

## Ulster County May Census – 2015

Seven field parties participated in the 2015 *John Burroughs Natural History Society* Ulster County May Census (Century Day) on Saturday, May 09, 2015. This annual Big Day count is an attempt to document bird diversity in the county by identifying as many species as possible within Ulster County during a 24-hour time period. This year's effort once again included a group of young birders from the Maple Ridge Community in Ulster Park. We collectively encountered **156 species**, five fewer than last year, but a final tally that included several uncommon or rare individuals on a day that featured little in the way of mixed flocks of warblers or migrants in general.

Migratory bird activity leading up to count day was generally subdued and uneventful throughout a spring season characterized by consistently pleasant weather, southerly winds, above average warm temperatures, and a discernable lack of rain and storm systems that apparently facilitated a fast overnight migration through the county with nothing to stage any major movements to our south. Similar conditions prevailed on count day with temperatures in the 54-76 degree (F) range under partly to mostly cloudy skies with 5-10 mph southerly winds. A 70 % waning gibbous was obscured by cloud cover during the overnight period, but apparently did not hamper nocturnal bird activity. All three expected breeding owls were detected, and Whip-poor-wills were heard singing in two locations.

Highlights include a **Connecticut Warbler** seen well and heard singing on Maple Ridge Community lands in Ulster Park, very near the location one was observed last year in mid-May. A **White-eyed Vireo** was found on the Mt. Airy utility cut in Saugerties, a **Gadwall** was observed on Yankeetown Pond in Woodstock, and a lone female **Greater Scaup** lingered on the pond at Wilson State Park in Woodstock. All representing rare or previously unrecorded species for this county-wide May census. A lingering female **Bufflehead** on Kingston Reservoir, two **Horned Grebes** in the lower basin of Ashokan Reservoir, and one **Bonaparte's Gull** in a mixed flock of gulls on the jetty at Kingston Point were uncommonly good finds.

**Ruffed Grouse** were heard drumming at Wilson State Park, **Sora** and **Common Gallinule** were encountered at the Great Vly Wildlife Management Area in Saugerties, **Upland Sandpiper** was heard in the Shawangunk Grasslands NWR, **Great Horned Owl** was vocalizing late in their breeding season from the Town of Ulster, **Eastern Whip-poor-wills** were heard singing from West Saugerties Road and Onteora State Park, several **Alder Flycatchers** were in Wilson State Park and a **Willow Flycatcher** was along the Sleightsburg Spit. There were two separate reports of **Swainson's Thrush** (including one from Mohonk Preserve), a **Grasshopper Sparrow** was detected in the Shawangunk Grasslands, and a continuing flock of eight **Pine Siskins** visiting bird feeders at the Maple Ridge Community were exceptionally noteworthy highlights.

Despite all of the field parties reporting a total lack of mixed warbler flocks, a remarkable twenty-seven species of warblers were found during the course of the day, including **Tennessee, Hooded, Cerulean, and Bay-breasted Warbler**, in addition to the Connecticut Warbler. **Common Nighthawk, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Black-billed Cuckoo, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Blackpoll, Wilson's, and Canada Warbler**, and both **White-throated and White-crowned Sparrow** made the list this year. **Red-headed Woodpeckers** continue to breed at the Weston Road marsh on the New Paltz/Esopus town line, where an apparent breeding hen **Hooded Merganser** was also observed out in the swamp. **Osprey**, often missing in many past years as they move through our area to breed farther north, are now expected on this count and are apparently on the verge of breeding in our county for the first time in a century or more.

Noteworthy by their absence, **American Black Duck, Pied-billed Grebe, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Horned Lark, Golden-crowned Kinglet, and Lincoln's Sparrow** are expected on this count but were not detected this year. **Mourning and Cape May Warbler** were missed, as was **Least Bittern** and **Acadian Flycatcher**. Shorebirds are never very reliable in the county this late in the season, and a lack of rainfall and wet inundated agricultural land reduced their numbers and variety even further, with no **Lesser Yellowlegs, Wilson's Snipe**, or unusual shorebirds reported. **Brant** also failed to materialize during the waning moments of count daylight, but started passing through our area in good numbers in the days immediately following our census.

