

# **JANUARY WATERFOWL COUNT 2014**

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Approximately 257 volunteers went into the field 18-26 January 2014 to conduct the New York State Ornithological Association's 2014 January Waterfowl Count. The volunteers logged 714 hours and counted 361,146 waterfowl. Swift (2007) described the methodology of the count.

## **WEATHER CONDITIONS**

Weather data from Buffalo, Ithaca, Plattsburgh, Kingston, and Islip showed that throughout New York State, temperatures were normal in early December. They dropped below normal 11-19 Dec, rose above normal 21-23 Dec, and fell below normal 24-28 Dec. During January, the temperatures were below normal 1-10 Jan, above normal 11-14 Jan, normal 16-20 Jan, and below normal 21-26 Jan. Waterfowl Count volunteers were in the field 18-26 Jan, so they faced frigid temperatures for much of the count period.

## **RESULTS**

Bryan Swift was able to provide data for two of the four years (2009-2012) that have been missing from recent reports. With the 2009 and 2010 totals now in hand, I would like to compare the 2014 totals to the average of the previous decade (2001-2010).

The 2014 total count, mentioned above, was less than the decade average of 383,706. Nevertheless, it was well within the standard deviation for that decade. While the counts of geese, swans, dabbling ducks, and non-Anseriformes waterfowl were below the decade average, the diving duck count was above the decade average. The counts for these taxonomic groups were within the standard deviation for the previous decade with the exception of the swan count which fell just outside the standard deviation.

Counts for 13 species were above the previous decade's average. Counts for 25 species were below the previous decade's average. The counts for two species, the rare-in-winter Blue-winged Teal and Red-necked Grebe, were the same as the previous decade's averages.

Although more species were below the previous decade's average than above, eight species were higher than the average and outside the standard deviation for that decade. The counts of six species were below the average and outside the standard deviation. The eight species above their average counts were: Brant, Gadwall, Eurasian Wigeon, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Long-tailed Duck, and Hooded Merganser. The six species well below average were Mute Swan, American Wigeon, Canvasback, Surf Scoter, Double-crested Cormorant, and Great Cormorant. The 41,628 Redheads reported was the highest count on record for the Waterfowl Count, dating back to 1973.

## LONG-TERM TRENDS

While the record number of 2,140 Tundra Swans recorded in the 2013 count seemed to indicate an upward trend of the species in winter in New York State, the numbers recorded in 2009, 2010, and 2014 were much closer to the average of 857 for 2001-2010. Snow cover and the freezing of shallow waters are likely to affect the wintering population.

While Canvasback rebounded from the record low count recorded in 2013, the 2014 count was still well below the decade average for 2001-2010. Nearly all were found in Regions 1 and 3. The species continued to decline in Region 10.

The scaup counts were average to high in 2009, 2010, and 2014 while well below average in 2013. Most of the 2014 count came from Region 10, in contradiction to the trend noted there through much of the previous decade.

Hooded Mergansers were increasing through 2008, but that trend seemed to reverse base on 2009, 2010, and 2013 numbers. Their count for 2014, however, was the third highest on record.

## FUTURE COUNTS

You can help with the 2015 count by contacting your regional compiler. Compiler contact information and the historical data are available online at:

<http://nybirds.org/ProjWaterfowl.htm>

For planning purposes, the January Waterfowl Count is conducted in a period that begins the Saturday before Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (the third Monday in January). The next two count periods will be:

2015 – January 17-25 (target date Sunday, January 18)

2016 – January 16-24 (target date Sunday, January 17)

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thanks to everyone who participated in the 2014 January Waterfowl Count. The field observers again endured some very cold temperatures during the count period. Regional and local compilers and coordinators deserve special thanks for making sure that the state had good coverage and for compiling the data in a timely manner. The regional compilers, this year, were:

Region	Compiler	Region	Compiler
1	Jim Landau	6	Jerry LeTendre
2	Robert Spahn	7	Gary Lee
3	Thomas Bell	8	Bryan Swift
4	Gail Kirch	9	Thomas Burke
5	Bill Purcell	10	Ronald Borque

## LITERATURE CITED

Swift, B. L. 2007. January waterfowl counts, 2005-2007, and some observations on long-term trends. *Kingbird* 57:198-213.

