



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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ATLANTIC WATERFOWL POPULATION HOLDS STEADY, SURVEY SHOWS

The number of waterfowl on the wintering grounds of the Atlantic Flyway is about the same as last year, according to the Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior.

This information was obtained from the annual survey conducted by the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife on wintering waterfowl populations in the Atlantic coastal States, plus West Virginia, Pennsylvania and Vermont. Weather conditions throughout the Flyway were ideal this year for counting ducks and geese.

The survey disclosed that the black duck, which has exhibited steadily decreasing winter populations in recent years increased 21 percent over last year. A substantially higher portion of blacks was found in the northern half of the Flyway than last year.

The effect of the severe drouth in the prairie nesting areas was evident. Mallards which occur in important numbers during the winter from Maryland south showed a moderate decrease compared with last year. There was no change in pintails.

Of the diving ducks, redheads showed a drastic decrease of over 50 percent, whereas the canvasback and ringneck appear to be holding their own compared to last year's low population. The figure for the ruddy duck was double that of last year.

Snow geese showed an increase of about 50 percent. Likewise whistling swans, another far-northern nester, showed nearly a 50 percent increase. Canada geese increased 25 percent, whereas brant changed but little from last year.

This annual survey of wintering waterfowl populations in the United States was conducted by the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife in cooperation with State Fish and Game Departments, the Armed Services and various private organizations and individuals.

In the Atlantic Flyway, observations commenced on January 4 and the bulk of the survey was completed by the evening of the 5th. Over 200 workers participated in this operation, using 33 aircraft, 102 cars, and 30 boats, clocking 20,500 miles in the air, 10,500 miles by road and 2,000 by boat. Wintering areas in Canada were surveyed by Canadian Federal and Provincial game personnel.

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