

[From Winter 2002]

When It Rains, It Snows - Geese

Waterfowl returned to the Chincoteague refuge in 2002 and discovered something they didn't find in great supply last fall - WATER! Early season northeasters provided the refuge with some sorely needed rainfall.

As a result, water levels in the fresh-water impoundments have been higher this year, providing good conditions for the migrating and wintering waterfowl.

The snow goose population is the highest it's been in several years, with close to 46,000 geese observed this year compared to only 5,356 last year.

Almost 8,000 ducks were also counted on the refuge during the November surveys. This was an increase over last year's 2,805. However, the numbers are lower than we would expect. It may be a little early or may be the warmer than usual fall that accounts for the fewer numbers. But, we have water - and where there is water there will be birds.

Eva Savage
Park Ranger

(Photos by F. V. Moore)

