

Long-Tailed Duck — Aaraliq

AARALIT AMLERTUT IKANI.—THERE ARE A LOT OF LONG-TAILED DUCKS OVER THERE.

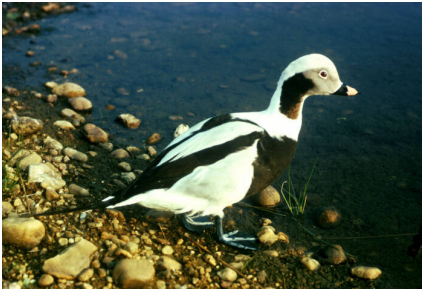


Photo: Female long-tailed duck, courtesy the USFWS
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The long-tailed duck (*Clangula hyemalis*) is a small, diving, sea duck. This species breeds in lakes and ponds across the high arctic, and then migrates south to winter in the waters along the north Pacific and north Atlantic coasts. The long-tailed duck is one of the most abundant arctic ducks and can be found in large flocks. They are particularly known for their chatter. Long-tailed ducks like to cackle and squawk. Males make most of the vocalizations using a three-note call. Their Alutiiq name, *aaraliq*, mimics this call.

The name long-tailed duck refers to the dramatic, long, black, tail feather of adult males. For many years, this name has been used to describe the species in its range outside of North America. Until recently, ornithologists in the United States and Canada used a different name. The old name referenced the birds chatter and used words offensive to Native American people, women, and the elderly. In 2000, the US Fish & Wildlife Service in Alaska petitioned the American Ornithologists' Union Committee on Classification and Nomenclature to change the name to long-tailed duck. They agreed. This change avoids hurtful stereotypes, and it makes it easier to discuss birds of the same species that live in different parts of the world.