

NEW YORK STATE WATERFOWL COUNT, JANUARY 1991

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The Federation of New York State Bird Clubs, Inc., held the 1991 winter Waterfowl Count from 12 through 20 Jan, with 13 Jan as the target date. All Regions completed their counts within the established dates. Weather was almost balmy through the count period. This accounted for birds being "all over." By the same token there were few or no weather-related problems of coverage. Very few bodies of water were not open. As a result none of the Regional compilers mentioned areas that were not covered.

The grand total count of 345,942 (Table 1) was up a modest 9.3% over 1990, and a great 51.9% above the eighteen year (1973-1990) average of 227,773. Five of the six species showing downward trends last year have reversed themselves. However, four species that showed upward trends last year are, sad to say, in a downward slide this year. Some of the more notable declines occurred in American Black Duck, Redhead and Bufflehead. It was nice to record increases for (Atlantic) Brant, Canvasback, scaup, Oldsquaw, scoter, goldeneye, Common Merganser and Red-breasted Merganser. This year Canada Goose experienced a slight decrease, a welcome word to those experiencing nuisance problems from the species. Region 10 reported several unusual species this year: Pink-footed Goose — 1; Ross's Goose — 1; and Bar-headed Goose — 2!

Comparing 1991 to 1990 count figures (Table 2), the commoner species showed a 10-4 split in favor of increases, although some different species changed as compared to 1990. When comparing 1991 count figures with the 1973-1990 eighteen year average (Table 3), there is a 11-2 split, strongly in favor of increases.

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service midwinter waterfowl inventory showed all geese in the Atlantic Flyway (Maine to Florida) were down 4.2% from 1990, including a decrease in Canada Goose of 3.6%. However, Atlantic Brant showed a 9.1% increase. The dabbling ducks again showed an overall increase of 20.6% over 1990, even after the 14% increase recorded last year. All species were up, with the exceptions of Gadwall (down 2.1%) and Blue-winged Teal (down 32.0%). Diving ducks, including sea ducks, showed an overall increase of 26.5% compared to 1990. A 29.9% decrease in Redhead, Canvasback and goldeneye was offset by a 70.9% increase in all sea ducks. American Coot also showed a 17.2% decrease from 1990 and a 52.3% decrease from the most recent ten year average.

Most American Coot again were wintering in Georgia and Florida. In summary, waterfowl in the Atlantic Flyway were up 10.9% over 1990, and 12.0% over the 1981-1990 ten year average.

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation 1991 aerial survey was conducted from 2-8 Jan 1991. The results are presented in Table 4. Table 5 compares the 1990 to 1991 aerial survey results. As in most years, the 1991 New York State Department of Environmental Conservation aerial count did not at all resemble the Federation's ground count total.

The 1992 Federation Waterfowl Count dates are from 11 through 19 Jan, with Sunday, 12 Jan, the target date.

I wish to thank the upwards of one hundred observers who participated this year. A special thanks also to the Regional Compilers who coordinated all those volunteers. Contrary to what appeared on the 1990 report, the new compiler for Region 2 was, and is, Thomas White. Welcome, Tom! The Regional Compilers were:

Region 1. Wavel Barber	Region 6. Lee Chamberlaine
2. Thomas White	7. John Peterson
3. Eric Donohue	8. Paul Grattan
4. Leslie Bemont	9. Helen Manson
5. Marge Rusk	10. Stephen Dempsey

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Table I. Regional totals for 1991 Waterfowl Count

Species \ Region	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
Loon, Red-throated		3								29	32
Common	1	5	14		8	1	3			455	487
Grebe, Pied-billed	1		9		1					38	49
Horned	2	3	11		8		23			438	485
Red-necked										5	5
Cormorant, Great										237	237
Double-crested	2		2		3					189	196
Swan, Tundra	1	7	14								22
Mute	3	1				4		76	217	1,463	1,764
Goose, Snow	1		1				4		20	518	544
Brant										21,086	21,086
Canada	976	1,251	74,770	77	1,150		2,032	2,134	13,464	33,394	129,248
Wood Duck	1	44	4		2					37	88
Green-winged Teal					23					340	363
American Black Duck	152	348	3,513	91	425	24	189	948	247	15,900	21,837
Mallard	5,503	6,098	14,883	532	4,359	202	1,442	696	1,562	10,772	46,049
Mallard X Black Duck	26	1			1					41	69
N. Pintail			6		1			2	2	108	119
Blue-winged Teal										2	2
N. Shoveler		1								199	200
Gadwall	21	12	45		12			2		691	783
Wigeon, Eurasian										2	2
American	17	3	11		2				14	1,154	1,201

