

AGFC personnel conducted aerial waterfowl surveys December 3<sup>rd</sup> through December 6<sup>th</sup> in the following regions: Northeast, East Central, Northwest Arkansas River Valley, Southwest, and Southeast. Cold fronts moved through the state at the beginning and end of the week with warmer weather midweek leading to daytime high temperatures that ranged from the lower 50s to upper 60s with lows in the low 30s. Weather conditions were clear throughout the survey period resulting in good visibility. This survey was conducted at a similar time as last year.

Habitat conditions varied widely across the state. The Arkansas River Valley remained dry while northeast Arkansas was remained wet in many locations and dry in others. Conditions were normal or drier than normal in the east central, southeast, and southwest survey regions. Landowners had flooded more agricultural fields since the November survey but the acreage flooded appears to be less than most years, possibly because of high fuel costs.

The statewide total duck count of 550,905 65% increase from last year's count of 333,294 and the highest count since 2004 but is still below the 1985–2007 December survey average of 828,988 ducks (Figure 1). This December's mallard count of 338,893 is a 95% increase from last year's count of 173,510 and, like total duck numbers, is the highest count since 2004 but remains well below the long-term average of 528,447 mallards (Figure 2). The majority of the mallards counted during this survey were in the Northeast and East Central survey regions. Snow goose numbers (328,450 this year, 237,155 last year) were nearly double last month's survey total and much higher than the December 2006 count. Counts of white-fronted geese declined since the November 2007 survey, but the December survey total of 36,750 is greater than the December 2006 estimate of 25,325 white-fronted geese. A regional listing of survey totals is found in Table 1.

Although the December 2007 survey totals are up markedly from 2006 they remain below long-term averages. The good news for waterfowl hunters is that mallard numbers increased substantially from last month and this month's survey total is the highest December total duck and mallard count since 2004. Several migration events have occurred in conjunction with cold fronts during the past month even though cold weather has come and gone quickly. Recent waterfowl counts conducted by Missouri Department of Conservation staff indicated approximately 750,000 mallards on surveyed public lands, so many birds remain just north of Arkansas. Winter storms currently impacting Kansas City and St. Louis and more cold fronts that keep temperatures low for an extended period of time may provide the necessary incentive for some of these birds to move south.

Table 1. Number of waterfowl observed during the December 2007 Arkansas Aerial Waterfowl Survey.

<b>Species</b>	<b>Northwest</b>	<b>Southwest</b>	<b>Northeast</b>	<b>East Central</b>	<b>Southeast</b>	<b>Statewide</b>
Mallard	14,308	7540	149,350	137,325	30,370	<b>338,893</b>
Black Duck	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Gadwall	7930	1640	26,365	14,385	36,420	<b>86,740</b>
Wigeon	400	250	20,650	12,975	0	<b>14,045</b>
G.W. Teal	3970	2820	20,650	0	21,940	<b>49,380</b>
B.W. Teal	300	0	0	50	0	<b>350</b>
N. Shoveler	1925	425	15,230	2100	7410	<b>27,090</b>
N. Pintail	580	390	6220	975	18,330	<b>26,495</b>
Wood Duck	25	0	0	1435	25	<b>1485</b>
<b>ALL DABBLERS</b>	<b>29,438</b>	<b>13,065</b>	<b>218,235</b>	<b>169,245</b>	<b>114,495</b>	<b>544,478</b>

<b>Species</b>	<b>Northwest</b>	<b>Southwest</b>	<b>Northeast</b>	<b>East Central</b>	<b>Southeast</b>	<b>Statewide</b>
Ruddy	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Redhead	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Canvasback	0	0	420	2	0	<b>422</b>
Scaup	0	270	0	0	745	<b>1015</b>
Ring-necked	300	20	6180	0	2785	<b>9285</b>
Bufflehead	65	15	20	0	0	<b>100</b>
Mergansers	0	0	20	0	0	<b>20</b>
<b>ALL DIVERS</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>6620</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3545</b>	<b>10,867</b>

<b>Species</b>	<b>Northwest</b>	<b>Southwest</b>	<b>Northeast</b>	<b>East Central</b>	<b>Southeast</b>	<b>Statewide</b>
Snow/Ross' Geese	0	1250	171,400	51,500	104,300	<b>328,450</b>
White-fronted Canada Geese	0	50	15,755	4750	16,195	<b>36,750</b>
Geese	280	65	300	25	265	<b>935</b>
<b>ALL GEESE</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>1365</b>	<b>187,455</b>	<b>56,275</b>	<b>120,760</b>	<b>366,135</b>

