

Ulster County May Census – 2016

The annual *John Burroughs Natural History Society* Ulster County May Bird Census (a/k/a Century Day) was conducted on Saturday, May 14, 2016. This “Big Day” count is an attempt to document bird diversity in the county by identifying as many species of birds as possible within Ulster County during a single day. This year’s effort included reports from eight field parties as well as several casual observations. The count occurred on the latest possible calendar date (second Saturday of May). Collectively we encountered **165 species**, nine more than last year, and four more than 2014. The final tally included several uncommon or rare species on a day that was preceded by a very productive May migration period that featured unusually good diversity and numbers of individuals over an extended span of time.

Count day temperatures ranged from 45°- 72° (F) under mostly to partly sunny skies with 5-10 mph southwesterly winds. No precipitation materialized on count day. A 60% waxing gibbous provided some nocturnal illumination. All three expected breeding owls were detected, and Whip-poor-wills were heard singing from two distinct locations.

The outstanding highlight of this year’s effort was a staked-out **Barn Owl** at a farm silo nest site in southern Ulster County. **Philadelphia Vireo** at the Great Vly Wildlife Management Area (WMA) in Saugerties was also a rare find for this count, as was a **Gray-cheeked Thrush** seen at the Maple Ridge Community property in Ulster Park. An **American Bittern** was observed flying north over Lauren Tice Road heading towards the Great Vly WMA in Saugerties, a **Red-breasted Merganser** was found out in the lower basin of Ashokan Reservoir, and one of an apparent breeding pair of **Merlins** was recorded from Forsyth Nature Center in Kingston. **Peregrine Falcon** was found in two locations, the Jockey Hill Road utility cut in Kingston and the Trapps in the Shawangunk Mountains of southern Ulster County.

Ruffed Grouse were heard drumming at Wilson State Park, two **Least Bitterns**, a **Sora**, **Common Gallinule**, and **Pied-billed Grebe** were all detected at the Great Vly WMA. **Black-crowned Night-Heron** was found at Kingston Point. **Eastern Whip-poor-wills** were heard from Kenco’s on Rte. 28 and from West Saugerties Road, **Great Horned Owl** was heard in the Shawangunk Grasslands National Wildlife Refuge (SGNWR), and four **Common Nighthawks** were seen hawking insects over the Great Vly WMA during the early morning hour and again late day just prior to dusk.

Acadian Flycatcher (Dug Hill Rd.), **Alder Flycatcher** (Wilson State Park), **Willow Flycatcher** (SGNWR), two **Swainson’s Thrushes** (Mill Rd. and Maple Ridge Community), several **Tennessee Warblers** (multiple locations), **Mourning Warbler** (Jockey Hill Rd.), two **Hooded Warblers** (Mill Rd. and Jenny Lane), several **Cape May Warblers** (multiple locations), **Cerulean Warbler** (Snyder Field, Rosendale), **Bay-breasted Warbler** (Great Vly WMA), **Grasshopper Sparrow** (SGNWR), and a few lingering **Pine Siskins** at Maple Ridge Community feeders were also noteworthy for this count.

Red-headed Woodpeckers continue to breed at the Weston Road marsh on the New Paltz/Esopus town line. **Osprey** were recorded again this year at a nest site off Kingston Point. Both **Black-billed** and **Yellow-billed Cuckoos** were recorded this year, as were **Golden-crowned** and **Ruby-crowned Kinglets**, though it required a hike up Slide Mountain in the Catskills to detect a Golden-crowned. **Hooded** and **Common Merganser**, and **White-throated**, **White-crowned**, and **Lincoln’s Sparrow** all made this year’s list. A very respectable twenty-eight species of warblers were encountered during the count day.

More or less expected species that were missed this year include **American Black Duck**, **Upland Sandpiper**, **Wilson’s Snipe**, and **Horned Lark**. **Brant** were also absent from this year’s count despite several thousand moving up the Hudson River just two days earlier. With the exception of the Red-breasted Merganser, we did not find any odd lingering ducks, or unusual gulls, terns, or shorebirds.

The following table summarizes species found by group, including field party effort. Thanks to all of the participants for their effort.

