

NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

Ring-necked Duck nests at Lake Alice, Clinton County – In middle to late May I observed six Ring-necked Ducks (*Aythya collaris*), four males and two females, at Lake Alice Wildlife Management Area in northern Clinton County. By this time Ring-necked Ducks have usually departed the area. On 20 June I visited Lake Alice and again I found four male Ring-necked Ducks still present. At this point I checked it off as a possible breeder for the Atlas Project. It also made me suspect that perhaps they would nest here. On 17 July, four males were observed in the open water part of the marsh and a female with seven downy young in cover along the shoreline. This therefore represents the northernmost known breeding site in the state for this species and one of only a few breeding sites outside the Adirondack Park boundary (Bull 1974).

On 17 July, the young appeared as if they were either late Class IB or early Class IIA (Bellrose 1976), or about 15-20 days old. At this point the nuptial plumage of the drakes looked as if it were fading.

Over the last two years Lake Alice has gone through a rapid change, with many more emergent cover plants appearing at the southern end of the lake. This appears to have been responsible for inducing the Ring-necked Ducks to nest here for the first time this year. The dominant vegetation at this end of the lake is a thin border of cattails along the shoreline with bulrush and spikerush as one proceeds away from the shoreline into open water. A fair amount of spatterdock was dispersed throughout the spikerush and bulrush. The optimal proportion of cover to open water for Wood Duck breeding habitat is 50:50 and 75:25 for brood cover (Golet and Larson 1974). The southern end of Lake Alice approaches this situation. The males at this point, ready to go through wing molt, also did not stray far from this excellent cover.

Literature Cited

- Bull, John. 1974. *Birds of New York State*. Doubleday/Natural History Press, Garden City, NY, p. 134-139.
- Bellrose, Frank C. 1976. *Ducks, Geese and Swans of North America*. Stackpole Books, p. 27.
- Golet, Francis C. and Joseph S. Larson, 1974. *Classification of Freshwater Wetlands in the Glaciated Northeast*. U.S. Fish Wildlife Service, Resource Publication 116. p. 15.

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