

NEW YORK STATE WATERFOWL COUNT, JANUARY 1984

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The Federation of New York State Bird Clubs, Inc., held the 1984 winter Waterfowl Count from 14 January through 22 January, with 15 January as the target date. All Regions completed their counts within the established dates.

The count period this year was kinder weatherwise than the last two years. Although there was some bitter cold weather, the two weekends were basically sunny. Exceptions are always the case east of Lake Erie and Lake Ontario, where snowfall can be expected when there is none elsewhere. Although the count did not set a record for the grand total, most observers felt results were better than average. The grand total count for 1984 (Table I) was down 9.7% from 1983 to 237,098, but still a worthy 18.7% above the eleven year average (1973-1983) of 199,713.

Comparing 1984 to 1983 count figures (Table II), the commoner species showed decreases for all listed species except Canada Goose, Canvasback, Redhead and scaup, which is especially encouraging for both Canvasback and Redhead.

Next, comparing 1984 figures with the 1973-1983 average (Table III) only Brant, American Wigeon, Oldsquaw, all three scoters and American Coot were down markedly from their eleven year averages. Brant in the Atlantic Flyway (Maine to Florida) were up slightly, which might indicate that some Brant migrated through to New Jersey or Virginia, the two states having the greatest numbers, instead of staying in New York. The same could be said for American Coot, except the greatest numbers were recorded in Florida. Oldsquaw and the three scoters, all being "sea ducks," could be easily missed. There is a lot of ocean out there! As for American Wigeon, the Atlantic Flyway is showing a 29.4% decrease compared to 1983 and an even greater decrease of 38.5% from the five year average (1979-1983). This species, perhaps, bears watching. Of the other ten species, six show substantial increases over their eleven year averages, while the remaining four show fluctuations which are to be expected.

The Department of Environmental Conservation 1984 aerial survey, which was delayed due to poor visibility and flying conditions caused by snowstorms, wind and ice fog, and conducted from 3 January to 23 January is presented in Table IV. Table V compares 1983 aerial survey results with 1984. These data are offered without comment.

The 1985 Federation Waterfowl Count dates are from 12 through 20 January, with Sunday, 13 January, as the target date.

I wish to thank the upwards of one hundred observers who participate each year. A special thanks also to the regional compilers who coordinated all those volunteers. The regional compilers are:

Region 1 - Alan Reckhow

2 - Warren Lloyd

3 - Eric Donohue*

4 - Leslie Bemont

5 - Fritz Scheider

Region 6 - Lee Chamberlaine

7 - John Peterson

8 - Paul Grattan

9 - Edward Treacy

10 - Stephen Dempsey

*A warm welcome to Eric. He has replaced John Confer who has served well and, because of many other duties, has had to relinquish his compiler's position. Thanks, John.

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SPECIES[illegible]

FALL, 1984

American	1	2	16							813	832
Duck sp?			860							1,021	1,881
Canvasback	5,886	2	730		75	4			919	8,142	15,758
Redhead	337	2	7,833		84			10	7	58	8,331
Ring-necked Duck			2		1				17	73	93
Scaup, not to spec.			782							14,532	15,312
Greater	804	2,393	45	1	1,347	500	1		2	50,132	55,225
Lesser	24	1	6		8				1	286	326
Eider, Common										2	2
King										2	2
Harlequin Duck										5	5
Oldsquaw	765	164			78	82				1,235	2,324
Scoter, Black										78	78
Surf					1					134	135
White-winged	15	141			19					1,728	1,903
Goldeneye, Common	4,084	1,093	488	50	1,039	685	224	7	209	3,197	11,076
Barrow's	1						1			1	3
Bufflehead	308	75	234		111	8	8	2	36	3,592	4,374
Merganser, Hooded	1		16		3			1	1	224	246
Common	2,046	599	105	43	2,189	270	269	159	6,778	9	12,467
Red-breasted	689	136	20	2	131	1				3,498	4,477
Ruddy Duck									2	648	650
Mallard x ?				3							3
American Coot	26		688		1				78	523	1,316
Gadwall x ?										1	1
TOTALS	18,748	6,829	49,619	541	7,732	1,686	1,128	1,490	12,516	136,310	237,098

TABLE II

Comparison of 1984 with 1983, for all species totalling over 1,000 individuals in 1983, and showing the per cent change from 1983 to 1984.

