

NEW YORK STATE WATERFOWL COUNT, JANUARY 1975

DOUGLAS M. AUER

Unseasonably mild temperatures may have affected the results of the annual waterfowl count held 11-19 January. Another factor may have been high winds on the larger lakes during the count period, reducing observer visibility. The total count was 225,900 individuals, or a reduction of 1.4% from 1974. By way of comparison, the aerial survey conducted by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation during the same period rose 2.6% over last year.

Apparently, the warm weather kept some diving ducks in Canada which might account for a decrease in the scaup count of 21%. Other significant decreases were in Redhead, Bufflehead, and Oldsquaw.

Noteworthy changes which might be termed peculiar were found in Region No. 1 where the Common Merganser count fell by more than 10,000 birds, or an astounding 76%, and in Region No. 3 where the Canada Goose total rose almost 10,000, for a remarkable increase of 583%.

Long Island (Region No. 10) reported the lowest count ever, despite greater numbers of Canada Goose and Brant. The scaup total which sometimes accounts for half of that region's ducks was off the same 20% shown in the rest of the state.

The table that follows is for those species only that tallied over one thousand individuals in the ground survey. For the sake of comparison, the table also shows the results for the same species as compiled during the aerial survey. It is offered without comment.

	Upstate		Long Island	
	Aerial	Ground	Aerial	Ground
Canada Goose	4,363	12,978	4,881	7,561
Brant	0	0	24,045	16,305
Mallard	2,807	9,135	3,467	9,844
Black	6,270	3,200	12,756	16,535
Wigeon	80	174	530	2,039
Redhead	7,970	6,559	15	99
Canvasback	7,435	8,788	1,500	10,766
Scaup	14,980	5,729	59,332	70,426
Goldeneye	2,132	7,946	320	2,886
Bufflehead	80	768	2,627	2,965
Oldsquaw	110	554	800	1,717

	Upstate		Long Island	
	Aerial	Ground	Aerial	Ground
Scoter (all species)	0	217	1,618	8,584
Mergansers (all species)	15,387	8,255	6,705	2,432
Coot	895	1,461	530	1,582
Totals	62,509	65,754	119,126	153,741

I would like to thank all people who participated. The regional organizers were:

Region 1—Dr. Allen M. Reckhew	Region 6—Robert C. Walker
Region 2—Walter Listman	Region 7—John Peterson
Region 3—Douglas Auer	Region 8—Guy Bartlett
Region 4—Leslie E. Bemont	Region 9—Paul Grattan
Region 5—Dr. Fritz G. Scheider	Region 10—Stephen B. Dempsey

220 Devon Road, Ithaca, New York 14850

(Editor's Note—The waterfowl census was first established by the New York State Department of Conservation in 1949. It was done, and is still being done by that agency, as an aerial survey.

In 1955, the Federation took its first annual waterfowl count to augment and supplement the count taken by the New York State Department of Conservation. It was, of course, done as a ground survey.

The census is taken at the time in January when duck movement is at a minimum and usually the smaller bodies of water frozen, forcing the ducks into larger bodies of water in concentrated numbers, thus making the count easier.

The result of this census, along with much other data gathered by state and federal agencies both on the breeding grounds and the Atlantic flyway, is used to determine open seasons, lengths of seasons, and bag limits. Actually the census result is probably the least scientific and the least important factor in these decisions. The sportsman has a tendency to read too much into the bare annual winter inventory figures as taken by the combined efforts of New York State and the Federation.)

GROUND SURVEY – JANUARY 1975
FEDERATION OF NEW YORK STATE BIRD CLUBS

Species	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	TOTAL
Common Loon		1	8	1	7		3			202	222
Red-throated Loon					1		22			20	43
Red-necked Grebe					1					2	3
Horned Grebe	8	6	219		4	1			2	516	756
Pied-billed Grebe			26		2				19	87	134
Mute Swan							4		12	642	658
Whistling Swan		21			1	3				10	35
Canada Goose	35	159	11,479	126	151	400			628	7,561	20,574
Brant										16,305	16,305
Snow Goose										8	8
Blue Goose		1								1	2
Mallard	780	2,004	3,175	231	1,422	90	3	99	1,331	9,844	18,979
Black Duck	349	251	1,646	105	175	151	37	306	180	16,535	19,735
Mallard x Black			5		4					9	18
Gadwall	118		3		7	1		10		848	987
Pintail	12		5		3				1	400	421
Green-winged Teal	1		2							410	413
Blue-winged Teal					2					30	32
American Wigeon	171	1				1			1	2,039	2,213
European Wigeon										1	1

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	TOTAL
Shoveler										192	192
Wood Duck	1	1	3		1				4	53	63
Redhead	140	17	6,398		2				2	99	6,658
Ring-necked Duck	1	5	19		1	2			81	96	205
Canvasback	4,713	178	2,107		13		1,270		507	10,766	19,554
Scaup, all	2,676	871	873	2	1,232	37	15		23	70,428	76,157
Common Goldeneye	4,369	1,289	747	16	572	227	725	1		2,886	10,832
Bufflehead	228	169	305		21	1	30		14	2,965	3,733
Oldsquaw	123	83	81		154	112			1	1,717	2,271
Harlequin	1										1
Common Eider										8	8
King Eider					2		3			15	20
White-winged Scoter		200				6	5			4,517	4,728
Surf Scoter					1	1				687	689
Common Scoter	2		1		1					776	780
Scoter (spp)										2,387	2,387
Ruddy Duck									394	348	742
Hooded Merganser	6	3	17		7	2			34	129	198
Common Merganser	3,158	69	173	10	625	3,920	18	15	32	63	8,083
Red-breasted Merganser	83	23	19		20	1				2,240	2,386
Coot	8	187	963		14				289	1,582	3,043
Unidentified		43	236	2	4			1,000		346	1,631
TOTAL	16,984	5,582	28,510	493	4,451	4,956	2,135	1,431	3,555	157,770	225,900

AERIAL SURVEY — JANUARY 1975
NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT
OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

	Upstate	Long Island	Totals
Mute Swan	25	695	720
Whistling Swan	2	0	2
Canada Goose	4,363	4,881	9,224
Brant	0	24,045	24,045
Mallard	2,807	3,467	6,274
Black Duck	6,270	12,756	19,026
Gadwall	0	10	10
Pintail	0	26	26
Green-winged Teal	0	210	210
Shoveler	0	126	126
American Wigeon	80	530	610
Redhead	7,970	15	7,985
Canvasback	7,435	1,500	8,935
Scaup (all species)	14,980	59,332	74,312
Common Goldeneye	2,131	320	2,451
Bufflehead	80	2,627	2,707
Oldsquaw	110	800	910
Scoters (all species)	0	1,618	1,618
Ruddy Duck	80	0	80
Mergansers			
(all species)	15,387	6,705	22,092
Coot	895	530	1,425
Totals	62,615	120,193	182,808