

WINTER WATERFOWL COUNT, JANUARY 2019

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[Editor's Note—Due to slight variations in the template files used in compiling this report, some of the species totals for Region 10 were incorrectly published here. These errors affected the summary as well, therefore the entire corrected report was reprinted in the following issue, Kingbird 69: 211-215.]

About 387 volunteers went into the field 12-27 January 2019 and conducted the New York State Ornithological Association's January Waterfowl Count (JWC). The volunteers logged 1025.5 party-hours and counted 390,487 waterfowl. Swift (2007) described the methodology of the count.

WEATHER CONDITIONS

The only significant snow in the state leading up to and during the waterfowl count period was in the western part of the State. Buffalo recorded a 13-inch snow cover on January 20, the count's target date, and 15-inch snow cover on January 26. The snow in Buffalo was accompanied by sub-zero weather on January 20, as well. The target date's weather did lead to some changed plans for participants, but the count's overall coverage of the State was good.

RESULTS

In this summary, I will compare the 2019 numbers with the average annual numbers from the decade, 2001-2010. The total number of waterfowl counted this year, 390,486, was 6780 (2%) more than the average for the 2001-2010 decade. The difference was primarily due to an overall larger count of geese, primarily Canada Geese, which was 44,522 (26%) more than the decade average. This larger count of geese more than offset the lower count of ducks and miscellaneous other waterfowl than the decade average. The 2019 count of swans was just 110 (4%) more than the decade average, a higher count of Tundra Swans overcoming a lower count of Mute Swans.

Lingering Wood Ducks and Northern Shovelers accounted for the only counts of dabbling ducks that were higher than the 2001-2010 average. Among diving ducks, the counts of Redheads, Greater Scaup (unless all the unidentified scaup from 2001-2010 were this species and none of the unidentified scaup in this count were), Common Eider, Long-tailed Duck, and Hooded Merganser were all higher than the decade average. All the non-Anseriformes waterfowl species counts were lower in the 2019 count than the average for the 2001-2010 decade.

Table 1. Regional totals for the 2019 January Waterfowl Count.

Species/Region	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
Goose, Gr. White-fr.	1	0	0		0		0	0	4	2	7
Snow	0	49	12,058		0		0	1	9	602	12,719
Ross's	0	0	0		0		0	0	0	3,884	3,884
Canada	5,286	15,741	42,879	5,118	4,873	1,191	0	23,840	31,011	52,013	181,952
Cackling	0	2	2	1	0		0	0	8	491	504
Brant	0	0	0		0		0	0	550	18,068	18,618
Swan, Mute	9	176	25		18	103	0	17	317	648	1,313
Trumpeter	0	16	20		6		0	0	0	0	42
Tundra	196	0	1,060		33	28	0	0	0	0	1,317
not to species	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wood Duck	0	0	2	2	0		0	0	28	38	70
Gadwall	12	1	62	3	16		0	0	72	1,211	1,377
Wigeon, Eurasian	0	0	0		0		0	0	0	40	40
American	5	0	41	1	0		0	0	51	698	796
Am. Black Duck	64	168	661	277	63	78	42	96	611	6,598	8,658
Mallard	2,042	2,424	4,946	1,393	1,600	522	1,404	1,611	5,478	7,594	29,014
Mallard X Black	2	2	2		0		0	0	1	12	19
Blue-winged Teal	0	0	0		0		0	0	0	0	0
Northern Shoveler	0	0	1		0		0	0	7	582	590
Northern Pintail	0	3	0	2	0	1	0	1	4	103	114
Green-winged Teal	1	4	1	1	0	2	0	0	4	131	144
Canvasback	4,255	14	964	3	3		0	3	90	159	5,491
Redhead	1,143	2,649	15,738	345	156	7	0	1	9	32	20,080
Ring-necked Duck	9	84	301	5	19		0	1	417	423	1,259
Tufted Duck	0	0	0		0		0	0	0	34	34
Scaup, Greater	16,817	397	403	31	132		0	0	1,128	18,918	37,826

