



Pintail

The Northern Pintail is a large dabbling duck. They have gray and black upperparts, a white neck, and gray sides. The head, throat, and nape are brown, and a white stripe divides the front and back of the neck. Their gray wings contain green coloring and are bordered with brown and white. They have a long, pointed, black tail.

The Northern Pintail is abundant in North America among shallow wetlands. Their core nesting habitat is within Alaska, the Prairies of southern Canada, and the northern Great Plains. They arrive in wintering areas beginning in August and can be seen in their preferred shallow wetland habitat. As a result, they can also be seen in flooded agricultural fields.

Shortly after the ice has melted, these ducks begin nesting. They are among the earliest nesting ducks in North America. Females build their nests on the ground, often long distances from water. Ducklings later hatch together in one day and follow the female to water after a day in the nest, and fledge by July or August.

Predators and farming operations greatly destroy Northern Pintail nests every year. Farming has reduced the amount of quality nesting cover available, and winter habitats are threatened by water shortages, agricultural development, contamination, and urbanization. Periods of extended drought in prairie nesting regions have caused dramatic population declines, usually followed by periods of recovery. Since half of the population of Northern Pintails declined from the early 1970s to the late 1980s, new conservation measures, such as habitat restoration and enhancement of agricultural lands, as well as prudent harvest restrictions, suggest that Northern Pintails should have a secure future in North America.



*Information compiled by: Danielle Ferchoff
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CITATION ON FILE

Birds of Alberta, "Northern Pintail" Accessed 26 May 2014.
<http://birdsofalberta.com/List/detail.php?id=18>