

NEW YORK STATE WATERFOWL COUNT, JANUARY 1985

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The Federation of New York State Bird Clubs, Inc., held the 1985 winter Waterfowl Count from 12 January through 20 January, with 13 January as the target date. All regions completed their counts within the established dates.

The count period this year was mild and bodies of water almost universally were open. Exceptions are always the case in the vicinity of the Great Lakes, where snowfall can be expected when there is none elsewhere. Although the count did not set a record for the grand total, most observers, except for Region 3, felt results were better than average. The grand total count for 1985 (Table I) was up 1.1% from 1984 to 239,656, and still a respectable 18.2% above the twelve year average (1973-1984) of 202,828.

Comparing 1985 to 1984 count figures (Table II), the commoner species showed increases for all listed species except Canvasback, Redhead, Scaup, Red-breasted Merganser and American Coot. Next, comparing 1985 figures with the 1973-1984 average (Table III) only American Wigeon, Canvasback, Redhead, Scaup, all three scoters and American Coot were down markedly from their twelve year averages.

All geese in the Atlantic Flyway (Maine to Florida) were up 9.5% over 1984, which indicates that some had a very good nesting season. The same cannot be said for the dabbling ducks or the diving ducks, which were down 7.9% and 9.7% from 1984 figures, respectively, for the flyway. In contrast to the ducks, American Coot were up 35.3% with 90.4% of the population occurring in the states of Georgia and Florida. As for the American Wigeon, the Atlantic Flyway is showing a further decrease of 11.5% compared to 1984 and an even greater decrease of 42.3% from the five year average (1980-1984). This species, perhaps, bears watching.

The Department of Environmental Conservation 1985 aerial survey was delayed due to poor visibility and flying conditions caused by wind and snowstorms. It was conducted from 9 January to 18 February. The results are presented in Table IV. Table V compares 1984 with 1985 aerial survey results. These data are offered without comment.

The 1986 Federation Waterfowl Count dates are from 11 through 19 January, with Sunday, 12 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	6 - Lee Chamberlaine
	2 - Warren Lloyd	7 - John Peterson
	3 - Eric Donohue	8 - Paul Grattan
	4 - Leslie Bemont	9 - Edward Treacy
	5 - Fritz Scheider	10 - Stephen Dempsey

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TABLE I

SPECIES	REGIONS										TOTAL
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	
Loon, Red throated										4	4
Common	1		16		5	1	6		1	44	74
Grebe, Pied-billed	3	1	9		3				1	40	57
Horned	5	4	17				10			268	304
Cormorant, not to spec.										23	23
Great										196	196
Double-crested		1								59	60
Swan, Tundra		20									20
Mute		1									
Goose, Snow								2	145	915	1,063
Brant									6	22	28
Canada	1,093	201	10,224		625	1	730	2,358	11,946	16,402	16,402
Wood Duck		1	1		1	1			3	24	31
Green-winged Teal	1	4								266	271
Am. Black Duck	284	167	1,681	435	230	29	159	2,140	653	12,846	18,624
Mallard	2,631	1,493	8,494	829	2,310	93	294	2,038	2,610	8,575	29,367
Mallard x Black			12		1	3	1			114	131
Northern Pintail	2	2	2	1	1			16	2	279	305
Blue-winged Teal										5	5
Northern Shoveler										208	208
Gadwall	25	2	91		5				9	550	682
Wigeon, Eurasian										3	3
American	54		4		1					1,460	1,519
Duck sp.?			2						50	795	847

TABLE I

SPECIES	REGIONS										TOTAL
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	
Canvasback	886	103	1,180		6	9	2		916	4,571	7,673
Redhead	193	13	4,074			6			6	66	4,358
Ring-necked Duck	1	6	28						46	99	180
Tufted Duck										1	1
Scaup, not to spec.			1,107			228	1		115	18,451	19,902
Greater	3,463	1,329	26		2,081	172	2	13		24,969	32,055
Lesser	3	8	14		15		1	3	7	807	858
Eider, Common										1	1
King	1				1					3	5
Harlequin Duck										4	4
Oldsquaw	5,449	1,498	1		121	13				2,450	9,532
Scoter, not to spec.										1,150	1,150
Black	1				1					64	66
Surf	1									574	575
White-winged	10	2,783			6	1				4,139	6,939
Goldeneye, Common	3,930	2,551	564	47	1,269	1,074	1,575	50	53	1,120	12,223
Bufflehead	173	174	164		92	19	33	1	7	4,627	5,290
Merganser, Hooded	5	3	39	1	6	1	3	2	2	220	282
Common	2,121	346	224	39	3,183	4,001	511	359	2,823	5	13,612
Red-breasted	15	89	13		19		1			3,847	3,984
Ruddy Duck									12	721	733
American Coot		4	606		1				84	464	1,159
TOTALS	20,351	10,804	28,593	1,352	9,983	5,652	3,329	6,982	19,497	133,112	239,656

