

April 1980



WATER BIRDS IN BOSTON HARBOR

Tabulation of Census of March 16, 1980

Species	Nahant Bay	Area A	Area B	Area C	Area D	Area E	March Totals	Feb Totals
Common Loon				1			1	
Red-throated Loon					1		1	
Red-necked Grebe			4				4	
Horned Grebe	1		9	6	8	27	51	18
Great Cormorant	68	18	41	65	219	266	609	430
B.-c. Night-heron						1	1	1
Canada Goose					6	27	33	
Brant		19	40	257	786	207	1309	1100
Mallard		30		7	6		43	90
Black Duck		460	249	69	561	188	1527	1450
Pintail								1
Canvasback					1		1	9
Greater Scaup		2030	105	345	548	601	3629	3000
Lesser Scaup		1					1	
Common Goldeneye		49	358	54	274	398	1133	650
Barrow's Goldeneye						1	1	3
Bufflehead		177	96	281	526	271	1351	800
Oldsquaw			6		5		11	2
Common Eider	22	1634	1809		242	3114	6799	7000
W.-w. Scoter			8		46	13	67	33
Common Merganser								23
R.-b. Merganser	15	91	175	74	372	533	1245	700
Killdeer			1		1		2	1
Red Knot								5
Purple Sandpiper						100	100	15
Dunlin		120			93		213	140
Sanderling		90					90	2
Iceland Gull	1						1	2
Black-headed Gull			2				2	5
Bonaparte's Gull			2				2	7

Area A = Lynn Harbor
 Area B = Winthrop
 Area C = Central Harbor
 Area D = Quincy Bay
 Area E = Hingham Bay

Nahant Bay was censused by the Area A party. It was not censused in February. March totals do not include Nahant Bay data.

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SPECIAL TASL SEMINAR ON APRIL 25

Mr. Ralph Andrews of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service will be the featured guest at a seminar organized for active TASL participants. Mr. Andrews' long and varied experience in wildfowl management make him a valued commentator on our "Year of Boston Harbor" project. One of the aims of this seminar will be to relate the results of our three "winter" censuses of water birds to known wintering and breeding populations of these birds in eastern and central North America.

The seminar will be held at Soheil Zende's, 380 Broadway, Somerville (628-8990), on April 25, 1980. We will begin promptly at 8 PM, so please be a little early!

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This winter's last water bird census will take place on Sunday, April 13. Please call any of the leaders and volunteer to participate. If you would like to be assigned to an area, please call Craig Jackson at 864-1917.

APR 80

COMPARISON OF THE FEBRUARY AND MARCH CENSUSES

Overall, some 2,900 more birds were counted in Boston Harbor on March 16th than on February 17th (18,200 and 15,300, respectively). This substantial increase seemed to be clearly due to migration. Following are those species which changed their status by 50% or more (+, increase; -, decrease); only species with more than 10 individuals on both counts are considered. The sole decrease was Mallard, undoubtedly due to the opening of inland waters.

Horned Grebe +	Common Goldeneye +	Red-breasted Merganser +
Great Cormorant +	Bufflehead +	Purple Sandpiper +
Mallard -	White-winged Scoter +	Dunlin +

Harborwide, the sex ratios (M/F) of the following abundant species changed as indicated: (a smaller number means that relatively more females were present)

	February	March
Greater Scaup	2.03	1.60
Common Goldeneye	2.97	1.41
Bufflehead	2.53	2.39
Red-breasted Merganser	1.52	2.25

For Common Eider, the ratio of adult drakes to ducks and sub-adult drakes was 0.65 in February and 1.80 in March.

Except for the merganser (and neglecting the eider, which is a special case), the other species showed proportionally more females in March, perhaps reflecting both the tendency of females to winter farther south and a March migration. Interestingly, these trends were not common to all areas surveyed by TASL, demonstrating the importance of widespread coverage as opposed to sample counts. Only female Common Goldeneyes increased proportionally everywhere. And the anomalous abundance of female Red-breasted Mergansers resulted, in the main, from disproportionately low female counts from Quincy in March and high counts in February. If these counts were excluded, the merganser sex ratios for the remainder of the Harbor would have been 2.24 in February and 1.59 in March, quite in line with the other species.

The easy recognition of such clearcut trends in population movements is encouraging, demonstrating the effectiveness of the TASL method.

Leif J. Robinson

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Memo to TASL leaders:

Be sure to age/sex species whenever possible.

Be sure to use same lookout numbers for all field trips. For example, #1 on February 17 should be #1 on March 16. Identify at least once on log sheet.

Be sure to note the standard time when each site was censused.

L.J.R.

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Participants in TASL survey and census of water birds in Boston Harbor, March 16, 1980:

NAHANT: Robert Stymeist, leader; Dorothy Arvidson; Ann Clarke; Louise DeGiacomo.

WINTHROP: Craig Jackson, leader; Barbara Scheller; Denise Braunhardt.

CENTRAL: Soheil Zende, leader; Beth and Alan Levine; Sally Whitney.

QUINCY: David Brown, Leif Robinson, leaders; Ted Atkinson; Fred Bouchard; Kate Ellis; Eliot Taylor.

HINGHAM: Sibley Higginbotham, Wayne Petersen, leaders; Dave Clapp.

TASL News



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