Steve M. Chorvas – compiler

2016 Ulster County May Census Summary

Species	Group									
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	M	
Canada Goose	A	B	C	D		F	G	H		
Mute Swan	A	B						H		
Wood Duck	A	B	C	D		F	G	H		
Mallard	A	B	C	D		F	G	H	M	
Hooded Merganser	A	B								
Common Merganser	A	B	C					H		
Red-breasted Merganser		B								
Ruffed Grouse	A	B		D						
Wild Turkey	A	B	C	D		F		H		
Common Loon	A	B						H		
Pied-billed Grebe	A	B		D						
Double-crested Cormorant	A	B	C	D		F	G	H		
American Bittern		B								
Least Bittern									M2	
Great Blue Heron	A	B	C	D	E	F				
Green Heron	A			D		F		H		
Black-crowned Night-Heron		B								
Black Vulture	A	B		D		F		H		
Turkey Vulture	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	M	
Osprey	A	B	C	D			G			
Bald Eagle	A	B	C	D		F				
Northern Harrier		B						H		
Sharp-shinned Hawk						F				
Cooper's Hawk				D		F				
Red-shouldered Hawk	A			D		F				
Broad-winged Hawk		B								
Red-tailed Hawk	A	B	C	D	E	F		H	M	
Virginia Rail	A	B		D						
Sora	A									
Common Gallinule	A	B		D				H		
Killdeer	A	B	C	D		F	G			
Spotted Sandpiper	A	B	C	D		F				
Solitary Sandpiper	A	B		D		F				
Greater Yellowlegs		B		D						
Lesser Yellowlegs	A	B		D						
Least Sandpiper	A	B	C	D			G			
American Woodcock	A	B		D		F				
Ring-billed Gull	A	B	C	D		F		H		
Herring Gull		B				F				
Great Black-backed Gull	A	B	C	D		F				
Rock Pigeon	A	B		D				H		
Mourning Dove	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	M	
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	A	B				F	G			
Black-billed Cuckoo	A		C	D		F				
Barn Owl		B								
Eastern Screech-Owl		B								
Great Horned Owl		B		D		F				
Barred Owl	A	B		D				H		
Common Nighthawk	A			D						
Eastern Whip-poor-will	A	B		D						
Chimney Swift	A	B	C	D		F	G	H		
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	A	B	C	D	E	F			M	
Belted Kingfisher	A		C	D		F		H		

Species	Group									
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	M	
Red-headed Woodpecker	A	B		D						
Red-bellied Woodpecker	A	B		D	E	F	G	H	M	
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	A	B	C							
Downy Woodpecker	A	B	C	D		F	G	H	M	
Hairy Woodpecker	A	B	C			F		H		
Northern Flicker	A	B	C	D		F	G	H		
Pileated Woodpecker	A	B	C			F	G	H	M	
American Kestrel	A	B		D				H		
Merlin		B		D						
Peregrine Falcon		B								
Eastern Wood-Pewee	A	B	C	D		F				
Acadian Flycatcher		B								
Alder Flycatcher		B		D						
Willow Flycatcher	A	B		D						
Least Flycatcher	A	B	C	D		F	G			
Eastern Phoebe	A	B	C	D	E	F		H	M	
Great Crested Flycatcher	A	B	C	D		F		H		
Eastern Kingbird	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H		
Yellow-throated Vireo	A	B	C	D		F				
Blue-headed Vireo	A	B	C	D		F				
Warbling Vireo	A	B	C	D	E	F		H		
Philadelphia Vireo		B								
Red-eyed Vireo	A	B	C	D	E	F		H		
Blue Jay	A	B	C	D	E	F		H	M	
American Crow	A	B	C	D		F	G	H		
Fish Crow	A	B	C	D		F		H		
Common Raven	A	B	C	D		F		H	M	
Purple Martin	A	B		D						
Tree Swallow	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H		
No. Rough-winged Swallow	A	B	C	D		F		H		
Bank Swallow	A	B	C	D				H		
Cliff Swallow	A	B	C							
Barn Swallow	A	B	C	D		F		H		
Black-capped Chickadee	A	B	C	D	E	F		H	M	
Tufted Titmouse	A	B	C	D	E	F		H	M	
Red-breasted Nuthatch									M1	
White-breasted Nuthatch	A	B	C	D	E	F		H	M	
Brown Creeper	A	B								
House Wren	A	B	C	D		F		H		
Winter Wren	A	B	C			F				
Marsh Wren	A	B	C	D						
Carolina Wren	A	B	C	D		F		H	M	
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	A	B	C	D	E	F		H		
Golden-crowned Kinglet									M1	
Ruby-crowned Kinglet		B		D						
Eastern Bluebird	A	B	C	D	E	F		H	M	
Veery	A	B	C	D		F		H		
Gray-cheeked Thrush						F				
Swainson's Thrush			C			F				
Hermit Thrush	A	B	C							
Wood Thrush	A	B	C	D		F	G	H	M	
American Robin	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	M	
Gray Catbird	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	M	

