

## SPECIES INFORMATION SHEET

*Aythya fuligula*

English name: <b>Tufted duck</b>	Scientific name: <b><i>Aythya fuligula</i></b>	
Taxonomical group: Class: Aves Order: Anseriformes Family: Anatidae	Species authority: Linnaeus, 1758	
Subspecies, Variations, Synonyms: –	Generation length: 5 years	
Past and current threats (Habitats Directive article 17 codes): Other threat factors (declining colonies of <i>L. ridibundus</i> ; J03.01), Tourism (disturbance; G01, G02), Alien species (I01), Competition and predation (I02), Hunting (F03.01), Bycatch (F03.02.05), Oil spills (H03.01)	Future threats (Habitats Directive article 17 codes): Other threat factors (declining colonies of <i>L. ridibundus</i> ; J03.01), Tourism (G01, G02), Alien species (I01), Competition and predation (I02), Hunting (F03.01), Bycatch (F03.02.05), Oil spills (H03.01)	
IUCN Criteria: <b>A2ab</b>	<b>HELCOM Red List Category:</b>	<b>NT Near Threatened</b>
Global / European IUCN Red List Category LC / LC	Annex I EU Birds Directive-no Annex II EU Birds Directive-II A	
Red List status in HELCOM countries: Denmark: LC, Estonia: LC, Finland: VU, Germany: * (*Not threatened), Latvia: –, Lithuania: –, Poland: –, Russia: –, Sweden: LC		

**Range description and general trends**

The tufted duck is a widespread breeder across much of Europe. The European population counts >730 000 bp. Although the species was stable or increased in much of its range during 1990–2000, there were declines in north-eastern Europe, including the north-eastern Baltic Sea.



*Aythya fuligula*. Photo by Lutz Ritzel.

**Distribution and status in the Baltic Sea region**

The size of the breeding population is much smaller in the western Baltic Sea area than in the north-eastern parts of the region.

The **Swedish** population has been stable both in short-term and long-term (Ottvall *et al.* 2009). It is currently estimated at 73 000–94 000 bp and is considered as “secure” (Ottosson *et al.* 2012). However, there are considerable regional differences. In the coastal parts of the Baltic Sea it has obviously declined. For example, it decreased by 71% in the Stockholm archipelago 1975–2000 (from 5 800 to 1

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700 pairs). Also in Västerbotten it has decreased since the beginning of the 1990s.

**Finland** hosts a large population of about 50 000 bp. It has been increasing in the past, but now it is strongly declining with about 5.4% annually. The decline has been estimated at 50% during the latest 10 years. In the archipelagos, the decline has been 50% as well. Currently, there are 11 000 bp in the archipelagos, *i.e.* one fifth of the total population.

In **Russia**, the tufted duck breeds with only few (60–80) pairs in the **Kaliningrad Region**, but is quite numerous in the **St Petersburg Region**. The trend is declining in Kaliningrad, but seems to be about stable in St Petersburg.

The **Estonian** population was estimated at 4,000–6,000 bp in 2003–2008, with a declining trend between 1991–2008 (Elts *et al.* 2009).

In **Latvia**, the tufted duck was increasing until the late 1980s, but has been decreasing since then. The current population amounts to 700–800 bp (A. Mednis, *pers. comm.*).

In **Poland**, the tufted duck is nowadays a widespread, but sparse breeder of the lowlands. It is more common in northern Poland, especially Pomerania. Significant populations are also found in Wielkopolska, Silesia and Małopolska. The highest densities are found on lakes and fishponds, especially near to or within Gull colonies. It is missing in the mountains; the highest known breeding place is at 500 m altitude. Since the late 19th century it has shown an increase and expansion to the south, recently also to the south-east (Tomiałojć & Stawarczyk 2003). Locally, a declining trend due to the decline of Black-headed Gull colonies has been observed (Sikora *et al.* 2007). The total Polish population was estimated to 15 000–25 000 bp during the period 1990–2000 (BirdLife International 2004).

