

## **Horned Grebe** (*Podiceps auritus*)

The sighting of a Horned Grebe at Colonel Sam Smith Park or anywhere else in Metropolitan Toronto is very significant, as these birds are on the federal government's ***Species at Risk Public Registry***. Based upon data gathered from annual surveys, their population has decreased by approximately 45% since the 1960's.

Horned Grebes are primarily found in northwestern Canada with their main breeding area being the Prairie Provinces, although some individuals do nest in northwestern Ontario. They often migrate overland to reach wintering areas along the Pacific and Atlantic coasts. Occasionally, some of these migrants will overwinter on larger inland lakes such as Lake Ontario. Their diet is mainly of fish, crustaceans and aquatic insects.

Their winter plumage differs radically from that exhibited during breeding season. A black-capped head with a body coloured in grays and white is offset with a vivid red eye.

They are vulnerable to drought, habitat loss, human disturbance and oil spills.