

Canvasback

Aythya valisineria

General Information:

-A sloping profile from the front of its crown to the tip of its long dark bill distinguishes this bird. It is one of the largest and heaviest ducks in North America. At a distance the male appears white with a black rear and breast. The long neck and head are a rich rust-red. The female is grayish with a rusty tint to the neck and head.

Song:

-The male makes a grunt or croak; female make a quack.

Behavior:

-A wary species that often rafts well away from the shoreline. It flies high, frequently in formations. It dives deep to feed on aquatic vegetation and mollusks.

Breeding:

-Monogamous and a solitary nester.

Nesting:

-Incubation of 23-29 days by the female. The 1 brood per year or precocial young are tended by the female and have their first flight at 56-60 days.

Population:

-Common to uncommon but local. Declining for some time, but has dropped drastically in recent years because of drought and drainage of marshes where they breed.

Conservation:

-Nesting habitat loss primarily blamed for declining. Releases from hunting pressures and development of nesting habitats may have stabilized the populations.

Shoreline Restoration Issues:

- If you would like to create an environment friendly to the Canvasback you are going to want to plant a lot of Wild Celery. Wild Celery is an aquatic plant that the Canvasback is very much dependant upon; so much in fact that Wild Celery and the Canvasback share the name "*valisneria*" in their scientific names. Furthermore, you are going to want to concentrate your efforts along the shore to create cover and nesting areas. I suggest Tussock's Sedge, Hard-stem Bulrush, River Bulrush, 3-Way Sedge, Blue Flag Iris, Sweet Flag, Sweet Gale, Sandbar Willow, Ninebark, Broad-leaf Cattail, Swamp White Oak, Black Willow, Wool-Grass, Indian Grass, and Japanese Millet.

