

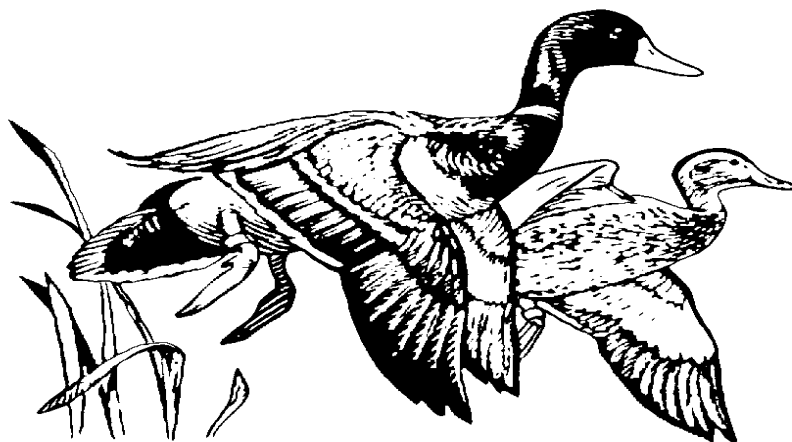
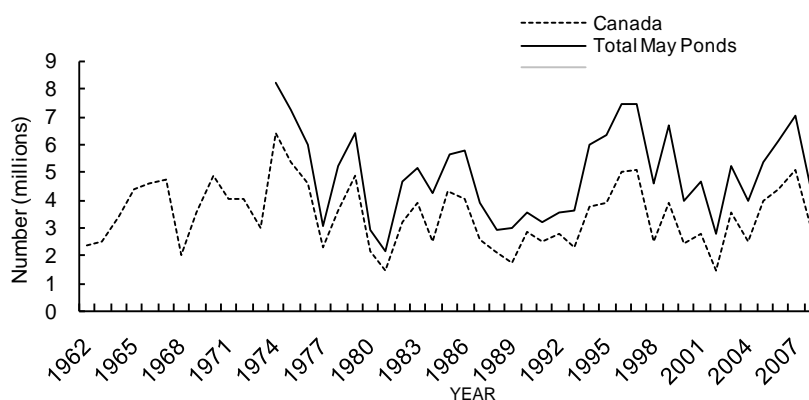
2009 DUCK AND WETLAND STATUS

Each May and July, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) coordinates extensive surveys of waterfowl and wetlands in primary breeding areas of the U.S. and Canada. They have suspended July surveys the past few years due to budgetary constraints, but are scheduled to resume them as funding allows.

2009 Breeding Duck Habitat:

Numbers of wetlands termed “May ponds” reflect habitat conditions for breeding ducks. The number of May ponds recorded during spring 2009 totaled 6.8 million, an increase of 45% from the previous year’s estimate of 4.4 million. The estimate of ponds in Prairie Canada was 3.6 million, a 17% increase from the 2008 estimate of 3.1 million. The most significant improvement in wetland conditions occurred in the north-central U.S. In contrast to drought conditions that prevailed during spring 2008, several precipitation events during the summer of 2008 and above average snow and precipitation during fall and winter resulted in a 108 % increase in May Ponds from 1.4 to 2.9 million by spring 2009.

Figure 7. Number of May Ponds in the traditional survey areas of the U.S. and Canada.



Duck Populations:

The total duck population estimate in the traditional survey area increased from 37.3 million during 2008 to 42 million during 2009, an increase of 13%. The 2009 estimate is 25% above the long-term average (1955-2007). The increase was greatest in the U.S. prairies where breeding duck numbers increased 79% in the Eastern Dakotas and 117% in Montana and the Western Dakotas. Mallard abundance in the traditional survey area (8.5 million) represented a 10% increase from the 2008 estimate of 7.7 million and was 13% above the long-term average. Compared to 2008, mallard numbers increased 26% in Montana and the western Dakotas, 62% in the Eastern Dakotas, and 10% in Southern Manitoba. Gadwall (+12%), wigeon (-1%), blue-winged teal (+11%), green-winged teal (+16%) and redheads (-1%) were statistically similar to 2008. Northern pintails increased by 23% from 2008, but still remain 20% below their long-term average. Scaup numbers were similar to 2008 and their status remains a concern because their numbers are still 18% below the long-term average. The estimate of 1.0 million redheads was similar to 2008 and 62% above their long-term average.

Table 4. Percent change in habitat and population indices from 2008 (08) and the long-term average (LTA) among breeding ground regions.

Region	<u>May Ponds</u>		<u>Breeding Ducks</u>		<u>Mallards</u>	
	vs. 08	vs. LTA	vs. 08	vs. LTA	vs. 08	vs. LTA
E. Dakotas	+117%	+84%	+79%	+171%	+62%	+181%
W.Dakotas/MT	+95%	+93%	-30%	+117%	+26%	-11%
S. Alberta	-19%	-7%	-22%	-23%	-14%	-31%
S. Saskatchewan	+37%	+11%	-10%	+7%	-2%	-10%
S. Manitoba	+12%	-1%	+12%	-11%	+10%	+10%

Mallard Fall Flight:

Projections of the mallard fall flight are based on historic relationships among breeding duck numbers, habitat conditions, adult survival, and expected fall age ratios. The removal, last year, of Alaska mallards from the mid-continent stock did not significantly affect the 2009 breeding population estimate of 8.5 million mid-continent mallards or the fall flight prediction of 10.3 million (9.2 million in 2008).