**Figure 1. Aerial Waterfowl Survey Statewide Totals for All Ducks, 1985-2007.**

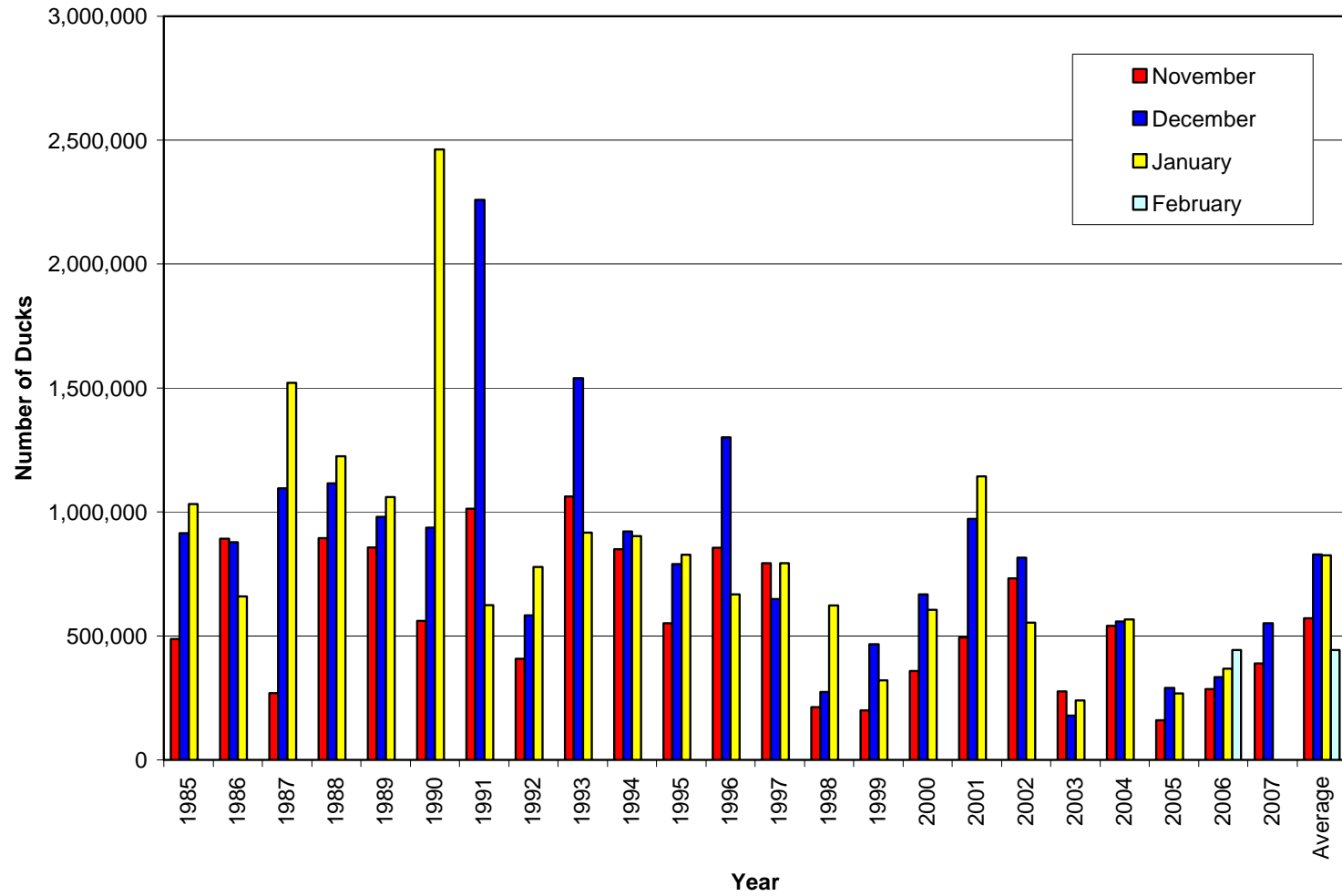


Figure 2. Aerial Waterfowl Survey Statewide Totals for Mallards, 1987-2007.

