

NEW YORK STATE WATERFOWL COUNT, JANUARY 1995

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The Federation of New York State Bird Clubs, Inc., held its 1995 winter Waterfowl Count from 14 through 22 January, with 15 January as the target date. All Regions completed their counts within the established dates.

THE WEATHER

An overly warm fall and early winter period continued into January 1995. Temperatures during the count period averaged about 8°F warmer than normal (20°). Precipitation averaged around 28% above normal (2.5 inches). Snowfall was very light, about 50% of normal accumulation, notwithstanding the heavy snowfalls usually received downwind of Lakes Erie and Ontario. A warming trend around 16 January prompted flood watches. On 20 January, flooding problems hit part of Region 1, with reports of rural road closures and flooding in the town of Albion, Orleans County. Water levels were above normal at practically all locations monitored by weather bureau observers.

THE COUNT

The grand total of 291,989 (Table I) was up 14.6% from 1994, and 14.3% above the 22-year (1973-1994) average of 250,234. Except for Brant, Redhead and the scoters, all species listed in Table II showed gains over 1994. It is disheartening to note a substantial decrease in Redhead. The Department of Environmental Conservation aerial count echoed this decrease as well. With the exception of two or three species, the downward trends of 1994 were reversed in 1995.

Comparing 1995 to 1994 count figures (Table II), the commoner species showed a 14-3 split heavily in favor of increases. Both Redhead and the scoters counts reversed themselves, showing decreases over 1994. When comparing 1995 count figures with the 22-year (1973-1994) average (Table III), there is a 7-6 split in favor of decreases. The overall total in Table III showed an 11.5% increase in 1995 over the 22-year average, up moderately from 1994.

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service midwinter waterfowl inventory showed all geese in the Atlantic Flyway (Maine to Florida) increased by 8.5% from 1994, mostly the result of a 61.0% increase in

Snow Geese. Brant and Canada Geese had decreases of 5.6% and 5.0% respectively. The dabbling ducks showed a decrease of 5.2% from 1994, after a 20.2% increase recorded last year. All species were down, with the exception of American Black Duck, which was up 1.6%. Diving ducks, including sea ducks, showed an overall increase of 12.8% compared to 1994. A few bright spots here were 60.0% increases for scaup over 1994, 40.0% for goldeneye, 39.9% for Bufflehead, 83.2% for Ruddy Duck, and 53.4% for mergansers. American Coot showed a 14.0% decrease from 1994, and a 22.3% decrease from the most recent ten-year average. Most American Coot again were wintering in the Carolinas, Georgia and Florida. In summary, waterfowl in the Atlantic Flyway were up 5.3% from 1994, and 22.2% above the 1985-1994 average.

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation 1995 aerial survey was conducted from 4 to 29 January 1995. The results are presented in Table IV. Table V compares the 1994 to 1995 aerial survey results. As in most years, the 1995 New York State Department of Environmental Conservation aerial count did not, in a general sense, resemble the Federation's ground count.

I wish to thank the upwards of one hundred observers who participated this year. A special thanks to the Regional Compilers who coordinated all those volunteers. The Regional Compilers were:

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|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Region 1. Joseph DiDomenico | Region 6. Lee Chamberlaine |
| 2. Thomas Smith | 7. John Peterson |
| 3. Eric Donohue | 8. Paul Grattan |
| 4. Leslie Bemont | 9. Michael Usai |
| 5. Marge Rusk | 10. Stephen Dempsey |

The 1996 Federation Waterfowl Count dates are from 13 through 21 January, with Sunday, 14 January, the target date.

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Table I. Regional totals for 1995 Waterfowl Count

Species / Region	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
Loon, Red-throated			1						3	84	88
Common	2		6	1	1	2	2	1	2	256	273
Grebe, Pied-billed	4	3	4		2			1	3	30	47
Horned	6	2	17				20		14	336	395
Red-necked									1	1	2
Cormorant, Great									36	298	334
Double-crested	13			1						288	302
Swan, Tundra	61	60	41		8	6				23	199
Mute		12	2		3			133	399	1,045	1,594
Goose, Snow			36		20		11	5	23	615	710
Brant									285	15,408	15,693
Goose, Canada	1,780	2,964	41,379	673	3,985	1,205	61	8,595	14,590	20,399	95,631
Duck, Wood	4	2	1					2	2	11	22
Teal, Green-winged			1	3	5			4	5	561	579
Duck, American Black	155	714	2,223	89	411	388	206	314	861	14,807	20,168
Mallard	3,188	5,858	12,439	361	3,713	3,132	1,550	664	3,748	10,274	44,927
Mallard X Black Duck		34	2	1				1	5	49	92
Pintail, Northern	2	4	10		7		2		7	230	262
Shoveler, Northern	1	5							3	262	271
Gadwall	73	21	40		22				63	1,249	1,468
Wigeon, Eurasian										6	6
American	12	12			2				116	1,777	1,919