Overall a tough day of field birding where considerable effort, expertise, and knowledge of local haunts and habitats was required to find a respectable diversity of species. The following table summarizes species found by group, including field party effort. Thanks to all of the participants for their reports and effort documenting another Ulster County spring migration.

## 2015 Ulster County May Census Summary

Species	Group						
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Canada Goose	A	B	C	D		F	G
Mute Swan	A	B	C	D			
Wood Duck	A	B	C	D		F	
Gadwall		B					
Mallard	A	B	C	D		F	G
Greater Scaup	A	B		D			
Bufflehead	A	B	C				
Hooded Merganser		B					
Common Merganser	A	B	C	D			
Ruffed Grouse	A	B		D			
Wild Turkey	A	B	C	D	E	F	
Common Loon	A	B	C				
Horned Grebe	A		C				
Double-crested Cormorant	A	B	C			F	
Great Blue Heron	A	B	C	D	E	F	
Green Heron		B				F	
Black Vulture	A	B		D		F	
Turkey Vulture	A	B	C	D	E	F	
Osprey	A	B		D		F	
Bald Eagle		B	C	D		F	
Northern Harrier			C				
Cooper's Hawk	A	B		D		F	
Red-shouldered Hawk			C				
Broad-winged Hawk		B	C	D			
Red-tailed Hawk	A	B	C	D		F	G
Virginia Rail	A	B	C	D			
Sora				D			
Common Gallinule		B		D			
Killdeer	A	B	C	D		F	
Spotted Sandpiper	A	B	C	D			
Solitary Sandpiper	A	B		D		F	
Greater Yellowlegs				D			
Upland Sandpiper		B		D			
Least Sandpiper		B	C	D			
American Woodcock	A		C				
Bonaparte's Gull		B					
Ring-billed Gull	A	B	C	D		F	
Herring Gull	A	B		D		F	G
Great Black-backed Gull	A	B	C			F	
Rock Pigeon	A	B	C	D			
Mourning Dove	A	B	C	D		F	G
Yellow-billed Cuckoo						F	
Black-billed Cuckoo	A					F	
Eastern Screech-Owl		B				F	
Great Horned Owl		B					
Barred Owl	A	B	C				
Common Nighthawk						F	
Eastern Whip-poor-will	A	B					
Chimney Swift	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	A	B	C	D		F	
Belted Kingfisher	A	B	C	D		F	
Red-headed Woodpecker	A	B		D			
Red-bellied Woodpecker	A	B	C	D	E	F	G

Species	Group						
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	A	B	C	D			
Downy Woodpecker	A	B	C	D		F	G
Hairy Woodpecker	A	B	C	D		F	
Northern Flicker	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Pileated Woodpecker	A	B	C	D	E	F	
American Kestrel	A	B	C	D			
Eastern Wood-Pewee						F	
Alder Flycatcher		B					
Willow Flycatcher		B					
Least Flycatcher	A	B	C				
Eastern Phoebe	A	B	C	D	E	F	
Great Crested Flycatcher	A	B	C	D		F	
Eastern Kingbird	A	B	C	D		F	G
White-eyed Vireo		B					
Yellow-throated Vireo	A	B	C			F	
Blue-headed Vireo	A	B	C	D	E	F	
Warbling Vireo	A	B	C	D	E	F	
Red-eyed Vireo	A	B	C	D	E	F	
Blue Jay	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
American Crow	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Fish Crow	A	B	C	D		F	
Common Raven	A	B	C		E	F	
Purple Martin	A	B					
Tree Swallow	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
No. Rough-winged Swallow	A	B	C	D		F	
Bank Swallow	A	B	C	D			
Cliff Swallow	A	B	C	D			
Barn Swallow	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Black-capped Chickadee	A	B	C	D	E	F	
Tufted Titmouse	A	B	C	D	E	F	
Red-breasted Nuthatch	A	B	C	D			
White-breasted Nuthatch	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Brown Creeper	A	B	C	D			
House Wren	A	B	C			F	
Winter Wren	A	B	C			F	
Marsh Wren	A	B	C				
Carolina Wren	A	B	C				G
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	A	B	C	D	E	F	
Ruby-crowned Kinglet		B				F	
Eastern Bluebird	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Veery	A	B		D			
Swainson's Thrush					E	F	
Hermit Thrush				D	E		
Wood Thrush	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
American Robin	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Gray Catbird	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Brown Thrasher	A	B	C				
Northern Mockingbird	A	B	C	D		F	G
European Starling	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Cedar Waxwing		B				F	
Ovenbird	A	B	C	D	E	F	
Worm-eating Warbler	A	B			E	F	
Louisiana Waterthrush	A	B	C		E	F	

