

NEW YORK STATE WATERFOWL COUNT, JANUARY 1982

WALTON B. SABIN

The Federation of New York State Bird Clubs, Inc., Waterfowl Count for 1982 was conducted from 9 January through 17 January, with 10 January as the target date. A few observers did not complete their voluntary assignments until 24 January, with one not done until 31 January. The count period was true to form, with a repeat of last year's subzero temperatures and accompanying bad weather, particularly in the western part of the state in regions 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6. As an example of the adverse weather conditions encountered, observers reported "The target date of January 10 was a complete bust. Cold, 0° to -10°, strong northerly winds and ice on Lake" [Ontario] "also snow squalls almost all day," and "The weekend of January 17 was about the same, plus much vapor" over "the water on the 17th making visibility completely blocked out over 50 to 100 yards." And, "—finally went out on the 30th. By 9:30 it was snowing and by noon a blizzard." Notwithstanding these hardships, the total count for 1982 (Table I) was up 1.4% over 1981 to 173,301, but still 12.7% below the 1973-1981 average of 198,494.

Comparing 1982 to 1981 count figures (Table II) for the more common species, reveals that all except Canada Geese, Redheads and Red-breasted Mergansers showed decreases, with American Wigeons and Common Mergansers exhibiting decreases greater than 30%. Canada Geese, Redheads and Red-breasted Mergansers were up by 69.0%, 282.7% and 44.0%, respectively, over 1981. These increases more than offset all other decreases, so that the 1982 total is greater than the 1981 total. Both Canada Geese and Redheads are rebounding toward their numbers of 1980, but still have a way to go.

Comparing 1982 count figures to the 1973-1981 averages for these same common species (Table III) shows eleven species below average, while only three species, Canada Goose, Brant and Red-breasted Merganser, above the average of the preceding nine years.

For the Atlantic Flyway (Maine to Florida inclusive), total Federal and State waterfowl population counts decreased 8.2%, with the greatest decreases being in Canada Geese (-26.4%), Mallards (-27.8%), American Wigeons (-25.8%), Redheads (-54.8%), Buffleheads (-32.1%), Ruddy Ducks (-34.3%), scoters (-39.6%) and Oldsquaws (-63.3%). These decreases were not quite offset by increases in Mute Swans

(+27.4%), Green-winged Teals (+76.3%), scaups (+37.5%), Ring-necked Ducks (+75.0%) and American Coots (+37.9%).

The Department of Environmental Conservation aerial survey is shown in Table IV without comment.

The 1983 Federation Waterfowl Count dates are from 15 January through 23 January, with Sunday, 16 January, as the target date.

I wish to thank the upwards of one hundred observers who participated in such bitter cold weather. Special thanks also to the regional compilers who coordinated all these volunteers. The regional compilers are:

Region 1 — Alan Reckhow
Region 2 — Warren Lloyd
Region 3 — John Confer
Region 4 — Leslie Bemont
Region 5 — Fritz Scheider

Region 6 — Lee Chamberlaine
Region 7 — John Peterson
Region 8 — Paul Grattan
Region 9 — Edward Treacy
Region 10 — Stephen Dempsey

652 Kenwood Avenue, Slingerlands, New York 12159-0044.

TABLE I

<u>REGIONS</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>Total</u>
Loon, Common	1				2					55	58
Grebe, Horned			26		1		1		1	24	53
Red-necked			1								1
Pied-billed	3		4		1				2	11	21
Cormorant, Great										28	28
Double-crested										17	17
cormorant sp.										23	23
Swan, Mute									225	566	791
Goose, Canada	45	222	19,416	134	641	201	444	346	1,889	13,588	36,926
Brant								3		10,714	10,717
Goose, Snow							1		1	2	4
Mallard	3,044	1,128	3,301	334	1,103	123	93	888	1,163	7,877	19,054
Black Duck	299	53	986	302	435	55	220	477	298	14,190	17,315
Mallard x Black			14		4	1				6	25
Gadwall	21		5		6	2			12	288	334
Pintail	1						1	9		138	149
Green-winged Teal					2					181	183
American Wigeon	47		6						2	1,442	1,497
Northern Shoveler										61	61
Wood Duck	1		7						1	14	23
Duck (sp?)			100					865	30	170	1,165
Redhead	103	8	5,808		2	7			1	33	5,962