Canvasback	1,262	99	255		1			375	383	3,686	6,061
Redhead	171	757	1,652		69	14	2	7	16	55	2,743
Duck, Ring-necked	10	25	65		19	5		1	559	285	969
Scaup, Greater	3,773	13,410	14		796		50		1,457	20,018	39,518
Lesser	42	738	67		22		20		380	2,342	3,611
species	15	3,205	29				450	64		539	4,302
Eider, Common										485	485
Duck, Harlequin	1				1					13	15
Oldsquaw	153	150					1		381	918	1,603
Scoter, Black		8								101	109
Surf	1	2								134	137
White-winged		19	1		1					2,157	2,178
species		774								100	874
Goldeneye, Common	2,464	2,484	631	5	832	970	512	114	176	1,651	9,839
Bufflehead	468	335	284	2	107	40	30	17	300	6,260	7,843
Merganser, Hooded	25	5	14	2	9			3	100	754	912
Common	5,193	84	105	101	1,276	569	348	191	1,000	192	9,059
Red-breasted	21	549	39		65	8	1	1	205	5,067	5,956
Duck, Ruddy	1								125	4,532	4,658
Coot, American	272	799	1,293	116	125		1	1	690	874	4,171
duck, unidentified	670	21	1,035			7	69		2	160	1,964
TOTAL	19,843	33,155	61,686	1,355	11,502	6,346	3,336	10,494	25,940	118,332	291,989

Table II. Comparison of 1995 with 1994 count for all species totalling over 1000 individuals in 1995.

Species	1994	1995	% change from 1994
Mute Swan	1,410	1,594	13.0
Brant	17,778	15,693	-11.8
Canada Goose	72,587	95,631	31.7
American Black Duck	16,956	20,168	18.9
Mallard	44,663	44,927	0.6
Gadwall	1,233	1,468	19.1
American Wigeon	726	1,919	164.3
Canvasback	5,964	6,061	1.0
Redhead	11,376	2,743	-75.9
scaup (both species)	25,481	47,431	86.1
Oldsquaw	1,364	1,603	17.5
scoter (all species)	25,322	3,298	-87.0
goldeneye (both species)	8,130	9,839	21.0
Bufflehead	7,352	7,843	6.7
Common Merganser	4,806	9,059	88.5
Red-breasted Merganser	4,046	5,956	47.2
Ruddy Duck	1,792	4,658	159.9
Total	250,986	279,891	11.5

Table III. Comparison of 1995 count with 1973-1994 average for all species totalling over 1000 individuals in 1995.

Species	1995	Average	% change
Brant	15,693	14,274	10
Canada Goose	95,631	56,965	67.9
American Black Duck	20,168	20,071	-0.5
Mallard	44,927	29,098	54.4
Canvasback	6,061	10,546	-42.5
Redhead	2,743	6,775	-59.5
scaup (both species)	47,431	53,833	-11.9
Oldsquaw	1,603	4,039	-60.3
scoter (all species)	3,298	13,641	-75.8
Common Goldeneye	9,839	11,897	-17.3
Bufflehead	7,843	5,550	41.3
Common Merganser	9,059	12,268	-26.2
Red-breasted Merganser	5,956	3,364	77.1
Total	270,252	242,321	11.5

**Table IV. New York State Department of Environmental
Conservation Aerial Count, 4-29 January 1994, for all
species of 1,000 individuals or more.**

Species	Upstate	Long Island	Total
Mute Swan	94	1,182	1,276
Brant		22,659	22,659
Canada Goose	59,835	11,352	71,187
American Black Duck	5,420	12,093	17,513
Mallard	23,798	3,863	27,761
Canvasback	6,125	2,355	8,480
Redhead	1,200		1,200
scaup (both species)	20,840	16,599	37,439
goldeneye (both species)	4,673	1,038	5,711
Bufflehead	391	2,332	2,723
merganser (all species)	19,386	2,188	21,574
Total	141,762	75,661	217,423

**Table V. New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
1994 and 1995 Aerial Counts compared, with percent change from 1994
for all species with 1,000 individuals or more in 1995.**

Species	1994	1995	% change
Mute Swan	1,443	1,276	-11.6
Brant	12,919	22,659	75.4
Canada Goose	64,283	71,187	10.7
American Black Duck	16,160	17,513	8.4
Mallard	16,059	27,661	72.3
Canvasback	8,967	8,480	-5.4
Redhead	10,197	1,200	-88.2
scaup (both species)	65,191	37,439	-42.6
Bufflehead	1,369	2,723	98.9
goldeneye (both species)	4,211	5,711	35.6
merganser (all species)	17,132	21,574	25.9
Total	239,968	217,423	-9.4