

JANUARY WATERFOWL COUNT 2021

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More than 353 volunteers went into the field 16-26 January 2021 and conducted the New York State Ornithological Association's January Waterfowl Count. The volunteers logged 1,098.67 party-hours and counted 397,429 waterfowl. The methodology of the count is described by Swift (January waterfowl counts, 2005-2007, and some observations on long-term trends. *The Kingbird* 57:198-213; 2007).

Daily high temperatures in January leading up to and through the count period were generally above freezing throughout the state, but most lows were below freezing. In Islip, low temperatures stayed above 20° F. In Plattsburgh, low temperatures during the count period were often in the single digits. Consequently, moving water was generally open and still water was frozen in most of the state. There was virtually no snow in January anywhere in the state except some trace amounts in Buffalo.

RESULTS

In this summary, I will compare the 2021 numbers with the average annual numbers from the decade, 2001-2010. The total number of waterfowl counted this year, 397,429, was 13,723 (4%) more than the average for the 2001-2010 decade. Canada Geese, Snow Geese, and Tundra Swans compensated for the lower numbers of dabbling ducks, diving ducks, and all other waterfowl.

Some species had higher counts than the 2001-2010 decade average: Greater White-fronted Goose, Canada Goose, Snow Goose, Mute Swan, Tundra Swan, Gadwall, Northern Shoveler, Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Common Eider, Hooded Merganser, Red-breasted Merganser, Ruddy Duck, and Double-crested Cormorant. The counts of 5,487 Ring-necked Ducks and 3,335 Hooded Mergansers were the highest counts ever. Both are less hardy species that would have benefited from the warmer than normal conditions. The count of 6,386 American Black Ducks was the lowest ever.

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 4,065 in 2016. In 2021, the count was 2,186, the highest since the 2016 peak.

By comparing the averages for the periods 1973-2000, 2001-2010, and 2013-2021 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, Northern Shoveler, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Common Eider, Harlequin Duck, Long-tailed Duck, Hooded Merganser, and Red-breasted Merganser. Long-term decreases may be happening to American Wigeon, American Black Duck, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, scaup (sp.), White-winged Scoter, Common Merganser, and Great Cormorant.

FUTURE COUNTS

You can help with the 2022 count by contacting your Regional compiler. Compiler contact information is 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: 15-23 January 2022 (target date Sunday, January 16); and 14-22 January 2023 (target date Sunday, January 17).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thanks to everyone who participated in the 2021 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	Debbie Suggs	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



Table 1. Regional totals for the 2021 January Waterfowl Count.

Species/Region	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
Snow Goose	0	0	24,155	0	0	1	27	2	5	707	24,897
Ross's Goose	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gr. White-fr. Goose	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Brant	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	132	14,492	14,624
Cackling Goose	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	6	10
Canada Goose	21,405	27,540	31,413	4,090	10,778	6,958	574	5,999	30,361	48,871	187,989
Mute Swan	14	557	21	0	90	79	0	2	369	940	2,072
Trumpeter Swan	0	10	6	0	17	0	0	0	0	2	35
Tundra Swan	75	66	1,623	0	264	158	0	0	0	0	2,186
swan species	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Wood Duck	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	11	31	45
Blue-winged Teal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Northern Shoveler	1	16	2	0	0	0	0	0	69	798	886
Gadwall	65	38	194	4	16	11	0	0	197	1,271	1,796
Eurasian Wigeon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Am. Wigeon	2	1	135	2	5	0	0	0	60	356	561
Mallard	2,593	3,051	4,309	1,485	2,239	2,091	882	1,316	4,805	6,599	29,370
Am. Black Duck	92	423	1,011	223	97	245	144	110	851	3,190	6,386
Mallard X Black Duck	2	7	4	0	1	2	0	0	6	42	64
Northern Pintail	1	4	43	0	2	0	0	2	4	35	91
Green-winged Teal	2	0	9	4	0	0	0	0	7	187	209
Canvasback	5,653	20	947	0	1	1	0	0	3	511	7,136
Redhead	453	13,261	20,570	0	1,509	1,001	0	0	0	24	36,818
Ring-necked Duck	17	1,031	2,773	54	33	10	1	2	1,176	390	5,487
Tufted Duck	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Greater Scaup	4,609	322	1,334	0	95	1,305	232	9	258	7,133	15,297

Species/Region	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
Lesser Scaup	20	71	11	0	100	2	310	0	26	2,297	2,837
scaup species	0	42	27	0	0	9	930	1	11	328	1,348
King Eider	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	6
Common Eider	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,628	1,628
Harlequin Duck	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	4
Surf Scoter	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	530	532
White-winged Scoter	251	93	8	0	9	18	0	0	2	1,891	2,272
Black Scoter	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	857	859
scoter species	0	0	58	0	0	0	0	0	0	669	727
Long-tailed Duck	494	1,217	16	0	488	903	2	1	147	2,116	5,384
Bufflehead	461	55	173	47	144	123	54	1	830	4,199	6,087
Com. Goldeneye	2,376	1,528	1,384	187	1,041	1,621	1,582	497	248	752	11,216
Barrow's Goldeneye	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	3
Hooded Merganser	99	103	207	408	74	8	54	62	1,101	1,219	3,335
Com. Merganser	532	118	611	777	2,672	1,446	191	707	2,656	14	9,724
Red-br. Merganser	745	4,419	249	1	867	341	2	0	93	1,458	8,175
Ruddy Duck	9	1	3	0	0	0	0	1	35	4,605	4,654
Pied-billed Grebe	2	4	2	0	2	0	0	0	13	20	43
Horned Grebe	10	1	3	0	0	0	3	0	2	129	148
Red-necked Grebe	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	6
Eared Grebe	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Am. Coot	6	50	386	35	31	0	0	0	218	140	866
Red-throated Loon	60	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	193	266
Common Loon	1	5	7	0	2	5	8	0	25	284	337
Dbl.-cr. Cormorant	10	33	7	0	7	5	0	0	0	271	333
Great Cormorant	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	75	70	145
Other/Unidentified	201	0	0	0	3	55	0	0	149	100	508
TOTALS	40,264	54,094	91,704	7,317	20,590	16,401	4,999	8,712	43,963	109,385	397,429