

Lesser Scaup *Aythya affinis*



Folk Name: Little Blackhead, Little Bluebill

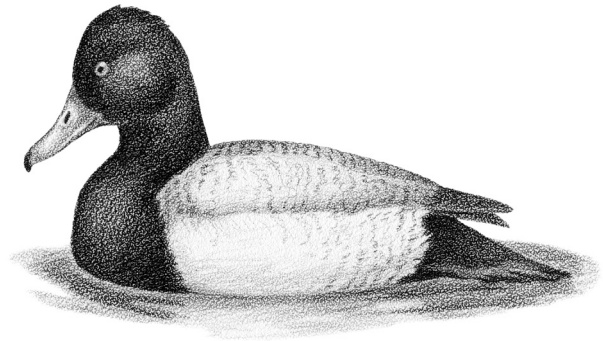
Status: Migrant, Winter Resident

Abundance: Uncommon

Habitat: Lakes, ponds

Tens of thousands of Lesser Scaup are found along the coast of the Carolinas each winter. Flocks of more than 50,000 birds have been estimated there. Lesser Scaup are also regularly found inland in both states, and they are much more numerous in the Central Carolinas than the Greater Scaup. They show up on our lakes and larger ponds, and they have been reported in this region almost annually for the past 60 years. They begin to arrive in the fall between late October and late November. In spring, some begin to head north as early as February, while others have lingered here into May. We have one record of a Lesser Scaup that remained here into June. This bird was found on a retention pond at Concord Mills Mall on June 19, 2011.

The size of Lesser Scaup flocks in the region have varied from one or two birds to groups of over 100.



Most are usually seen in the 5–50 range. Three of the largest flocks ever seen here include: a total count of 100 reported in 1993, by observers on the Southern Lake Norman Christmas Bird Count; a flock of 111 birds found on Lake Hickory on March 14, 2012; and an estimated group of 145 found in Stanly County on Lake Tillery on February 22, 2015.