Species	1984	1983	% change
Brant	6,138	20,428	— 70.0
Canada Goose	47,565	40,727	+ 16.8
American Black Duck	16,826	19,535	— 13.9
Mallard	26,688	27,101	— 1.5
American Wigeon	832	2,373	— 64.9
Canvasback	15,758	11,087	+ 42.1
Redhead	8,331	6,553	+ 27.1
Scaup (both)	70,863	62,451	+ 13.5
Oldsquaw	2,324	4,473	— 48.0
Scoter (all three)	2,116	7,520	— 71.9
Goldeneye (both)	11,079	12,278	— 9.8
Bufflehead	4,374	7,008	— 37.6
Common Merganser	12,467	29,809	— 58.2
Red-breasted Merganser	4,477	5,003	— 10.5
American Coot	1,316	1,506	— 12.6
TOTALS	231,154	257,852	— 10.4

TABLE III

Comparison of the 1984 count with the 1973-1983 average for the same species as in Table II, and showing the per cent change from the average.

Species	1984	Average 1973-1983	% change
Brant	6,138	11,396	— 46.1
Canada Goose	47,565	25,863	+ 83.9
American Black Duck	16,826	18,613	— 9.6
Mallard	26,688	20,375	+ 31.0
American Wigeon	832	2,133	— 61.0
Canvasback	15,758	11,758	+ 34.0
Redhead	8,331	6,416	+ 29.8
Scaup (both)	70,863	61,208	+ 15.8
Oldsquaw	2,324	2,976	— 21.9
Scoter (all three)	2,116	10,760	— 80.3
Goldeneye (both)	11,079	11,798	— 6.1
Bufflehead	4,374	4,350	+ 0.6
Common Merganser	12,467	12,319	+ 1.2
Red-breasted Merganser	4,477	2,324	+ 92.6
American Coot	1,316	2,004	— 34.3
TOTALS	231,154	204,299	+ 13.1

TABLE IV

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
Aerial Count - 3-23 January, 1984

All species of about 1,000 individuals and more

Species	Upstate	Long Island	Total
Mute Swan	10	1,225	1,235
Brant		2,427	2,427
Canada Goose	48,425	10,036	58,461
American Black Duck	7,400	11,701	19,101
Mallard	11,039	2,527	13,566
Canvasback	3,872	5,080	8,952
Redhead	5,650	2	5,652
Scaup (both)	10,805	27,582	38,387
Oldsquaw	2,627	1,104	3,731
Scoter (all three)	592	8,567	9,159
Goldeneye (both)	7,176	2,486	9,662
Bufflehead		1,061	1,061
Merganser (all three)	20,250	5,715	25,965
TOTALS	117,846	79,513	197,359

Note: NO American Wigeons, Ruddy Ducks or American Coots were recorded.

TABLE V

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
1983 and 1984 Aerial Counts Compared

All species of about 1,000 individuals and more

Species	1984	1983	% change
Mute Swan	1,235	977	+ 26.4
Brant	2,427	12,561	— 80.7
Canada Goose	58,461	83,711	— 30.2
American Black Duck	19,101	20,273	— 5.8
Mallard	13,566	35,288	— 61.6
Canvasback	8,952	8,105	+ 10.5
Redhead	5,652	4,075	+ 38.7
Scaup (both)	38,387	29,688	+ 29.3
Scoter (all three)	9,159	1,364	+ 571.5
Goldeneye (both)	9,662	11,030	— 12.4
Bufflehead	1,061	1,131	— 6.2
Merganser (all three)	25,965	27,947	— 7.1
TOTALS	193,628	236,150	— 18.0