Species	Group					
	A	B	C	D	E	F
Northern Waterthrush			C			
Blue-winged Warbler	A	B	C		E	F
Black-and-white Warbler	A	B	C	D	E	F
Tennessee Warbler	A	B				F
Nashville Warbler		B	C			F
Connecticut Warbler						F
Common Yellowthroat	A	B	C	D	E	F
Hooded Warbler	A	B	C			
American Redstart	A	B	C	D	E	F
Cerulean Warbler		B	C		E	
Northern Parula	A	B		D	E	
Magnolia Warbler	A	B	C		E	F
Bay-breasted Warbler		B				
Blackburnian Warbler	A	B	C			
Yellow Warbler	A	B	C	D	E	F
Chestnut-sided Warbler	A	B	C	D		F
Blackpoll Warbler	A	B				F
Black-throated Blue Warbler	A	B	C	D	E	F
Pine Warbler	A	B	C			
Yellow-rumped Warbler	A	B	C	D	E	F
Prairie Warbler	A	B	C	D	E	
Black-throated Green Warbler	A	B	C	D	E	F
Canada Warbler						F
Wilson's Warbler	A					
Eastern Towhee	A	B	C	D	E	F
Chipping Sparrow	A	B	C	D	E	F

Species	Group						
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Field Sparrow	A	B	C		E	F	
Savannah Sparrow	A	B		D		F	
Grasshopper Sparrow	A	B		D			
Song Sparrow	A	B	C	D	E	F	
Swamp Sparrow	A	B	C	D			
White-throated Sparrow	A	B		D		F	
White-crowned Sparrow						F	
Dark-eyed Junco		B	C		E		
Scarlet Tanager	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Northern Cardinal	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	A	B	C		E	F	
Indigo Bunting	A	B	C		E	F	
Bobolink	A	B	C	D		F	
Red-winged Blackbird	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Eastern Meadowlark	A	B	C	D			
Common Grackle	A	B	C	D	E	F	
Brown-headed Cowbird	A	B	C	D		F	
Orchard Oriole	A	B	C	D		F	
Baltimore Oriole	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
House Finch	A	B	C			F	G
Purple Finch			C				
Pine Siskin						F	
American Goldfinch	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
House Sparrow	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
<b>Totals: 156 Species</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>29</b>

Field party effort:

- A** – Larry Alden, Steve Chorvas (2:15 a.m.– 8:45 p.m., 222 miles)
- B** – Jim Clinton, Mark DeDea, Peter Schoenberger (2:00 a.m.– 8:30 p.m., 305 miles)
- C** – Deb Ferguson, Frank Murphy (3:30 a.m.– 6:30 p.m., 200 miles)
- D** – Jessica Prockup, Wendy Tocci (4:22 a.m. – 8:30 p.m., 207 miles)
- E** – Dr. Eric Perlman (7:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m., Mohonk Preserve)
- F** – Arnold Meier and Maple Ridge Community youth birders (Primarily Maple Ridge lands, Ulster Park)
- G** – Charles and Donna Seymour (Kingston, Port Ewen, Shaupeneak Ridge)
- M** – Miscellaneous Reports (no miscellaneous or incidental reports were received this year)