

## New York State January Waterfowl Count Report – 2020

The Ulster County segment of the annual NYSOA New York State January Waterfowl Count was conducted on January 18, 2020. Twenty participants in eight field parties encountered a remarkable **21 species** and **10,012 individual** waterfowl, surpassing our previous high count of 17 species recorded in 2016, 2013, and 2008. Our ten-year average for this countywide effort is 11.8 species and 6,225 individuals. Typical for this annual mid-winter survey, two species accounted for 94% of our total abundance, **Canada Goose** (82%) and **Mallard** (12%). A total of **16 Bald Eagles** (9 adults and 7 sub-adults) were observed during the course of the waterfowl count.

Extensive open water, exposed fields, and extremely mild air temperatures less than a week prior to the count encouraged a noticeable movement of waterfowl into the mid-Hudson River region, with air temperatures reaching the upper 60's (F) on two consecutive days over the previous weekend. Cold arctic air eventually moved into our area mid-week and remained in place, freezing smaller and slower-moving bodies of water. This sudden change induced some waterfowl to congregate in significant areas of open water on creeks, rivers, and reservoirs, and an exceptionally good diversity of waterfowl remained in the county for count day.

The highlight of this year's survey was principally the magnitude of diversity encountered on a waterfowl count that typically tallies in the low teens. Although there was no particular outstanding species this year, **Hooded Mergansers** were found in record high numbers (35), surpassing our previous high count of 20, more than four times our ten-year average of 8.2/year. A single **Lesser Scaup** was the first record for this species in over 15 years, and three **Long-tailed Ducks** was a new high count compared to the past 15 years. With considerable effort, one **Cackling Goose** was found in a very large flock of approximately 3,250 **Canada Geese** amassing in the Wallkill River in the Village of Wallkill. One **Snow Goose** was observed on Spring Lake, and fifteen more were reported from River Road on the Hudson River.

All major bodies of water were mostly open, with creeks and rivers flowing at a moderate rate. The presence of abundant open water in the Hudson River and Ashokan Reservoir contributed significantly to our species diversity, while the Wallkill River hosted our largest concentration of waterfowl. Stone Ridge Pond was roughly half open and continues to attract large numbers of **Canada Geese** (1,500), **Mallards** (420), and our only **Northern Pintail**, though the mix and density of waterfowl on the pond fluctuates considerably throughout the course of a typical day.

Rondout Reservoir was completely open with a raft of 25 **American Black Ducks** visible on the water. The marsh at the Great Vly WMA was entirely frozen, as is often the case this time of the year, and the lagoon at Kingston Point was half open hosting just a few Mallards and Common Mergansers. Most area ponds had frozen over late in the week, with a few exceptions, including those with aeration pumps or underground inflows.

Count day temperatures ranged from a frigid morning low 14° (F) to an afternoon high 21° (F). Winds were generally calm with an occasional light breeze under overcast skies until mid-afternoon (1:00 p.m.) when a snowstorm moved into the area from the south, severely limiting visibility during the final two to three hours of daylight.

The following table summarizes the 2020 Ulster County results by area, followed by field party effort and area descriptions. Thanks to all of the field observers for providing extensive coverage of the county once again this year. Next year's Ulster County segment of the NYSOA NYS January Waterfowl Count is scheduled for **Saturday, January 16, 2021**.