<u>REGIONS</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>Total</u>
Ring-necked Duck	1		1		2	1			55	68	128
Canvasback	2,703	7	2,468	1	3		606	40	320	3,480	9,628
Scaup, Greater	2,127	712	308		1,700	1	5		52	32,731	37,636
Lesser	7	1	48		5					297	358
scaup sp.			212						28	1,082	1,322
Tufted Duck										1	1
Goldeneye, Common	3,154	1,674	637	57	498	327	579	18	58	1,546	8,548
Barrow's	1				1					1	3
Bufflehead	100	20	169		96		15		52	2,392	2,844
Oldsquaw	32	2,006	2		22	11				674	2,747
Harlequin Duck										6	6
Eider, Common										54	54
King		1			1					6	8
Scoter, Surf										571	571
White-winged	3	131					1			2,792	2,927
Black	2									263	265
Ruddy Duck									3	465	468
Merganser, Hooded	3	1	4	1	9				17	195	230
Common	1,370	749	108	58	1,595	2,216	820	78	838	19	7,851
Red-breasted	11	4	15		8	2				2,343	2,383
American Coot	<u>5</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>509</u>						<u>55</u>	<u>346</u>	<u>916</u>
TOTALS	13,084	6,718	34,155	887	6,137	2,947	2,786	2,724	5,103	98,760	173,301

TABLE II

Comparison of 1982 with 1981, for all species totaling over 1,000 individuals in 1982, and showing the percent change from 1981 to 1982.

SPECIES	1982	1981	% CHANGE
Canada Goose	36,926	21,843	+ 69.0
Brant	10,717	14,218	- 24.6
Mallard	19,054	21,627	- 11.9
Black Duck	17,315	17,953	- 3.6
American Wigeon	1,497	1,887	- 20.7
Redhead	5,962	1,558	+282.7
Canvasback	9,628	9,723	- 1.0
Scaup (both)	39,316	41,575	- 5.4
Goldeneye (both)	8,551	8,643	- 1.1
Bufflehead	2,844	4,785	- 40.6
Oldsquaw	2,747	3,328	- 17.5
Scoters (all three)	3,763	4,813	- 21.8
Common Merganser	7,851	11,772	- 33.3
Red-breasted Merganser	<u>2,383</u>	<u>1,655</u>	+ 44.0
TOTALS	168,554	165,380	+ 1.9

TABLE III

Comparison of the 1982 count with the 1973-1981 average, for the same species as in Table II, and showing the percent change from the average.

SPECIES	1982	Average 1973-1981	% CHANGE
Canada Goose	36,926	22,983	+ 60.7
Brant	10,717	10,468	+ 2.4
Mallard	19,054	19,775	- 3.6
Black Duck	17,315	18,655	- 7.2
American Wigeon	1,497	2,177	- 3.1
Redhead	5,962	6,451	- 7.6
Canvasback	9,628	12,071	- 20.2
Scaup (both)	39,316	63,503	- 38.1
Goldeneye (both)	8,551	12,108	- 29.4
Bufflehead	2,844	4,223	- 32.7
Oldsquaw	2,747	2,836	- 3.1
Scoters (all three)	3,763	11,897	- 68.4
Common Merganser	7,851	10,872	- 27.8
Red-breasted Merganser	<u>2,383</u>	<u>2,020</u>	+ 18.0
TOTALS	168,554	200,039	- 15.7

TABLE IV
STATE OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION
AERIAL SURVEY – JANUARY 5-22, 1982

SPECIES	Upstate	Long Island	Totals
Mute Swan	71	996	1,067
Canada Goose	30,396	8,582	38,978
Brant		14,925	14,925
Mallard	9,057	2,583	11,640
Black Duck	9,015	10,600	19,615
American Wigeon		168	168
Redhead	7,591		7,591
Canvasback	7,237	4,145	11,382
Scaup (both)	7,546	32,805	40,351
Common Goldeneye	6,729	1,921	8,650
Bufflehead	32	979	1,011
Oldsquaw	615	141	756
Scoters (all three)	6	6,619	6,625
Ruddy Duck		135	135
Mergansers (all three)	34,686	2,093	36,779
American Coot	<u>318</u>		<u>318</u>
TOTALS	113,299	86,692	199,991