

NEW YORK STATE WATERFOWL COUNT, JANUARY 1999

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ABSTRACT

The Federation of New York State Bird Club's annual midwinter waterfowl count was held 16-24 January 1999. The entire state was covered by about 130 observers. Of the 47 species counted, 24 exceeded 1,000 individuals, and 9 of these exceeded 10,000 each. Those top 9 species, in order of abundance, were: Canada Goose, Mallard, Greater Scaup, Brant, American Black Duck, Common Goldeneye, Old Squaw, Redhead and Canvasback. Of those 9, 4 decreased and 5 increased since 1998. The grand total of 371,254 individuals was up 10.5% from 1998, and 41.3% above the 26-year (1973-1998) average of 262,771.

INTRODUCTION

The Federation of New York State Bird Clubs, Inc., held its 1999 mid-winter Waterfowl Count from 16 through 24 January, with 17 January as the target date. All Regions completed their counts in the allotted time.

THE WEATHER

Late fall weather was warmer than usual by about 10 degrees. Snowfall was meager except in the usual snow belt areas downwind of Lakes Erie and Ontario. The temperature bottomed out to minus 10 degrees on 2 Jan in the Albany area, the coldest it got all winter. As a result, there were many water areas left open to waterfowl use that normally would have frozen.

THE COUNT

The grand total of 371,254 (Table 1) was up 10.5% from 1998, and 41.3% above the 26-year (1973-1998) average of 262,771. Counts of all species

listed in Table 2 showed gains versus losses over 1998 to be 13 to 6.

Comparing 1999 to 1998 count figures (Table 2), the top 9 species showed a 5 to 4 split in favor of increases. Canada Goose, Brant, Canvasback and Common Goldeneye showed decreases and, except for Canada Goose, showed a reversal in trend from 1997-98. Apparently, more American Black Duck, Mallard, Redhead, Greater Scaup and Oldsquaw than in 1998 decided to remain in New York waters rather than going farther south in the Atlantic Flyway.

When comparing 1999 count figure with the 26-year (1973-1998) average (Table 3), there is a 12 to 1 split in favor of increases. The overall total in Table 3 had a larger percent increase over the long-term average than in 1998. Canada Goose, Mallard and Greater Scaup contributed substantially to this. It is encouraging that scaup and scoter numbers have now shown an increase over 1998, while on the other hand, it was not encouraging that Common Merganser numbers have decreased.

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service midwinter waterfowl inventory report (Serie and Vecchio 1999) showed Snow Goose, Canada Goose and Brant numbers in the Atlantic Flyway (Maine to Florida) increased respectively by 3.7%, 30.1%, and 19.6%. The Canada Goose increase this year reverses the minor decrease of 1998. The dabbling ducks encouragingly showed a 28.3% increase after two successive years of decline. The only discouraging note was the continued decline of Northern Shoveler, minus 34.4% this year. Diving ducks, excluding mergansers but including sea ducks, showed 3.9% and 4.0% decline respectively. Mergansers, however, showed a 31.3% increase over 1998. While Canvasback, Redhead, eiders and Oldsquaw, Common Goldeneye, and Ruddy Duck, all showed increases, they were more than offset by decreases in Ring-necked Duck, scaup, scoters and Bufflehead. American Coot showed another increase this year of 37.9%. In summary, waterfowl in the Atlantic Flyway was up 19.1% from 1998, and 19.5% above the 10-year (1989-98) average.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank the upwards of 130 observers who participated this year. A special thanks to the Regional Compilers who coordinated all those volunteers. Paul Grattan, the Region 8 compiler, has retired after many years of faithful service. Many thanks, Paul! His place has been ably taken by Bryan L. Swift. Regional Compilers were:

<u>Region</u>	<u>Compiler</u>	<u>Region</u>	<u>Compiler</u>
1	William Burch	6	Lee Chamberlaine
2	Gregory Hartenstein	7	John Peterson
3	Eric Donohue	8	Bryan Swift
4	Leslie Bemont	9	Michael Usai
5	Marge Rusk	10	Stephen Dempsey

NEXT YEAR

The 2000 Federation Waterfowl Count dates are from 15 through 23 January, with Sunday, 16 January, as the target date.

LITERATURE CITED

Serie JR and A Vecchio 1999. *Atlantic Flyway Midwinter Waterfowl Survey - 1999. Final Report*. US Fish and Wildlife Service Office of Migratory Bird Management, Laurel, MD 20708. P.1-3

