular property taxes.

The reforestation act is intended to stimulate ownership of cutover and logged lands through the 5-cent per acre feature. Currently, about 950,000 acres in 18 counties, have been placed under the law.

Classification of the lands must be approved by both the state forestry department and tax commission, forestry officials advised. The forestry department urged all owners of cutover lands to investigate the possibilities of classifying their properties under the act.

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From where I sit... by Joe Marsh

## New Light on an Old Subject

Mr. Evans from the Lighting Company gave an interesting talk at the Community Hall last night — on how farmers can cut electric bills. For those who missed it, here's a short recap.

Don't try to light up the cobwebs in the rafters. Use a reflector and a smaller bulb will probably do the job. Too many farmers use naked bulbs that waste 50% of the light.

Try using moveable projector bulbs that beam light the way a searchlight does. A couple of these "spots" will often give you

better illumination than a gang of juice-wasting overhead lamps. From where I sit, it's amazing how often we misuse the things we have . . . like electricity. We also make a mistake if we misuse our right of personal choice — about which candidate to vote for, say, or whether beer or coffee makes the ideal mealtime drink — by trying to force our opinions on others. Respect for the other fellow's point of view should be our "guiding light."

Joe Marsh

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