

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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FEDERAL SURVEY SHOWS MAJOR DECLINE IN SOME DUCKS AND GEESE IN THE ATLANTIC FLYWAY

A recent annual cooperative survey of wintering waterfowl populations in the Atlantic Flyway by the Fish and Wildlife Service showed waterfowl numbers declined from a year ago, the Department of the Interior reported today. Total ducks in the flyway were down about 7 percent and geese were off 23 percent to 50 percent, depending on the species. The winter survey is conducted in cooperation with State and Federal agencies.

The important black duck shows little change from last year. Some other much-sought-after species continued to lose ground. The mallard was down 25 percent, pintail off 18 percent, canvasback decreased 13 percent, and ringneck down 20 percent. The widgeon and redhead exhibited a slight improvement (10 percent) over last year, and the relatively abundant scaup showed no change. Considering all favored duck species together, there was a moderate decline for the flyway as a whole, the Fish and Wildlife Service said.

Goose species, which have done so well in recent years, exhibited drastic reductions in numbers. Only about half the number of brant is present in the flyway this year, compared with 1961. The greater snow goose shows a loss of over 25 percent, and the swan a decrease of more than 33 percent. Even the Canada honker had a loss of nearly 25 percent. Apparently, these far-north nesters had very poor production during the past summer. Field checks by technicians in the flyway during the fall and winter indicate a marked scarcity of young birds in the flocks.

The annual winter survey is a cooperative effort among the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, State fish and game departments, and the Armed Services. Surveys also are carried out simultaneously in Canada by Canadian authorities. This year's survey was conducted from January 8 to 14.

The information concerns only the survey in the 17 States of the Atlantic Flyway. Approximately 191 individuals participated, using 29 aircraft, 58 cars, and 3 boats. The 22,920 miles traveled by air, the 3,750 miles by car, and the 218 miles by boat gave good coverage of the major wintering areas.

The 17 Atlantic Flyway States are: Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia. The District of Columbia also is included as one of the areas counted.

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