Table 1. Regional totals for the 2014 January Waterfowl Count.

Species	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
Goose, White-fronted	0	0	0		0		0	0	0	10	
Snow/Ross'	0	0	1,018		3		1	0	0	82	1,104
Canada/Cackling	4,543	15,836	38,802	1,530	5320	232	6	1,346	1,484	45,993	115,092
Brant	0	0	0		0		0	0	12	24,301	24,313
Swan, Mute	8	83	0	1	7	53	0	0	32	1,037	1,221
Trumpeter	0	0	0		0		0	0	0	0	0
Tundra	180	0	591		16		0	0	0	2	789
Wood Duck	0	2	0	1	3		0	0	2	29	37
Gadwall	29	44	156	11	14	3	0	0	368	1,954	2,579
Wigeon, Eurasian	0	0	0		0		0	0	1	16	17
American	13	0	14		0		0	0	110	672	809
Am. Black Duck	156	499	1,233	303	86	123	37	88	281	8,518	11,324
Mallard	3,869	7,402	6,510	1,374	2455	501	678	1,024	360	9,887	34,060
Mallard X Black	5	5	10	1	0		1	0	2	42	66
Blue-winged Teal	0	0	0		0		0	0	0	4	4
Northern Shoveler	0	0	0		0		0	0	10	288	298
Northern Pintail	0	3	3	2	0		0	0	0	92	100
Green-winged Teal	0	0	0	1	0		0	0	1	183	185
Canvasback	4,998	53	1,107	1	6	2	0	0	5	223	6,395
Redhead	510	1,035	39,356	100	307	230	2	0	5	83	41,628
Ring-necked Duck	6	657	875	208	26	13	107	0	10	788	2,690
Tufted Duck	0	0	0		0		0	0	0	0	0
Scaup, Greater	5,754	1,806	166		576	182	203	0	1,493	32,551	42,731
Lesser	61	297	2,015	7	22	1	2,226	5	155	826	5,615
not to species	2	257	1,017		6		0	0	0	2,182	3,464

Species	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
Eider, King	1	2	0		1		0	0	0	2	6
Common	0	0	0		0		0	0	0	724	724
Harlequin Duck	0	0	0		0		0	0	0	3	3
Scoter, Surf	2	7	0		0		0	0	1	425	435
White-winged	253	684	12	1	239		0	0	28	3,121	4,338
Black	2	0	2		0		0	0	0	199	203
not to species	0	0	0		0		0	0	0	539	539
Long-tailed Duck	906	1,550	24		289	109	0	0	220	8,335	11,433
Bufflehead	2,865	60	243	3	119	133	169	0	314	4,974	8,880
Goldeneye, Common	2,638	1,466	1,051	94	629	1,119	4,210	41	71	1,062	12,381
Barrow's	0	0	0		0		0	0	0	2	2
Merganser, Hooded	149	2	55	195	104	24	18	8	78	1,671	2,304
Common	2,979	1,138	2,069	494	1490	490	268	137	2	143	9,210
Red-breasted	3,195	2,972	83	1	1060	44	16	0	152	2,264	9,787
Ruddy Duck	11	0	7	2	0		0	0	26	2,943	2,989
Loon, Red-throated	1	0	0		0		0	0	5	129	135
Common	0	0	2		1		2	0	7	263	275
Grebe, Pied-billed	2	0	25		9		0	0	0	50	86
Horned	14	9	20		4	1	30	1	31	306	416
Red-necked	0	0	0		1		0	0	2	5	8
Eared	0	0	0		0		0	0	0	0	0
Cormorant, D.-crested	21	1	5		23		0	0	0	105	155
Great	0	0	0		0		0	0	18	24	42
American Coot	275	123	717	51	112		0	0	2	325	1,605
Other/Unidentified	411	1	49		0	51	0	0	0	147	659
TOTAL OF ABOVE	33,859	35,994	97,237	4,381	12928	3,311	7,974	2,650	5,288	157,524	361,146

Table 2. Comparison of 2014 January Waterfowl Counts to ten-year and long-term averages.

