



## Featured Species Habitat Management Guidance for Greater and Lesser Scaup

**Latin Name:** *Aythya marila* and *Aythya affinis*

**Scope:** Statewide

**Rationale** - *why we value the species and the problem for the species:*

Although Michigan is not an important breeding area for greater or lesser scaup, these species are abundant during spring and fall migration and are the primary species pursued by diving duck hunters. Lesser scaup are listed as high conservation priorities within the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) and the Upper Mississippi River and Great Lakes Joint Venture (UMRGLJV) lists scaup as a “focal species” for planning and monitoring (UMRGLJV 2007). The USFWS still retains restricted hunting regulations because of concerns over scaup population numbers. Habitat management for scaup will likely benefit other associated open water species such as canvasback.

**Habitat Need** - *the cause & effect relationship between habitat and species and its primary limiting habitat need:*

The “spring condition hypothesis” suggests that reduced food availability during spring migration has resulted in reduced reproductive success of female lesser scaup that are arriving on breeding areas in poorer body condition than they did historically (Anteau and Afton 2006). It is thought that declines in preferred food at migration stopover sites may be the cause. Scaup feed primarily in open water areas > 25 acres with water depths 3-30 feet (UMRGLJV, 2007) that support food such as wild celery, sago pondweed, fingernail clams, snails, and mussels.

**Habitat Objectives** - *the treatment or management to address the primary limiting habitat need:*

- 1) Protect or improve water quality sufficient enough to support submerged beds of aquatic vegetation and associated invertebrates;
- 2) Protect existing open or deep-water wetlands;
- 3) Work with partners to restore open or deep-water wetlands;
- 4) Protect 120,000 acres and restore 16,000 acres of “open water wetlands” (UMRGLJV 2007).

**Priority Geographic Areas** – *the specific geographic areas where we should focus management for the species:*

In the Lower Peninsula: western Lake Erie, Lake St. Clair, the Detroit River, and Saginaw Bay; In the Upper Peninsula: the Portage Lake/Canal, and Munuscong Bay; and the 7 WLD Project Areas (1 UP, 3 NLP, and 3 SELP), which identify scaup as a featured species.

**Priority Landscapes** – *the landscape, setting, or cover-type where we should focus management within the areas above:*

Extensive open water areas > 25 acres with water depths 3-30 feet that do or could potentially support submerged aquatic plants and/or high densities of aquatic invertebrates.

**Population Goal** - *the goal for the species, its habitat, or a stakeholder's actions:*

NAWMP continental goal is 6.3 million scaup.

**Evaluation Method** - *the monitoring method to measure progress towards the goal above:*

Document habitat management accomplishments and report to UMRGLJV within 1-year of completion. Continue annual fall aerial diving duck surveys of Lake St. Clair and western Lake Erie. Establish an annual spring aerial survey.

**Incidental Species** – *other species which may benefit from management for this species:*

Canvasback; common merganser; hooded merganser; red-breasted merganser; and redhead duck.

**References** - *citation for documents referenced in this guidance:*

- Anteau, M. J., and A. D. Afton. 2006. Diet shifts of lesser scaup during spring migration: support for the spring condition hypothesis. *Canadian Journal of Zoology* 86:779-786.
- Upper Mississippi River and Great Lakes Region Joint Venture (UMRGLJV). 2007. Upper Mississippi River and Great Lakes Joint Venture, Waterfowl Habitat Conservation Strategy. U.S. Department of Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA.