

Ulster County May Census – May 08, 2021

The annual *John Burroughs Natural History Society* Ulster County May Bird Census (a/k/a Century Day) was conducted on the traditional second Saturday of the month, May 08, 2021. This “Big Day” effort is an attempt to document bird diversity in Ulster County by identifying as many species of birds as possible during a single day. Seven individuals in three field parties participated this year, recording a total of **140 species** plus one hybrid (Lawrence’s Warbler). Based on ebird records, additional species were documented in the county during the count day, but only three field parties submitted reports for the census.

Count day environmental conditions were challenging again this year, with cold air temperatures (42 – 52° F) and periods of rain showers throughout the day. This year’s count was also conducted on the earliest possible date within the second Saturday date range (May 08-14) during a time period with unfavorable migratory conditions, combined with relatively little participation and less effort compared to recent past years. It was apparent early in the morning that few if any new migrants had arrived overnight, traditionally late-season migrants had not yet reached our area in any significant numbers, and recently arrived local breeders were inexplicably quiet, relatively few in number, and generally uncooperative.

Despite this amalgamation of challenges, a larger than expected number of unusual species were documented by the field parties. Ashokan Reservoir hosted eight **White-winged Scoters** (Dike Road), and four **Bufflehead** (two drakes and two hens) were discovered on Cooper Lake in Woodstock. Two **Green-winged Teal** lingered in the farm pond off Denniston Road in Gardiner. **Sora**, two **Common Gallinule**, and an **American Coot** were detected at the Great Vly Wildlife Management Area in Saugerties, and one **Bonaparte’s Gull** was mixed in with a flock of Ring-billed Gulls on Kingston Point beach. A distant **Northern Goshawk** was seen in flight from Lauren Tice Road in Saugerties, a **Peregrine Falcon** was seen in flight over Winston Farm in Saugerties, and a **Merlin** was observed flying over North Street in Kingston.

Extremely unusual for this census, **Evening Grosbeaks** were encountered at two different locations. A single flyover was heard in Wilson State Park, and two additional birds were heard vocalizing on Rock City Road in Woodstock. A **Pine Siskin** was encountered on Glasco Turnpike, and a male **Golden-winged Warbler** was observed on West Saugerties Road, both in the Town of Woodstock. A hybrid **Lawrence’s Warbler** was seen and heard singing a Blue-winged Warbler song off Lauren Tice Road in Saugerties. **Red-headed Woodpecker** was recorded at the Weston Road swamp in New Paltz and at Winston Farm in Saugerties, but not at Esopus Meadows. **Ruffed Grouse** continues to be reliable at Wilson State Park, and **Eastern Whip-poor-will** returned to the Catskill Mountain foothills along West Saugerties Road, though an attempt to detect them from a previously reliable location off Rte 28 in the Onteora Lake area of Kingston was unsuccessful.

A total of Twenty-one (21) species of warblers were detected during the count effort, with none of the expected species missed, but all of the traditionally later-arriving species not recorded. Significant in a historical context, **Purple Martins** were NOT present at the Paradies Lane colony in New Paltz, but were found at the Rosendale colony, and for the second consecutive year at least one individual was observed associating with a large mixed flock of swallows foraging low over the Wallkill River in Gardiner.

There were numerous species not detected on this year’s count, the most noteworthy for the early date include Northern Harrier, Eastern Screech-Owl, Winter Wren, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Hermit Thrush, Cedar Waxwing, and Dark-eyed Junco. No concerted effort was directed at finding Northern Saw-whet Owl this year, and Least Bittern and Barn Owl were sought after with no success. The Shawangunk Grasslands/Blue Chip Farm area was relatively unproductive, failing to yield any sight or sound of harrier, Grasshopper Sparrow, or Upland Sandpiper. Peekamoose and associated mountain roads were not surveyed this year for high-elevation specialties.

The following table summarizes the list of species found by field party, followed by field party effort. Thanks to everyone for your effort, and let’s hope that we experience better conditions and greater participation next year when the count will occur on the latest possible date, May 14, 2022.