Species/Region	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
Lesser	3	17	104	3	20	2	0	0	35	1,145	1,329
not to species	130	10	243		50		100	0	1	1,876	2,410
Eider, King	0	0	0		0		0	0	0	1	1
Common	0	0	0		0		0	0	0	3,331	3,331
Harlequin Duck	1	0	0		0		0	0	0	224	225
Scoter, Surf	0	0	0		1		0	0	0	625	626
White-winged	99	34	20	1	42		0	0	1	1,198	1,395
Black	0	0	0		1		0	0	0	2,230	2,231
not to species	0	0	0		0		0	0	0	4,488	4,488
Long-tailed Duck	1,182	2,565	46	13	475	539	0	0	207	3,266	8,293
Bufflehead	925	24	201	4	33	16	22	0	830	4,355	6,410
Goldeneye, Co.	2,234	1,098	1,982	139	670	1,504	359	467	538	1,046	10,037
Barrow's	1	1	0		0		0	0	0	66	68
Merganser, Hooded	57	9	98	133	47	1	5	59	253	1,142	1,804
Common	1,058	410	3,323	364	1,560	762	241	431	1,547	188	9,884
Red-breasted	702	3,523	486	2	163	65	0	0	89	1,738	6,768
Ruddy Duck	0	0	0		0		0	0	18	1,435	1,453
Loon, Red-throated	0	3	0		0		0	0	7	110	120
Common	0	3	2		0		2	0	43	207	257
Grebe, Pied-billed	3	1	6		3		0	0	5	18	36
Horned	0	3	3	1	0		2	0	16	210	235
Red-necked	0	1	0	2	0		0	0	0	2	5
Eared	0	0	0		0		0	0	0	0	0
Cormorant, D.-cr.	16	17	1		26		0	0	2	99	161
Great	0	0	0		0		0	0	47	49	96
American Coot	0	29	240		2		0	0	23	156	450
Other/Unidentified	1,297	3	901		0	41	0	0	21	243	2,506
TOTALS	37,550	29,481	86,822	7,844	10,012	4,862	2,177	26,528	43,482	141,729	390,487

LONG-TERM TRENDS

We have been watching for many years the long-term trend of increasing numbers of Tundra Swans wintering in New York State, the number peaking at 4065 in 2016. That number dropped to 1443 in 2017 and to 655 in 2018. The number rebounded somewhat in the 2019 count to 1317. We have also been watching Canvasbacks. While their numbers vary widely from year to year, their two highest counts, 24,584 and 25,718, both occurred in the 2001-2010 decade. Their two lowest counts, 3,771 and 4,514, occurred in the current decade.

By comparing the averages for the periods 1973-2000, 2001-2010, and 2013-2019 possible long-term trends in New York State's winter waterfowl populations can be identified. Possible long-term increases can thus be seen for Snow Goose, Brant, Trumpeter Swan, Tundra Swan, Wood Duck, Gadwall, Eurasian Wigeon, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Common Eider, Harlequin Duck, Long-tailed Duck, Bufflehead, Hooded Merganser, and Red-breasted Merganser. Long-term decreases may be happening to American Wigeon, American Black Duck, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, scaup, Surf Scoter, White-winged Scoter, and Common Merganser.

FUTURE COUNTS

You can help with the 2020 count by contacting your regional compiler. Compiler contact information and historical data are available online at:

<http://nybirds.org/ProjWaterfowl.htm>

For planning purposes, the January Waterfowl Count is conducted in a period that begins the Saturday before Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (the third Monday in January). The next two count periods will be:

2020 – January 18-26 (target date Sunday, January 19)

2021 – January 16-24 (target date Sunday, January 17)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thanks to everyone who participated in the 2019 January Waterfowl Count. The many dedicated field observers volunteered many hours in the field. Regional and local compilers and coordinators deserve special thanks for making sure that the state had good coverage and for compiling the data in a timely manner. The regional compilers, this year, were:

Region	Compiler	Region	Compiler
1	Jim Landau	6	Jeff Bolsinger
2	Robert Spahn	7	Gary Lee
3	Thomas Bell	8	Bryan Swift
4	Gail Kirch	9	Bill Ostrander
5	Bill Purcell	10	Clifford Hagen

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