

New York State January Waterfowl Count – January 19, 2013

Nine field observers in five parties participated in the 2013 Ulster County segment of the annual NYSOA New York State January Waterfowl Count on Saturday, 19 January, encountering a total of **7,176 individuals** of **17 species** during a 9.5-hour effort. Species diversity and waterfowl abundance was exceptionally good this year, equalling our all time high count of 17 species in 2008 and recording our second highest number of individuals following last year's impressive 8,874.

Relatively mild mid-day temperatures that consistently dropped below freezing at night preceded the count and resulted in widespread areas of open water both locally and regionally, with very little snow covering agricultural fields and pastures. Count day temperatures reflected this weather pattern, ranging from a chilly 28° (F) at sunrise in Saugerties to a very comfortable afternoon high of 42° (F) on the Lomontville Flats in the Town of Hurley. Partly cloudy skies provided intermittent periods of sunshine and intervals of overcast throughout the day, with variable winds that were pleasantly calm inland, but very brisk and cold along exposed areas of the Hudson Riverfront.

Major rivers, creeks, and reservoirs were entirely open; smaller ponds, marshes, and lakes ranged from partially open to completely frozen. The Hudson River was extremely windy and turbulent with considerable wave action. The Wallkill River and Rondout Creek were both flowing swiftly. Esopus Creek was raging over the Glenierie falls and rapids but moderated downstream in Saugerties, providing some placid shelter for several small flocks of waterfowl. No precipitation was recorded during the count day, and there was no view-hampering fog to contend with this year.

Ashokan Reservoir was completely open and produced a single Common Loon in the lower basin and an adult Bald Eagle resting on an exposed rock formation near the spillway. Stone Ridge Pond on Mill Dam Road was approximately half open, harboring only a relatively small number of Mallards (109), four Mute Swans, and was surprisingly devoid of the large numbers of Canada Geese that typically congregate on this pond in mid-January. Historically productive grazing pastures at Blue Chip Farm in southern Ulster County also lacked large concentrations of geese, perhaps a direct result of a massive flock of 3,719 Canada Geese found congregating a short distance to the southeast on the Wallkill River near the Ulster/Orange County line.

Mark DeDea discovered **two Cackling Geese** (a first record for this count) associating with this large Wallkill River flock; and one **Snow Goose**, a lone **Ring-necked Duck**, and eight **Hooded Mergansers** were also present along this very productive stretch of the river. One **Green-winged Teal** and a **Long-tailed Duck** were found in the Hudson River at Kingston Point Beach, and a small flock of eight ducks on a largely frozen beaver pond along County Rte 2 in Kripplebush consisted of seven **Northern Pintails** (1 male/6 females) and one **Gadwall**. The Gadwall representing a first record for the nine years I have compiled this survey, and potentially a first historical record for this count.

Canada Geese once again dominated the abundance numbers, accounting for 6,465 individuals and 90% of all waterfowl observed on this year's count. Thirteen Bald Eagles were encountered during the waterfowl count, consistent with a partial southward movement of some migrant birds from recently frozen water to our north, but not yet on a sufficient scale to concentrate large numbers of eagles in the Mid-Hudson reach.

Additional non-waterfowl highlights include a flock of 45 Common Redpolls and a Merlin at Shawangunk Grasslands NWR, approximately 40 Common Redpolls in a small tree adjacent to the compost piles off Fording Place on the Lomontville Flats, two Belted Kingfishers, and one Great Blue Heron. No unusual gulls were observed, and no banded waterfowl were reported.

The following table summarizes the Ulster County effort by territory, followed by field party effort and area descriptions. Thanks to all of this year's field observers for their time and effort documenting Ulster County winter waterfowl. Next year's Ulster County segment of the NYS January Waterfowl Count is scheduled for **Saturday, January 18, 2014**.

New York State January Waterfowl Count
Ulster County Area Summary - January 19, 2013

Total	Species	A	B	C	D	E	F	M
1	Snow Goose					1		
2	Cackling Goose					2		
6,465	Canada Goose	325	592	495	3	4,409	641	
16	Mute Swan	7	3				6	
1	Gadwall	1						
14	American Black Duck		14					
277	Mallard	155	32	37		41	12	
7	Northern Pintail	7						
1	Green-winged Teal		1					
1	Ring-necked Duck					1		
2	<i>Scaup species</i>			2				
1	Long-tailed Duck		1					
1	Bufflehead	1						
136	Common Goldeneye	34		98		1	3	
11	Hooded Merganser		2	1		8		
239	Common Merganser	101	46	58	3	29	2	
1	Common Loon	1						
7,176	Total Individuals	632	691	691	6	4,492	664	
17	Total Species	9	8	6	2	8	5	

13	Bald Eagle (Adult / Juvenile)	4A/4J	1A/1J	1J	1A	1A	0	
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Field Parties, Effort and Area Descriptions (sector leaders are listed first)

Group A: Steve Chorvas (7:30 a.m.- 5:00 p.m.) 9.50 hours.

The Great Vly WMA; Hudson River- Bristol Beach State Park (Saugerties), Malden Park, Latham Circle, Saugerties Lighthouse, Falling Waters Preserve, Glasco Park; Esopus Creek- Glenerie Falls to confluence with Hudson River and Fording Place at Hurley; Lomontville cornfields and holding ponds; Stone Ridge Pond; Ashokan Reservoir (upper and lower basin, Esopus outflow); Sawerkill at HITS; Kripplebush CR 2 pond; Kenozia Lake; Onteora Lake; Blue Mtn. Reservoir.

Group B: Mark DeDea (7:00 a.m.- 10:07 a.m.) 3.00 hours.

Hudson River- Ulster Landing County Park, Rider Park, Post Park, East Kingston, Kingston Point; Esopus Creek (Town of Ulster and Kingston); Interstate 587 pond.

Group C: Lynn and Allan Bowdery, Wendy Tocci (10:50 a.m.- 4:10 p.m.) 5.25 hours.

Rondout Creek- Rosendale to Kingston waterfront, including East Strand; Sturgeon Pool; Hudson River- Sleightsburgh, Port Ewen Beach, Esopus Meadows. Springtown and Libertyville Road agricultural fields in New Paltz.

Group D: Mark DeDea (10:25 a.m.- 2:15 p.m.) 4.00 hours.

Hudson River- Black Creek confluence (Winding Brook Road, Esopus), Mariner's Restaurant (Highland), Dock Street (Marlboro); Humpo Marsh and Harcourt Wildlife Sanctuary (New Paltz).

Group E: Frank Murphy, Deb Ferguson (8:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.) 6.00 hours.

Wallkill River- Wallkill north to Tillson; Shawangunk Creek; Rondout Creek- Rosendale; Watch Tower Farm, Blue Chip Farm.

Group F: Evelyn & Bob Rifenburg (9:15 a.m.- 3:33 p.m.) 6.25 hours.

Sawkill Creek (Zena to Lake Katrine); Kingston Reservoirs #1 and #4; Esopus Creek (Leggs Mills Rd bridge, Lake Katrine); Rondout Creek- Accord to High Falls; Bennekil Pond, and area fields.

M: Miscellaneous Reports (not covered by an organized group).