

New York State January Waterfowl Count Report – 2018

The Ulster County segment of the annual NYSOA New York State January Waterfowl Count was conducted on January 13, 2018. Considerable ice, raging water, and flooded fields presented challenges and opportunities for the seventeen participants in six field parties as we collectively tallied **2,041 individuals** representing **13 species** during 8.5 hours of effort (8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.). Diversity was close to average (12.1 ten-year average); however, abundance was well below our ten-year average of 6,244 and a new record low for the fourteen-year period that I have compiled this count. Perhaps not surprisingly, this year's count was in stark contrast to last year's remarkable tally of 13,500 individuals under more hospitable environmental conditions.

Two weeks of consistently frigid air temperatures solidified most bodies of water, followed by a very brief warm-up with heavy rain just prior to the count, setting the stage for a count day featuring substantial ice with rapid and high water flows in turbulent channels. Count day temperatures ranged from a morning high of 32° (F), dropping to an afternoon low of 29° (F). Early morning rain and fog gave way to overcast skies by 9:00 a.m. and eventually cleared somewhat, with partly sunny skies by mid-day. Winds were generally calm to 10-15 mph.

Most of the Hudson River was covered in ice and largely devoid of waterfowl. Kingston Point produced twenty Mallards and eight American Black Ducks, and a few Common Mergansers were found off Rider Park in the Town of Ulster and in a small area of open water farther south at Mariner's Restaurant in Highland. Traditionally productive sites in the north (Saugerties Lighthouse and Glasco) were iced over. Inland rivers, creeks, and a few ponds and fields provided the most attractive habitat for this year's survey.

The Wallkill River was frozen in slower moving areas but raging in typically rapid areas. Rondout Creek was open and roaring in some areas, partly to mostly frozen at other locations. Esopus Creek was open in patches near the confluence of the Hudson River, frozen solid off Saugerties Beach, raging fast and high over Glenerie Falls, and flowing briskly in the shallows at Fording Place, with solid ice in the more tranquil reaches. The upper basin of Ashokan Reservoir was 50% open, the lower basin 75%-100% frozen, attracting just two **Horned Grebes**. Kingston Reservoirs and Blue Mountain Reservoir in Saugerties were entirely frozen.

Stone Ridge Pond was 90% frozen, with open water restricted to the typically open back inflow area where three **Gadwall** and two **American Wigeon** lingered along with 155 Mallards. Another 190 Mallards were found seeking refuge in the open waters of the pond's outflow stream. Most inland ponds, lakes, and marshes were entirely or mostly frozen, with the exception of seeps, inflows, and aerated sites utilizing pumps to maintain limited areas of open water. Agricultural fields ranged from entirely open with little in the way of snow or ice cover, to substantially flooded, hosting this year's only **Wood Duck** (Bruyn Turnpike), twenty-one **American Black Ducks**, and two **Northern Pintail** (Denniston Road).

Canada Geese typically make up a very large percentage of our total number of individuals on this mid-winter survey and this year's total of 1,263 represents a new 14-year low, well below our ten-year average of 4,874 birds. **Mute Swans** continue to overwinter with the assistance of public feeding at two locations; a pair in the aerated pond at Lazy Swan Golf Course in Saugerties, and three in the pond at Buttermilk Inn and Spa in Milton. There were no unusual species encountered this year, and a total of **29 Bald Eagles** (20 adults and 9 sub-adults) were noted during the course of the waterfowl count.

The following table summarizes the 2018 Ulster County results by area, followed by field party effort and area descriptions. Thanks to all of the participants for providing good coverage of the county under challenging conditions. Next year's Ulster County segment of the NYSOA NYS January Waterfowl Count is scheduled for **Saturday, January 19, 2019**.

New York State January Waterfowl Count
Ulster County Area Summary - January 13, 2018

Total	Species	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	M
1	Snow Goose					1			
1,263	Canada Goose	62		20	20	1,161			
5	Mute Swan	2			3				
1	Wood Duck					1			
3	Gadwall	3							
2	American Wigeon	2							
34	American Black Duck		8	2		23		1	
669	Mallard	352	21	29	75	143	47		2
2	Northern Pintail					2			
3	Common Goldeneye					3			
4	Hooded Merganser	2				1		1	
52	Common Merganser	1	4	2	4	1		12	28
2	Horned Grebe							2	
2,041	Total Individuals	424	33	53	102	1,336	47	16	30
13	Total Species	7	3	4	4	9	1	4	2

29	Bald Eagle (20 Adult /9 Sub-adult)	2A/2S	3A/1S	2A	0	4A/2S	1A	2A/4S	6A
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Field Parties, Effort and Area Descriptions

Group A: Steve Chorvas (9:30 a.m.- 4:30 p.m.) 7.00 hours.

The Great Vly WMA; Hudson River (Bristol Beach State Park, Malden Park, Latham Circle, Saugerties Lighthouse, Glasco Park); Esopus Creek (Glenerie Falls to confluence with Hudson River and Forging Place at Hurley); Lazy Swan pond; Blue Mountain Reservoir; Sawyer Kill at HITS; Lomontville cornfields and holding ponds; Stone Ridge Pond.

Group B: Mark DeDea, Jim Clinton, Peter Schoenberger (8:00 a.m.- 10:30 a.m.) 2.5 hours.

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

Group C: Lin Fagan, Allan and Lynn Bowdery, Elizabeth Moffett (12:00 p.m.- 3:00 p.m.) 3.00 hours.

Rondout Creek (Rosendale to Kingston waterfront, including East Strand); Sturgeon Pool; New Salem Lake; Hudson River (Sleightsburgh, Port Ewen Beach).

Group D: Dave Hayes (12:25 p.m.- 1:47 p.m.) 1.50 hours

Hudson River- Lamont Landing (Esopus), Mariner's Restaurant (Highland), Dock Street (Marlboro); and area ponds.

Group E: Mark DeDea, Jim Clinton, Peter Schoenberger (10:57 a.m.- 2:15 p.m.) 3.25 hours.

Wallkill River (Wallkill north to Tillson); Shawangunk Creek; Watch Tower Farm, Old Fort Rd. pond, Wallkill Prison grounds, Blue Chip Farm; and area fields; Springtown Road agricultural fields in New Paltz.

Group F: Jessica Prockup, Wendy Tocci, Annie Mardiney (8:30 a.m.- 12:30 p.m.) 4.00 hours.

Cooper Lake, Spring Lake, Binnewater Lake, Williams Lake; Rondout Creek (Accord to High Falls); Sawkill Creek (Zena to Lake Katrine, including Big Deep); Esopus Creek (Leggs Mills Rd bridge, Lake Katrine); Kingston Reservoirs #1 and #4; Bennekil Pond; and area ponds and fields.

Group G: Dave Hayes, Loren Quinby, Dan Spencer (9:02 a.m. - 3:45 p.m.) 6.75 hours.

Ashokan Reservoir (upper and lower basin, Esopus outflow); Kenozia Lake; Onteora Lake; Yankeetown Pond; Wilson SP.; Esopus Creek (Mt. Tremper and Phoenicia, including Catskill Interpretive Center); and area ponds.

Group M: Miscellaneous Reports –Rufus Wareham, Dwight Wareham (Hudson River at Mount Community, south of Pell Landing. 3:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m., 1.5 hours). Arnie Meier (Hudson River- Esopus Meadows; Spring House Pond and Hellbrook, Mapleridge Community, Ulster Park - .5 hours). Total 2.00 hours.