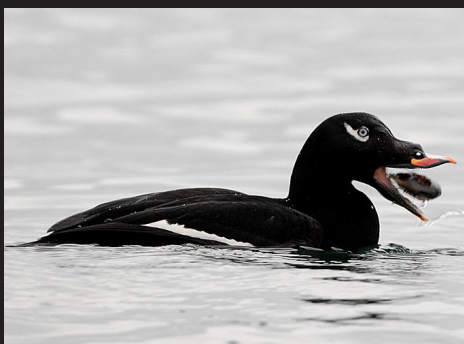


# Sea Ducks and Offshore Wind



## The Sea Duck Joint Venture

The Sea Duck Joint Venture (SDJV) is a conservation partnership formed in 1999 under the auspices of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. Its purpose is to improve knowledge about sea duck life histories and limiting factors to improve management and better address concerns about population declines. Partners include federal, state, and provincial wildlife agencies, academia, private conservation groups, and industries with a stake in sea duck resources. The SDJV provides seed money, coordination services, education and outreach to stimulate research and monitoring of sea ducks in North America. For more information about the SDJV, go to [www.seaduckjv.org](http://www.seaduckjv.org).

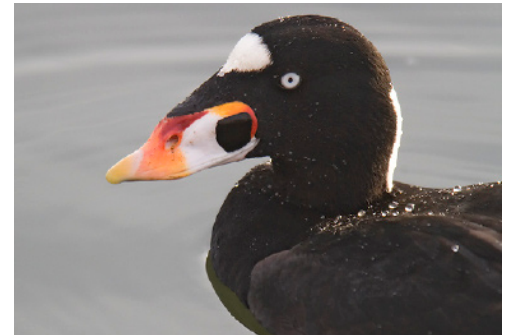


*White-winged Scoter eating a clam.*  
©Mike Yip

Development of renewable energy, including offshore wind, may be part of the solution to slow the impacts of global warming. The public will want to ensure that offshore wind energy is developed in a responsible manner to ensure healthy populations of marine species, including sea ducks, are maintained. To that end, the Sea Duck Joint Venture (SDJV) has launched a large scale collaborative study on sea duck migration and habitat use that will provide information to managers and developers to make better decisions about wind energy development, design and placement of turbines. We invite you to be a part of this exciting project.

## What Makes Sea Ducks Unique

Sea ducks spend a good part of the year in marine and near-shore environments. The habitats they find suitable for foraging are relatively shallow near-shore waters. Those habitats are often the same areas that are ideal for efficient wind energy development. Sea ducks are one of the most poorly understood groups of birds in North America. During summer, most breed in remote arctic or boreal habitats. During winter, many live offshore where they are not easily observed or surveyed.



*Surf Scoter.* ©Milo Burcham

## What Are the Major Concerns?

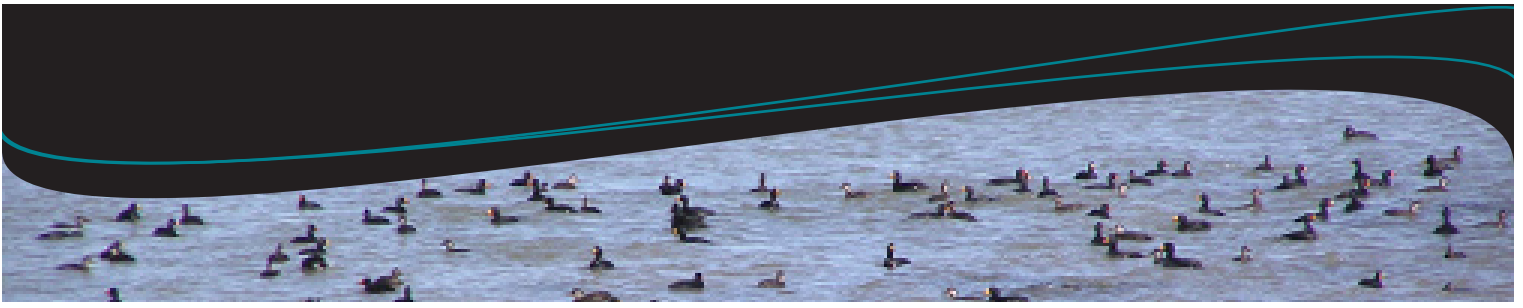
Concerns relative to sea ducks and wind energy development include their avoidance of wind farms, habitat alteration, collisions with above-water structures, and cumulative, long term impacts from multiple offshore wind development sites throughout their wintering range.

