

## Canvasback - *Aythya valisineria*

Abundance: Uncommon

Status: NSS3 (Bb)

NatureServe: G5 S4B

Population Status: Distribution is restricted but extirpation is not imminent.

Limiting Factor: Habitat: limiting factor is severe.

Comment:

### Introduction

Breeding grounds are from Alaska to California and Nebraska with the highest densities in the prairie-parklands of southern Canada. Canvasbacks winter along the Atlantic Coast, Mississippi River delta and delta lakes in Louisiana, Gulf coast, and Pacific coast. In Wyoming, canvasbacks are much less common during the breeding season than during migration. Most of the breeding effort has been observed in the south-central and western portions of the state. The canvasback has low abundance in Wyoming and is considered an uncommon summer resident. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD) classifies the canvasback as a Species of Special Concern with a Native Species Status of 3 (NSS3) because its breeding population in Wyoming is restricted in numbers, habitat is restricted and vulnerable but no recent or on-going significant loss.

### Habitat

Canvasbacks are ecological specialists and require deep, open, permanent ponds, marshes and potholes for feeding, resting, and courtship activities. They are omnivorous and their diet consists of aquatic vegetation and aquatic invertebrates. Breeding may occur in small lakes, deep-water marshes, sheltered bays of large freshwater and alkali lakes, permanent and semi-permanent ponds, sloughs, potholes and shallow river impoundments. Females usually breed in their natal area and may either make a floating nest, or nest on top of a muskrat house. Nests are made of loosely woven reeds and sedges. In aspen parklands and mixed-grass prairies, the preferred breeding habitat is semipermanent and permanent, shallow marshes bordered by dense emergent vegetation, including bulrushes, cattails and reed grass. Brood rearing often takes place in the same habitat as breeding.

### Problems

- h There are no ongoing efforts to delineate important habitats in Wyoming.
- h Species is susceptible to impacts from energy development and other large-scale projects that destroy or impair suitable habitats.
- h Human encroachment of wetlands is impacting this species.
- h Heavy livestock grazing in wetland margins can adversely impact brood rearing habitat.
- h Population status and trends are not well-known in Wyoming, but the continental population appears stable.
- h Species may be susceptible to impacts caused by climate change.

### Conservation Actions

- h Integrate habitat management for this species and other wetland obligates to the extent possible.
- h Monitor population status and trends.
- h Work cooperatively with land management agencies and others to protect and manage key habitats.
- h Identify and delineate important habitats.
- h Protect important wetland areas on private lands through conservation easements.
- h Restore and create wetland habitats through available funding and mitigation programs.
- h Delay haying in locations where this species nests until after July 15.
- h Conserve grassland habitats by minimizing the conversion of native prairie to croplands, fragmentation, roads, urban development, exotic plants, and a shift in community ecology characteristics.

### Monitoring/Research

There is no ongoing monitoring or research in Wyoming.

#### Recent Developments

None.

#### References

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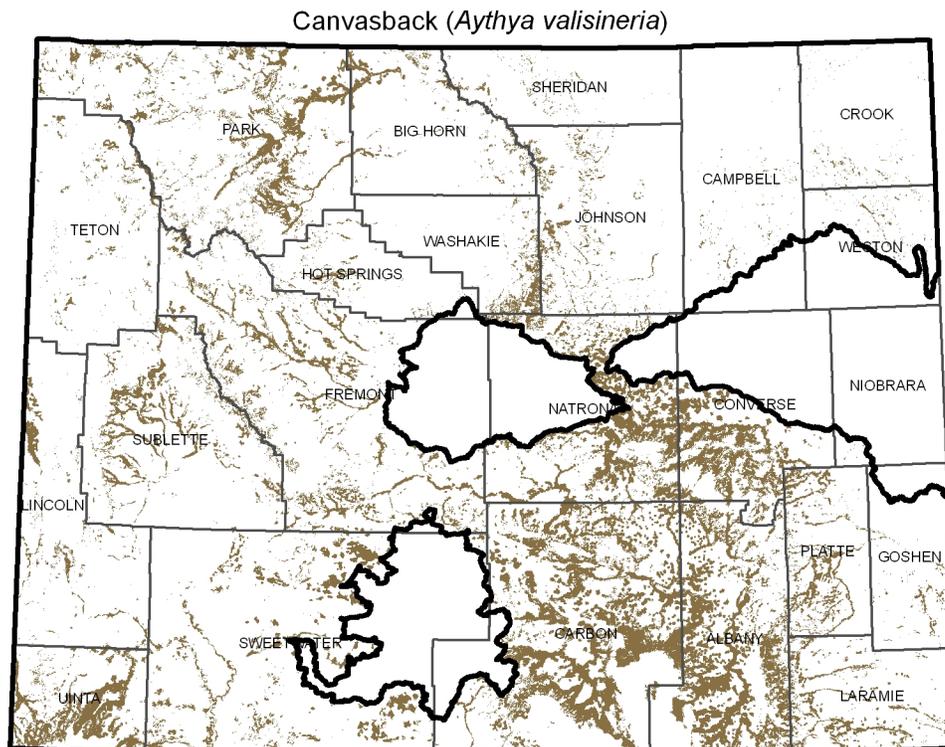
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SOURCE: Digital maps of ranges and predicted distributions for Wyoming Species of Greatest Conservation Need: April 2010. Wyoming Natural Diversity Database. University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming. Note that brown indicates the predicted distribution of the species; heavy black lines indicate outermost boundaries of possible occurrence.