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***New York State January Waterfowl Count***  
**Ulster County Area Summary - January 18, 2020**

Total	Species	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	M
16	Snow Goose						1			15
1	Cackling Goose					1				
8,242	Canada Goose	2,134	59	213	490	4,490	831	16	2	7
8	Mute Swan	1		4	1			2		
2	Wood Duck			2						
8	Gadwall		8							
1	American Wigeon	1								
58	American Black Duck	10	1	2	4	14			25	2
1,202	Mallard	680	31	98	111	21	175	5	46	35
1	Northern Pintail	1								
2	Canvasback									2
2	Greater Scaup		2							
1	Lesser Scaup									1
3	Long-tailed Duck	2								1
8	Bufflehead			5				3		
143	Common Goldeneye	16	24	101		2				
35	Hooded Merganser	19		3			11			2
275	Common Merganser	34	13	145	15	14	23	10		21
1	Common Loon	1								
2	Horned Grebe	2								
1	Double-crested Cormorant									1
<b>10,012</b>	<b>Total Individuals</b>	<b>2,901</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>547</b>	<b>621</b>	<b>4,542</b>	<b>1,041</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>21</b>	<b>Total Species</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	

<b>16</b>	Bald Eagle (9 Adult /7 Sub-ad.)	<b>2A/3S</b>	<b>1A</b>	<b>1A/2S</b>		<b>2A/1S</b>	<b>1A</b>	<b>1A/1S</b>		<b>1A</b>
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**Field Parties, Effort and Area Descriptions**

**Group A:** Steve Chorvas, Alan Beebe, Ariane Giudicelli, Wes John-Alder, Bob Miller (7:00 a.m.- 2:30 p.m.) 7.5 hours.  
 Great Vly WMA; Hudson River (Bristol Beach State Park, Malden Park, Latham Circle, Glasco Park); Esopus Creek (Glenerie Falls to confluence with Hudson River and Town of Hurley, including Forging Place); Lazy Swan pond; Blue Mountain Reservoir; Sawyer Kill at HITS; Hurley Flats cornfields and holding ponds; Ashokan Reservoir (lower basin), Stone Ridge Pond.

**Group B:** Mark DeDea, Peter Schoenberger (8:11 a.m.- 10:10 a.m.) 2 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:** Allan Bowdery, Lynn Bowdery, Lin Fagan (8:30 a.m.- 12:35 p.m.) 4 hours.  
 Rondout Creek (Rosendale to Kingston waterfront, including East Strand); Sturgeon Pool; New Salem Lake; Hudson River (Sleightsburgh, Port Ewen Beach, Esopus Meadows).

**Group D:** Dave Hayes (8:00 a.m.- 2:00 p.m.) 6 hours.  
 Hudson River (Lamont Landing, Black Creek Preserve, Highland Landing Park, Oakes Road, Milton Station Park); Black Creek, Chodikey Lake, Lily Lake, Harcourt Wildlife Sanctuary, Humpo Marsh, Weston Road Swamp, and area ponds; Springtown and Libertyville Road agricultural fields in New Paltz.

**Group E:** Mark DeDea, Peter Schoenberger (10:40 a.m.- 2:25 p.m.) 3.75 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.

**Group F:** Jessica Prockup, Wendy Tocci, Marilyn Abend (8:14 a.m.- 2:03 p.m.) 5.75 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:** Dixon Onderdonk, Loren Quinby (Mt. Tremper), Dan Spencer (Phoenicia) (8:20 a.m. - 12:25 p.m.) 4.00 hours. Ashokan Reservoir (upper and lower basin, Esopus outflow); KenoZIA Lake; Onteora Lake; Yankeetown Pond; Wilson State Park.; Esopus Creek (Mt. Tremper and Phoenicia, including Catskill Interpretive Center); and area ponds.

**Group H:** Pat Dechon, Riley Dechon (7:42 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.) 3.25 hours. Ellenville area ponds and creeks (Beerkill and Sandburg); Rondout Reservoir; Minnewaska Lake.

**Group M: Miscellaneous Reports** – Arnie Meier (1.5 hrs) Hudson River - Mount Community, Spring House Pond - Mapleridge Community. Jim Clinton via ebird (6 hrs) Hudson River, Rondout Creek at North St., Ashokan Reservoir, Stone Ridge Pond.



Canada Geese, Mallards, and American Black Ducks on Stone Ridge Pond – January 18, 2020 Waterfowl Count, Steve Chorvas