In Germany, **Mecklenburg-Vorpommern**, the population of the tufted duck has increased during the 1970s and 1980s, but declined after 1994. It was estimated at 450 pairs in 1978–1982, 400–600 bp in 1994, but only 300–350 in 1998 (Zimmermann 2006). The main breeding areas are the coastal bird colonies, but the species is also found in inland lake areas.

The species colonised **Schleswig-Holstein** mainly during the 20th century. During 1980–1990, the numbers of breeding pairs increased from *c.* 2 600 to 3 200 (Berndt *et al.* 2002). The actual total population (including North Sea) counts *c.* 5 000 bp. The species is present in almost all suitable habitats. The highest breeding pair numbers are recorded in the inland lake areas (*c.* 3 300 bp), but it is also quite abundant at the Baltic coast (*c.* 500 bp; 2005–2009).

The **Danish** population counts about 1 000–2 000 bp and has been increasing.

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Table 1: Population numbers of the tufted duck in the Baltic Sea area. For population trends 0=stable, -=decreasing, +=increasing, F=fluctuating, (+)=slightly increasing.

Country	Population size		Short-term population trend (10 years)	Long-term population trend (50 years)
	Breeding pairs	Year		
Sweden	73 000–94 000	2010	0	0
Finland	50 000	2009	-	+
Russia, PET	5 000–10 000	2009	0	0
Russia, KAL	60–80	2000–2004	-	F
Estonia	4 000–6 000	2003–2008	-	+
Latvia	700–800	2009	-	+
Lithuania	4 000–6 000	1999–2001	-	+
Poland	15 000–25 000	1990–2000	(+)	+
Germany, SH	3 800	2005–2009	+	+
Germany, MV	300–350	1998	-	+
Denmark	1 000–2 000	2000	(+)	+
<b>Baltic Sea</b>	<b>157 000–198 000</b>			

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## Distribution map

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### Habitat and ecology

The breeding habitats are marshes, lakes, fishponds and other water surfaces with rich vegetation to conceal the nest. The highest densities are found in the vicinity or within gull and tern colonies. In the vast archipelagos of the northern Baltic Sea, the association with terns and gulls is even more pronounced, especially in the outer zones (Hildén 1964). The tufted duck is only weakly marine (Numers 1995); yet, it is nevertheless the second numerous Anatidae over the entire Baltic (after the Common Eider). It feeds mainly by diving, but may also dabble. Food consists of bivalves, aquatic insects and plants.

### Description of major threats

The strong decline in Finland, but also in other areas, is supposed to be related to the declining numbers of *L. ridibundus*, but also hunting, human disturbances and the increased predation by the American Mink and native predators (like foxes) have negative effects on the population. There is only little evidence for by-catch in the northern Baltic, and losses are also comparatively low in the southern Baltic (Stempniewicz 1994). However, this is an everlasting threat during severe ice winters when large bird congregations occur in restricted areas. Another potential threat are oil spills. Though the oil contamination of the Baltic has been reduced largely during the last decades, spills due to accidents are an everlasting risk.

### Assessment justification

The tufted duck has been increasing and expanding its range during much of the 20th century. However, starting from the late 1980s and during the 1990s, a declining trend has been observed in many parts of the Baltic Sea area. Since the tufted duck is widespread and numerous, it is difficult to get precise population figures. The available data indicate, from a Baltic-wide view, a declining trend with a population size reduction of >15% within 15 years, which categorizes the species as *Near Threatened* (NT) according to criterion A2ab. In Finland, the estimated population decline has been even c. 50% within the last 10 years, both inland and in the archipelagos. However, the threshold for the category *Vulnerable* is most likely not reached for the whole Baltic.

### Recommendations for actions to conserve the species

The conservation measures include the protection of breeding sites, especially from human disturbances, but also the control of predatory mammals (especially foxes, Mink and Raccoon Dog). Hunting should be banned, the species should be deleted from Annex II of the EU Birds Directive.

### Common names

Denmark: Trolband, Estonia: Tuttvart, Finland: Tukkasotka, Germany: Reiherente, Latvia: Cekulainā nīrpīle, Lithuania: Kuoduotoji antis, Poland: Czernica, Russia: Хохлатая чернеть, Sweden: Vigg

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