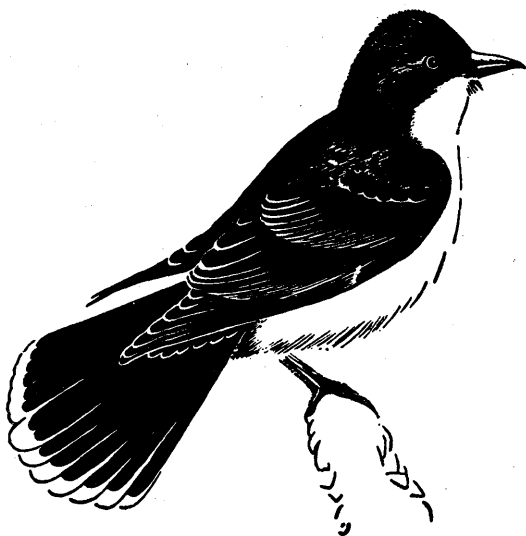


Table 1. Regional Totals for 1999 Waterfowl Count

Species/Region	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	TOTAL
Loon, Red-throated	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	74	81
Common	-	3	4	1	2	-	2	-	4	231	247
Yellow-billed	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Grebe, Pied-billed	8	1	13	4	3	-	-	-	23	97	149
Horned	14	15	49	11	37	-	11	2	12	312	463
Red-necked	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Cormorant, Double-crested	7	12	4	-	6	-	-	-	-	147	176
Great	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	36	281	319
Goose, Gr. White-fronted	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2
Snow	4	-	52	-	-	-	-	701	1	786	1,544
Canada	2,493	417	38,348	2,369	1,938	338	276	5,257	8,879	47,712	108,027
Brant	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	26,700	26,700
Swan, Mute	3	102	2	-	2	5	-	60	417	1,280	1,871
Trumpeter	6	4	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	11
Tundra	144	18	56	2	10	7	-	1	-	2	240
Wood Duck	6	-	3	-	-	1	-	-	1	12	23
Gadwall	15	26	49	-	10	3	9	-	48	1,682	1,842
Wigeon, Eurasian	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	8	9
American	-	-	14	-	-	-	-	1	122	1,730	1,867
American Black Duck	177	401	2,013	400	209	292	273	499	414	15,498	20,176
Mallard	7,737	8,450	7,087	2,953	3,716	417	1,690	2,123	1,761	11,938	47,872
Mallard X Black	-	1	-	-	1	-	1	-	11	36	50
Blue-winged Teal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Northern Shoveler	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	464	471
Northern Pintail	2	5	10	3	1	-	-	-	3	113	137
Green-winged Teal	3	-	5	-	1	-	-	-	-	553	562
Canvasback	7,328	466	1,365	2	39	-	2	256	364	2,138	11,960
Redhead	398	1,553	10,091	37	578	-	6	1	-	104	12,768
Ring-necked Duck	13	9	196	2	157	23	6	5	301	695	1,407
Tufted Duck	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	3
Scaup, Greater	21,940	8,980	115	3	821	691	228	-	672	11,777	45,227
Lesser	37	231	288	9	147	-	21	-	16	3,887	4,636
not to species	2	38	207	-	250	-	10	-	-	1,325	1,832
Eider, King	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Common	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	.5
Harlequin Duck	-	-	-	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	6
Scoter, Surf	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	2,550	2,553
White-winged	72	500	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	9,221	9,794
Black	1	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	797	800
not to species	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	804	804
Oldsquaw	2,126	6,676	1	3	573	600	1	1	17	3,073	13,071
Bufflehead	448	151	300	7	131	304	92	2	322	7,614	9,371
Goldeneye, Common	4,426	4,220	402	19	994	1,338	1,309	424	161	2,593	15,886
Barrow's	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	-	-	1	4
Merganser, Hooded	33	23	36	17	40	10	17	53	91	1,126	1,446
Common	1,704	1,398	1,922	261	942	889	497	156	348	221	8,338
Red-breasted	250	115	7	-	55	-	4	-	194	4,405	5,030
Ruddy Duck	6	1	1	-	1	-	-	1	168	8,656	8,834
American Coot	165	127	1,201	100	68	1	3	3	667	1,444	3,779
UNKNOWN	333	-	50	1	-	-	-	2	450	20	856
TOTAL	49,903	33,946	63,894	6,204	10,745	4,920	4,459	9,549	15,518	172,116	371,254

Table 2. Comparison of 1999 count with 1998 count for all species totalling over 1,000 individuals in 1998 or 1999, or both.

SPECIES	1998	1999	Percent Change from 1998
Snow Goose	817	1,544	89.0
Canada Goose	129,141	108,029	- 16.3
Brant	31,592	26,700	- 15.5
Mute Swan	1,637	1,871	14.3
Gadwall	1,467	1,842	25.5
American Wigeon	1,621	1,867	15.1
American Black Duck	18,497	20,176	9.1
Mallard	33,809	47,872	41.6
Canvasback	15,995	11,960	- 25.2
Redhead	11,182	12,768	14.2
Ring-necked Duck	700	1,407	100.1
scaup (both species)	24,265	51,695	113.0
scoter (all species)	3,523	13,951	296.0
Oldsquaw	4,672	13,071	179.7
Bufflehead	7,465	9,371	25.5
goldeneye (both species)	18,220	15,890	- 12.8
Hooded Merganser	1,218	1,446	18.7
Common Merganser	6,953	8,338	19.9
Red-breasted Merganser	7,164	5,030	- 29.8
Ruddy Duck	8,090	8,834	9.2
American Coot	4,406	3,779	- 14.2
TOTAL	332,434	367,441	10.5

Table 3. Comparison of 1999 count with 1973-1998 average for all species consistently totalling over 1,000 individuals annually.

Species	Average	1999	Percent Change
Canada Goose	62,506	108,029	72.8
Brant	14,867	26,700	79.6
American Black Duck	19,888	20,176	1.4
Mallard	31,094	47,872	54.0
Canvasback	10,697	11,960	11.8
Redhead	7,342	12,768	73.9
scaup (both species)	50,086	51,695	3.2
scoter (all species)	12,497	13,951	11.6
Oldsquaw	4,094	13,071	219.3
Bufflehead	5,874	9,371	59.5
Common Goldeneye	12,107	15,886	31.2
Common Merganser	11,560	8,338	- 27.9
Red-breasted Merganser	3,726	5,030	35.0
TOTAL	246,338	344,847	40.0