

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
GAME DIVISION
LANSING, MICHIGAN 48926

Report No. 2658
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1970 Midwinter Waterfowl Inventory

by
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Michigan participated in the annual nation-wide midwinter waterfowl survey during the week of January 5-9, 1970. Department of Natural Resources personnel carried out the Michigan inventory with the assistance of the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife. This midwinter count is made annually to determine the size of the waterfowl population remaining after the hunting season.

Procedures and coverage in Michigan were approximately the same as in past years. Ground sample checks and aerial coverage were made on most known wintering areas. Because of bad flying weather in the southwestern part of the Lower Peninsula, counts there were confined to ground checks. The following table lists the comparative midwinter waterfowl populations for the years 1964-1970:

COMPARATIVE MIDWINTER WATERFOWL POPULATIONS FOR MICHIGAN

<u>Species</u>	<u>Number of Birds Observed 1964 - 1970</u>						
	<u>1970</u>	<u>1969</u>	<u>1968</u>	<u>1967</u>	<u>1966</u>	<u>1965</u>	<u>1964</u>
Mallard	9,717	10,033	7,067	6,888	9,139	7,371	12,143
Black Duck	4,580	5,318	3,268	4,073	18,460	13,245	14,197
Bufflehead	335	2,071	18	267	2,466	197	142
Redhead	444	2,218	304	602	9,430	2,154	980
Canvasback	3,661	2,971	8,956	1,870	1,363	10,438	12,976
Scaup	20,241	27,701	37,281	14,362	6,204	12,316	9,042
Goldeneye	10,833	19,495	1,888	3,442	6,786	7,750	8,281
Mergansers	2,550	947	575	1,504	4,385	3,310	5,274
Other Species	585	1,955	1,358	3,829	2,685	1,475	644
Total Ducks	52,946	72,709	60,733	36,837	60,918	58,256	63,679
Canada Geese	8,588	8,051	2,820	5,946	6,187	5,769	7,626
Swans	19	68	49	295	1,197	360	314
	--	--	--	(86)*	(3)*	(190)	(150)
Gulls	**	**	**	3,571	**	13,887	19,329

*Numbers in parenthesis are mute swans

**Not counted

Weather throughout much of December was cold and snowy, with exceptionally cold weather during the last week. However, the freeze-up date was late for southern Michigan. Exceptionally cold weather of late December extended into the first full week of January. Lake St. Clair, Saginaw Bay, Lake Erie, and parts of Lake Michigan and Huron were ice covered at the time of the inventory, with snow covering the entire state.

As one might expect, most wintering waterfowl are found in the Lower Peninsula, with the greatest concentrations in southeastern Michigan. The total number of ducks was down 28 percent from 1969, and 13 percent below 1968. The goose population increased 7 percent. The number of waterfowl wintering in Michigan is a reflection of weather -- not a change in the flyway population level.

All species, except the canvasback and merganser, were found in fewer numbers this year.

We cannot assay the status of the continental waterfowl population based on our data. To attempt to do so would lead to an erroneous picture of the flyway and continental populations. When complete data are made available by the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, a supplemental report will be prepared to evaluate the total 1970 waterfowl picture.

COMPARATIVE WINTER WATERFOWL POPULATIONS FOR MICHIGAN

Number of Birds Observed 1964 - 1970

Species	1970	1969	1968	1967	1966	1965	1964
Mallard	9,717	10,033	7,067	6,888	8,139	7,571	12,143
Black Duck	4,580	5,318	3,368	4,073	18,460	13,245	14,197
Bufflehead	335	5,071	18	367	3,466	187	143
Redhead	414	3,218	304	603	9,430	3,154	680
Canvasback	3,561	3,971	8,956	1,870	1,363	10,438	13,976
Scaup	20,241	27,701	37,281	14,363	6,304	12,316	9,043
Goldeneye	10,833	19,495	1,888	3,443	6,786	7,750	8,281
Merganser	3,550	947	575	1,304	4,388	3,310	3,374
Other Species	285	1,955	1,358	2,838	3,685	1,475	644
Total Ducks	52,946	72,709	60,733	56,837	60,918	58,556	63,679
Canada Goose	8,588	8,051	5,830	5,366	6,187	5,769	7,636
Swans	19	68	49	395	1,197	360	314
Gulls	**	**	**	(86)*	(3)*	(198)	(150)
	**	**	**	3,571	**	13,887	19,339

*Numbers in parenthesis are mute swans
 **Not counted

Weather throughout much of December was cold and snowy, with exceptionally cold weather during the last week. However, the freeze-up date was late for southern Michigan. Exceptionally cold weather of late December extended into the first full week of January. Lake St. Clair, Saginaw Bay, Lake Erie, and parts of Lake Michigan and Huron were ice covered at the time of the inventory, with snow covering the entire state.