Canvasback	3,430	4	2,145		3			1	3,130	4,108	12,821
Redhead	121	12	7,249		11				2	24	7,419
Ring-necked Duck	15	2	23		21			4	75	268	408
Tufted Duck										1	1
Scaup, Greater	3,579	1,838	804		1,460	13	1		1	25,268	32,964
Lesser	159	9	369		8		3		1	313	862
species		508	921							3,335	4,764
Eider, Common										5	5
King		1								27	28
Harlequin Duck		1			1					5	7
Oldsquaw	4,915	798			93	7	1			1,113	6,927
Scoter, Black		1					1			463	465
Surf										2,951	2,951
White-winged	151	164			19					7,588	7,922
species										57	57
Goldeneye, Common	2,534	3,669	692	24	1,169	622	1,682	68	18	3,218	13,696
Barrow's							1			2	3
Bufflehead	191	321	311		202		41	2		5,709	6,777
Merganser, Hooded	7	6	49	12	18	7			29	367	495
Common	4,288	1,879	135	52	3,353	513	850	270	2,420	59	13,819
Red-breasted	699	251	395	3	61		2			5,668	7,079
Ruddy Duck	1		6						5	788	800
American Coot	43	5	337		4				27	225	641
unidentified	132		30							1	163
TOTAL	26,972	17,246	106,749	791	12,418	1,393	6,275	4,203	21,234	148,661	345,942

Table II. Comparison of 1991 with 1990 for all species totaling over 1000 individuals in 1991.

Species	1990	1991	% change from 1989
Mute Swan	1,091	1,764	61.7
Brant	14,391	21,086	46.5
Canada Goose	139,333	129,248	-7.2
American Black Duck	22,691	21,837	-3.8
Mallard	45,374	46,049	1.5
Canvasback	4,538	12,821	182.5
Redhead	8,099	7,419	-8.4
scaup (both species)	31,712	38,590	21.7
Oldsquaw	3,754	6,927	84.5
scoter (all species)	10,176	11,395	12.0
goldeneye (both species)	8,541	13,699	60.4
Bufflehead	7,079	6,777	-4.3
Common Merganser	8,423	13,819	64.1
Red-breasted Merganser	5,252	7,079	34.8
Total	310,454	338,510	9.0

Table III. Comparison of 1991 count with 1973-1990 average for all species totaling over 1000 individuals in 1991.

Species	1991	Average	% change
Brant	21,086	12,560	67.9
Canada Goose	129,248	46,235	179.5
American Black Duck	21,837	19,581	11.5
Mallard	46,049	24,936	84.7
Canvasback	12,821	10,611	20.8
Redhead	7,419	6,542	13.4
scaup (both species)	38,590	54,858	-29.7
Oldsquaw	6,927	3,986	73.8
scoter (all species)	11,395	13,153	-13.4
Common Goldeneye	13,699	11,070	23.7
Bufflehead	6,777	4,961	36.6
Common Merganser	13,819	12,707	8.8
Red-breasted Merganser	7,079	2,692	163.0
Total	336,746	223,892	50.4

**Table IV. New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
Aerial Count, 2-8 January 1991. All species of 1,000 individuals or more.**

Species	Upstate	Long Island	Total
Mute Swan	77	1,544	1,621
Brant	5	21,920	21,925
Canada Goose	58,424	17,122	75,546
American Black Duck	6,858	16,851	23,709
Mallard	19,209	3,080	22,289
Canvasback	9,217	3,601	12,818
Redhead	2,065		2,065
scaup (both species)	7,212	37,430	44,642
Oldsquaw	1,504	797	2,301
goldeneye (both species)	760	2,181	2,941
Bufflehead	40	1,209	1,249
merganser (all species)	10,809	4,026	14,835
Total	116,180	109,761	225,941

**Table V. New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
1990 and 1991 Aerial Counts compared, with percent change from 1990
for all species with 1,000 individuals or more in 1991.**

Species	1990	1991	% change
Mute Swan	1,362	1,621	19.0
Brant	18,950	21,925	15.7
Canada Goose	112,369	75,546	-32.8
American Black Duck	24,852	23,709	-4.6
Mallard	14,546	22,289	53.2
Canvasback	6,928	12,818	85.0
Redhead	6,690	2,065	-69.1
scaup (both species)	33,094	44,642	34.9
Oldsquaw	1,621	2,301	41.9
goldeneye (both species)	7,313	2,941	-59.8
merganser (all species)	16,681	14,835	-11.1
Total	244,406	225,941	-93.9