TABLE II

Comparison of 1985 with 1984, for all species totalling over 1,000 individuals in 1984, and showing the percent change from 1984 to 1985.

Species	1985	1984	% change
Brant	16,402	6,138	+ 167.2
Canada Goose	48,839	47,565	+ 2.7
American Black Duck	18,624	16,826	+ 10.7
Mallard	29,367	26,688	+ 10.0
American Wigeon	1,519	832	+ 82.6
Canvasback	7,673	15,758	- 51.3
Redhead	4,358	8,331	- 47.7
Scaup Duck (both)	52,815	70,863	- 25.5
Oldsquaw	9,532	2,324	+ 310.2
Scoters (all three)	8,730	2,116	+ 312.6
Common Goldeneye	12,233	11,079	+ 10.4
Bufflehead	5,290	4,374	+ 20.9
Common Merganser	13,612	12,467	+ 9.2
Red-breasted Merganser	3,984	4,477	- 11.0
American Coot	1,159	1,316	- 11.9
TOTALS	234,137	231,154	+ 1.3

TABLE III

Comparison of 1985 count with the 1973-1984 average for the same species as in Table II, and showing the percent change from the average.

Species	1985	Average 1973-1984	% change
Brant	16,402	10,958	+ 49.7
Canada Goose	48,839	27,672	+ 76.5
American Black Duck	18,624	18,464	+ 0.9
Mallard	29,367	20,901	+ 40.5
American Wigeon	1,519	2,205	- 25.0
Canvasback	7,673	12,091	- 36.5
Redhead	4,358	6,576	- 33.7
Scaup Duck (both)	52,815	62,013	- 14.8
Oldsquaw	9,532	2,922	+ 226.2
Scoters (all three)	8,730	10,040	- 13.0
Common Goldeneye	12,233	11,738	+ 4.2
Bufflehead	5,290	4,352	+ 21.6
Common Merganser	13,612	12,331	+ 10.4
Red-breasted Merganser	3,984	2,503	+ 59.2
American Coot	1,159	1,947	- 40.5
TOTALS	234,137	206,533	+ 13.4

TABLE IV

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
 Aerial Count – 9 January - 18 February 1985
 All species of about 1,000 individuals and more

Species	Upstate	Long Island	Total
Mute Swan	52	1,412	1,464
Brant		8,715	8,715
Canada Goose	39,270	13,295	52,565
American Black Duck	7,123	14,568	21,691
Mallard	10,887	2,407	13,294
Canvasback	3,815	5,595	9,410
Redhead	9,059		9,059
Scaup (both)	5,680	34,024	39,704
Oldsquaw	1,455	244	1,699
Scoter (all three)	600	3,441	4,041
Goldeneye	10,480	3,259	13,739
Bufflehead	392	1,029	1,421
Merganser (all three)	15,715	2,661	18,376
TOTALS	104,528	90,650	195,178

Note: NO Tundra Swans were recorded.

TABLE V

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
 1984 and 1985 Aerial Counts Compared
 All species of about 1,000 individuals and more

Species	1985	1984	% Change
Mute Swan	1,464	1,235	+ 18.5
Brant	8,715	2,427	+ 259.1
Canada Goose	52,565	58,461	- 10.1
American Black Duck	21,691	19,101	+ 13.6
Mallard	13,294	13,566	- 2.0
Canvasback	9,410	8,952	+ 5.1
Redhead	9,059	5,652	+ 60.3
Scaup (both)	39,704	38,387	+ 3.4
Oldsquaw	1,699	3,731	- 54.5
Scoter (all three)	4,041	9,159	- 55.9
Goldeneye	13,739	9,662	+ 42.2
Bufflehead	1,421	1,061	+ 33.9
Merganser (all three)	18,376	25,965	- 29.2
TOTALS	195,178	197,359	- 1.1