
Lesser Scaup

Aythya affinis

Class: *Aves*

Order: *Anseriformes*

Family: *Anatidae*

Characteristics:

Lesser scaup are one of two scaup species in North America. While the greater scaup tends to prefer salt water, the lesser prefers freshwater and is only found in North and South America. It is a medium-sized diving duck with a slight bump on the peak of the head. The male has a bluish bill, black head, neck, chest and rear end and grey sides. The female is brown but is identified by the white patch at the base of the bill.

Behavior:

Scaup are diving ducks, which means they will dive completely under the water to find food. Like many ducks, the female and male have distinct calls. They are social, nonaggressive birds that will live together in large flocks.

Reproduction:

They make a ground nest either on the ground or will also construct a mound of vegetation over water. The female lay 6-14 eggs that hatch following an incubation period of about 30 days. Ducklings can actually dive and start feeding themselves as soon as they are dry out of the egg.

Diet:

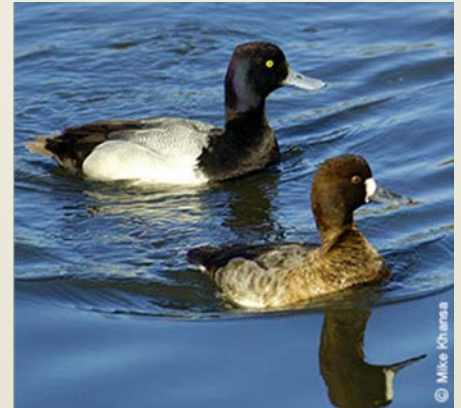
Wild: Clams, snails, crustaceans, aquatic insects, aquatic plants and seeds
Zoo: Seabird diet, scratch grains, flock raiser pellets, greens

Conservation:

Widely found throughout North and into South America, lesser scaup are Least Concern.

FYI:

Lesser scaup are one of the most widespread diving ducks in North America ([Cornell Lab of Ornithology](#)).



Range & Habitat:

Lakes and ponds in fresh or brackish water



Lifespan: up to 20 years in captivity, 15 years in the wild.

Special Adaptations: Scaup will “play dead” when grasped by a predator!

IUCN Conservation Status:

Least Concern