## What We Currently Know

Studies from Europe, where offshore wind projects have been in operation for years, have demonstrated that some sea ducks avoid wind farms. In certain instances the avoidance appears to be temporary. More than 20 offshore wind projects have been proposed or are under development along the U.S. Atlantic coast; however, little or no baseline data exist concerning sea duck use of proposed development sites.

## What Information is Needed to Make Better Decisions?

SDJV and partners recognize an urgent need to identify key areas and habitats that sea ducks use, both offshore and along the coast. A coordinated, comprehensive, and well-funded effort is needed to address these gaps and to provide the information necessary to guide the permitting process and mitigate potential adverse effects.



*Flock of Black Scoters. USFWS*

The Department of the Interior has launched a ‘Smart from the Start’ wind energy initiative for the Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf to facilitate the rapid and responsible development of this abundant renewable resource. This project supports the *smart planning* aspects of that initiative, and there’s no time to lose in answering these questions.

### What the SDJV is Currently Doing

The SDJV is conducting a flyway-wide collaborative study of sea duck migration and habitat use in the U.S. and Canada using state-of-the-art satellite transmitters to track duck movements throughout the year. About 300 sea ducks of four species (Black Scoter, Surf Scoter, White-winged Scoter, and Long-tailed Duck) will be marked with satellite transmitters along the Atlantic coast and in the Great Lakes. About 100 transmitters have already been deployed and are yielding excellent results; see [http://seaduckjv.org/atlantic\\_migration\\_study.html](http://seaduckjv.org/atlantic_migration_study.html). This study will help identify seasonal migration corridors and high priority use areas for sea ducks – information that can be used in risk assessments to ensure that offshore wind projects will be sited or engineered to minimize impacts to sea ducks.

### How Can You Help?

The SDJV would like to build upon the existing partnerships and collaborate with other stakeholders to provide sound science that will help guide responsible offshore wind development. The SDJV is putting nearly all of its available project funds toward this study, highlighting the great importance the SDJV places on this issue, but we need other stakeholders to invest in this project - partners such as Bureau of Ocean Energy and Management, the U.S. Offshore Wind Collaborative, other conservation groups, and the wind industry itself.



*Female Black Scoter with satellite transmitter: Josh Beuth*

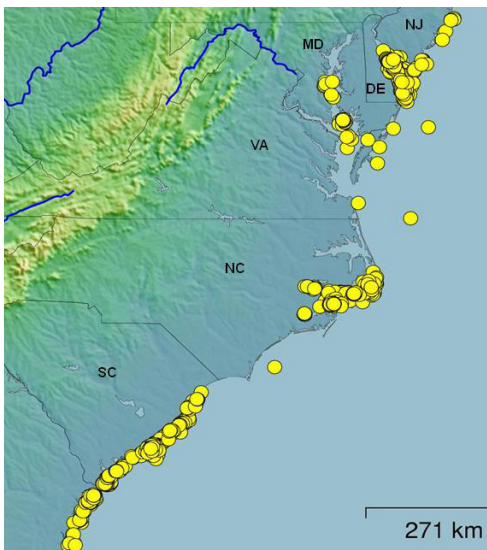


*Long-tailed Duck. ©E.J. Peiker at www.ejphoto.com*

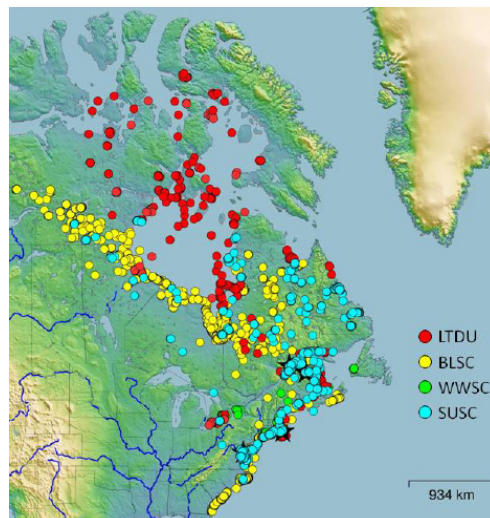
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*Locations of radio-marked Black Scoters along a section of the Atlantic coast.*



*Locations for Long-tailed Duck, White-winged Scoter, Surf Scoter, and Black Scoter tagged with satellite transmitters in 2009-2010.*



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