Steve M. Chorvas – compiler

2021 Ulster County May Census Summary

Species	Group						
	A	B	C				
Canada Goose	A	B	C				
Mute Swan		B					
Wood Duck	A	B	C				
Mallard	A	B	C				
Green-winged Teal		B	C				
White-winged Scoter	A	B					
Bufflehead	A						
Hooded Merganser		B					
Common Merganser	A	B	C				
Ruffed Grouse		B	C				
Wild Turkey	A	B	C				
Rock Pigeon	A	B	C				
Mourning Dove	A	B	C				
Eastern Whip-poor-will	A		C				
Chimney Swift	A	B	C				
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	A		C				
Virginia Rail		B	C				
Sora	A						
Common Gallinule	A	B	C				
American Coot			C				
Killdeer	A	B	C				
Least Sandpiper		B	C				
American Woodcock	A	B	C				
Spotted Sandpiper	A	B	C				
Solitary Sandpiper	A	B	C				
Lesser Yellowlegs		B	C				
Greater Yellowlegs		B	C				
Bonaparte's Gull			C				
Ring-billed Gull	A	B	C				
Herring Gull		B	C				
Great Black-backed Gull		B	C				
Common Loon	A	B	C				
Double-crested Cormorant	A	B	C				
Great Blue Heron	A	B	C				
Green Heron	A		C				
Black Vulture		B	C				
Turkey Vulture	A	B	C				
Osprey		B	C				
Cooper's Hawk	A	B					
Northern Goshawk		B					
Bald Eagle	A	B	C				
Red-shouldered Hawk	A	B	C				
Broad-winged Hawk		B					
Red-tailed Hawk	A	B	C				
Great Horned Owl	A						
Barred Owl	A	B	C				
Belted Kingfisher	A	B	C				
Red-headed Woodpecker	A	B	C				
Red-bellied Woodpecker	A	B	C				
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	A	B	C				
Downy Woodpecker	A	B	C				
Hairy Woodpecker	A	B	C				
Northern Flicker	A	B	C				

Species	Group						
	A	B	C				
Pileated Woodpecker	A	B	C				
American Kestrel		B	C				
Merlin		B					
Peregrine Falcon		B					
Great Crested Flycatcher	A	B	C				
Eastern Kingbird	A	B	C				
Willow Flycatcher		B					
Least Flycatcher	A						
Eastern Phoebe	A	B	C				
Yellow-throated Vireo	A	B					
Blue-headed Vireo		B					
Warbling Vireo	A	B	C				
Red-eyed Vireo	A	B	C				
Blue Jay	A	B	C				
American Crow	A	B	C				
Fish Crow	A	B	C				
Common Raven	A	B	C				
Bank Swallow		B					
Tree Swallow	A	B	C				
No. Rough-winged Swallow	A	B	C				
Purple Martin		B	C				
Barn Swallow	A	B	C				
Cliff Swallow	A	B	C				
Black-capped Chickadee	A	B	C				
Tufted Titmouse	A	B	C				
Red-breasted Nuthatch	A	B	C				
White-breasted Nuthatch	A	B	C				
Brown Creeper	A	B					
House Wren	A	B	C				
Marsh Wren	A	B	C				
Carolina Wren	A	B	C				
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	A	B	C				
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	A	B	C				
Eastern Bluebird	A	B	C				
Veery	A	B	C				
Wood Thrush	A	B	C				
American Robin	A	B	C				
Gray Catbird	A	B	C				
Brown Thrasher	A	B	C				
Northern Mockingbird	A	B	C				
European Starling	A	B	C				
House Sparrow	A	B	C				
Evening Grosbeak	A	B					
House Finch	A	B	C				
Purple Finch	A	B	C				
Pine Siskin	A						
American Goldfinch	A	B	C				
Chipping Sparrow	A	B	C				
Field Sparrow	A	B	C				
White-crowned Sparrow		B	C				
White-throated Sparrow	A	B	C				
Savannah Sparrow		B	C				
Song Sparrow	A	B	C				

Species	Group							
	A	B	C					
Swamp Sparrow	A	B	C					
Eastern Towhee	A	B	C					
Bobolink	A	B	C					
Eastern Meadowlark	A	B	C					
Orchard Oriole	A							
Baltimore Oriole	A	B	C					
Red-winged Blackbird	A	B	C					
Brown-headed Cowbird	A	B	C					
Common Grackle	A	B	C					
Ovenbird	A	B	C					
Worm-eating Warbler		B	C					
Louisiana Waterthrush	A	B	C					
Northern Waterthrush		B						
Golden-winged Warbler	A							
Blue-winged Warbler	A	B	C					
<i>Lawrence's Warbler</i>		B						
Black-and-white Warbler	A	B	C					
Nashville Warbler	A		C					

Species	Group							
	A	B	C					
Common Yellowthroat	A	B	C					
American Redstart	A	B	C					
Northern Parula	A	B	C					
Magnolia Warbler		B						
Blackburnian Warbler	A	B						
Yellow Warbler	A	B	C					
Chestnut-sided Warbler	A	B	C					
Black-throated Blue Warbler	A		C					
Palm Warbler		B						
Pine Warbler	A	B	C					
Yellow-rumped Warbler	A	B	C					
Prairie Warbler	A							
Black-throated Green Warbler	A	B	C					
Scarlet Tanager	A	B	C					
Northern Cardinal	A	B	C					
Rose-breasted Grosbeak		B	C					
Indigo Bunting		B	C					
Totals: 140 Species	109	125	114					

Field party effort:

A – Peter Schoenberger (12.75 hrs, 4:00 AM - 4:50 PM, 109 miles on bike and foot)

B – Jessica Prockup, Wendy Tocci, Michael Cukrovany, Mark DeDea (15.5 hrs, 2:00 AM - 5:30 PM, ~100 miles)

C – Larry Alden, Steve Chorvas (17.75 hrs, 2:15 AM - 8:00 PM, 196 miles)