Species	2014	Avg '01-'10	% Diff.	Avg '73-'10	% Diff.
Goose, White-fronted	10	6	79	2	544
Blue		0		0	-100
Snow	1,104	12,944	-91	3,618	-69
Ross's		0	-100	0	-100
Canada	115,090	143,674	-20	88,989	29
Cackling	2				
Brant	24,313	16,519	47	15,480	57
Swan, Mute	1,221	1,682	-27	1,341	-8.9
Trumpeter	0	42	-100	11	-100
Tundra	789	857	-8	261	202
Wood Duck	37	46	-19	38	-2.2
Gadwall	2,579	1,520	70	1,066	142
Wigeon, Eurasian	17	4	336	3	472
American	809	1,319	-39	1,563	-48
Am. Black Duck	11,324	12,141	-7	17,804	-36
Mallard	34,060	39,594	-14	34,275	-0.6
Mallard X Black	66	186	-64	86	-24
Blue-winged Teal	4	4	-2	4	2.7
Northern Shoveler	298	451	-34	288	3.3
Northern Pintail	100	149	-33	198	-49
Green-winged Teal	185	261	-29	269	-31
Canvasback	6,395	14,722	-57	11,723	-45
Redhead	41,628	15,601	167	9,585	334
Ring-necked Duck	2,690	1,321	104	663	306
Tufted Duck	0	4	-100	2	-100
Scaup, Greater	42,731	32,549	31	28,180	52
Lesser	5,615	2,538	121	1,415	297
not to species	3,464	6,367	-46	18,320	-81
Eider, King	6	8	-20	7	-12
Common	724	1,183	-39	1,094	-34
Harlequin Duck	3	14	-79	8	-63
Scoter, Surf	435	6,028	-93	3,112	-86
White-winged	4,338	5,502	-21	7,145	-39
Black	203	3,488	-94	1,332	-85
not to species	539	3,192	-83	2,320	-77
Long-tailed Duck	11,433	6,854	67	5,035	127
Bufflehead	8,880	8,287	7	6,658	33
Goldeneye, Common	12,381	15,701	-21	13,189	-6.1
Barrow's	2	18	-89	6	-67
Merganser, Hooded	2,304	1,766	30	888	160
Common	9,210	10,211	-10	11,132	-17
Red-breasted	9,787	7,552	30	5,142	90
not to species		0	#DIV/0!	0	-100
Ruddy Duck	2,989	3,808	-22	2,395	25
Loon, Red-throated	135	298	-55	109	24
Common	275	367	-25	216	27
Yellow-billed		0	#DIV/0!	0	-100
not to species		0	#DIV/0!	0	-100

Species	2014	Avg '01-'10	% Diff.	Avg '73-'10	% Diff.
Grebe, Pied-billed	86	82	5	80	7.4
Horned	416	479	-13	387	7.4
Red-necked	8	8	-5	5	70
Eared	0	1	-100	0	-100
Cormorant, D.-crested	155	261	-41	155	-0.2
Great	42	130	-68	165	-74
not to species		0	#DIV/0!	1	-100
American Coot	1,605	2,252	-29	2,025	-21
unidentified	659	1,720	-62	1,221	-46



Three species of *Bucephala* (Common Goldeneye at upper left, Barrow's Goldeneye at lower right, and Bufflehead at upper right), Point Breeze, *Orleans*, 1 Jan 2014, © Dominic Sherony. A male Barrow's Goldeneye has been spending the winter in this general area for the past the past 11 years, initially just west of Hamlin Beach in December of 2004 (Kingbird 2005 (No. 2) 55:171).