

Long-tailed Duck (*Clangula hyemalis*)

This elegant duck's summer range is circumpolar. It breeds in Arctic tundra pools and marshes and along high latitude seacoasts in North America, Europe and Russia. In Ontario, it may be found nesting on the shores of Hudson's and James Bay.

It is only the male duck that sports wonderfully long tail feathers and a pink band near the tip of a black bill. Females tend to be more subdued making for better camouflage when on the nest. Both sexes experience seasonal variations in plumage. For example, in winter the male's head is mostly white.

Long-tailed Ducks are highly migratory and, as deep divers, like to winter on the open ocean or in large deep freshwater lakes. Toronto's lakeshore accommodates large numbers of these birds during the non-breeding period.

Mating may begin early in May, long before they reach their breeding grounds. After arrival in the north, the female builds her nest and lays an average of 6-8 eggs. Upon hatching, fledglings gather in a group and are tended by older females.

Formerly called the Oldsquaw Duck, the name was changed to the less offensive Long-tailed Duck.