Species	Group										
	A	B			E	F					
Brown Thrasher	A	B			E	F					
Northern Mockingbird	A	B		D		F	G				
European Starling	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	M		
Cedar Waxwing	A	B				F					
Ovenbird	A	B	C	D		F		H			
Worm-eating Warbler	A	B		D		F					
Louisiana Waterthrush	A	B	C	D		F			M		
Northern Waterthrush	A	B		D				H			
Blue-winged Warbler	A	B	C	D		F					
Black-and-white Warbler	A	B	C	D		F					
Tennessee Warbler	A	B				F					
Nashville Warbler	A	B	C			F					
Mourning Warbler	A	B	C		E	F		H			
Common Yellowthroat	A	B	C	D	E	F		H	M		
Hooded Warbler		B	C	D							
American Redstart	A	B	C	D	E	F		H			
Cape May Warbler	A	B				F					
Cerulean Warbler		B		D							
Northern Parula	A	B	C	D		F					
Magnolia Warbler	A	B	C			F	G				
Bay-breasted Warbler		B									
Blackburnian Warbler	A	B	C	D							
Yellow Warbler	A	B	C	D		F	G	H			
Chestnut-sided Warbler	A	B	C	D			G				
Blackpoll Warbler		B				F		H			
Black-throated Blue Warbler	A	B	C	D	E	F					
Pine Warbler	A	B									
Yellow-rumped Warbler	A	B	C	D			G	H			
Prairie Warbler	A	B		D		F					
Black-throated Green Warbler	A	B	C	D	E	F					

Species	Group										
		B	C								
Canada Warbler		B	C								
Wilson's Warbler		B		D					H		
Eastern Towhee	A	B	C	D		F		H			
Chipping Sparrow	A	B	C	D	E	F		H	M		
Field Sparrow	A	B	C	D		F					
Savannah Sparrow	A	B		D		F					
Grasshopper Sparrow	A	B		D					H		
Song Sparrow	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H			
Lincoln's Sparrow						F					
Swamp Sparrow	A	B		D					H		
White-throated Sparrow	A	B	C	D		F	G				
White-crowned Sparrow	A	B									
Dark-eyed Junco	A	B	C								
Scarlet Tanager	A	B	C	D		F		H			
Northern Cardinal	A	B	C	D	E	F		H	M		
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	A	B	C	D		F		H	M		
Indigo Bunting	A	B	C	D		F		H			
Bobolink	A	B	C	D		F		H			
Red-winged Blackbird	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	M		
Eastern Meadowlark	A	B		D					H		
Common Grackle	A	B	C	D	E	F		H	M		
Brown-headed Cowbird	A	B	C	D		F		H	M		
Orchard Oriole	A	B	C	D		F					
Baltimore Oriole	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H			
House Finch	A	B	C	D		F		H			
Purple Finch	A	B	C	D							
Pine Siskin						F					
American Goldfinch	A	B	C	D	E	F		H	M		
House Sparrow	A	B	C	D		F	G	H			
Totals: 165 Species	134	150	98	120	33	106	33	78	32		

Field party effort:

- A** – Larry Alden, Jackie Bogardus, Steve Chorvas (2:20 a.m.– 9:05 p.m., 218 miles)
- B** – Jim Clinton, Mark DeDea, Peter Schoenberger (1:23 a.m.– 9:08 p.m., 313 miles)
- C** – Deb Ferguson, Frank Murphy (8:00 a.m.– 7:45 p.m.)
- D** – Jessica Prockup, Wendy Tocci (2:02 a.m. – 7:23 p.m., 263 miles)
- E** – Margaret Segall (Zena Rd. and Thorn Preserve)
- F** – Arnold Meier, Dennis Warehaus, Kent Warner and Maple Ridge school children (6:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Primarily Maple Ridge Community lands, Ulster Park)
- G** – Donna Seymour (6:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Kingston Point and Shaupeneak Ridge)
- H** – David Hayes (5:30 a.m. – 7:50 p.m.)
- M** – Miscellaneous Reports - Annie Mardiney (M – Rosendale area), Eric Hough (M1 – Slide Mtn.), Deb Weltsch (M2 – Great Vly WMA)