

New York State January Waterfowl Count Report – 2021

The Ulster County segment of the annual NYSOA New York State January Waterfowl Count was conducted on January 16 and 17, 2021. Twenty participants in twelve field parties encountered **6,436 individuals** representing **14 species** and two hybrids. Our ten-year average for this countywide effort is 12 species, 6,225 individuals/year.

Typical for this annual mid-winter survey, two species accounted for 89% of our total abundance, **Canada Goose** (79%) and **Mallard** (10%). A rather impressive **39 Bald Eagles** (20 adults and 19 sub-adults) were observed during the course of the waterfowl count. The total number of waterfowl and eagles were adjusted down to account for any apparent duplication, but given the tendency for some birds, including eagles, to move considerable distances throughout the day, we can not eliminate the possibility that some additional birds may have been counted more than once, especially along river corridors.

Major bodies of moving water were mostly open, with creeks and rivers flowing rapidly. Still water ranged from entirely frozen to mostly open. Fields were free of ice and snow, providing forage opportunities for geese. Weather conditions on Saturday, 16 January, were better than originally forecasted, but fog and rain still impacted viewing conditions, resulting in most field parties conducting their survey the following day. Sunday, 17 January, was mostly cloudy with good viewing conditions and relatively mild air temperatures (36-43° F).

Two **Cackling Geese** were identified in a large flock of Canada Geese along Denniston Road in Gardiner, and two **Snow Geese** were found in a field off Libertyville Road in New Paltz, where an odd hybrid, possibly a **Mallard x Pintail**, was also seen and photographed by Mark DeDea. A raft of thirty-three **Ring-necked Ducks** on Binnewater Lake represented a new record high count for a species typically found on this count as one or two lingering individuals, last recorded in 2016 when 29 were tallied. New high counts were also established for **Hooded Merganser** (61, eclipsing 35 from last year and well above our ten-year average of 11.5), and **Common Merganser** (403, compared to 335 in 2011 and a ten-year average of 200).

One **Wood Duck** lingered in the mouth of the Rondout Creek, and seven **Gadwall** were observed on Stone Ridge Pond, which was atypically devoid of the traditional large gathering of geese and Mallards, despite 50% open water. **Mallards** (634) were found in below average number this year (ten-year average 986), and **Canada Geese** (5,057) were nearly identical to our ten-year average 5,064.

In addition to waterfowl, field observers reported one **Belted Kingfisher** and a **Great Blue Heron** at Lion's Pavilion in Wallkill along the Wallkill River, another Belted Kingfisher was heard at Bristol Beach in Saugerties, four flyover **White-winged Crossbills** were seen and heard from the Saugerties Lighthouse trail, two flyover **Evening Grosbeaks**, **Fish Crows**, and **Horned Larks** were encountered at Denniston Road, and three different **American Kestrels** were observed in southern Ulster County, at Blue Chip Farm, Wallkill Prison, and Watchtower Farm.

The following table summarizes the 2021 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 again this year. Next year's Ulster County segment of the NYSOA NYS January Waterfowl Count is scheduled for **Saturday, January 15, 2022**.

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New York State January Waterfowl Count
Ulster County Area Summary - January 16-17, 2021

Total	Species	A	B	BC	C	D	E	E2	F	G	G2	H	M
2	Snow Goose					2	2						
2	Cackling Goose						2						
5,057	Canada Goose	290	46	30	309	827	4,010		162	18	3	19	82
5	Mute Swan	1			2	2							
1	Wood Duck			1									1
7	Gadwall	5									7		
150	American Black Duck	4	4	4	3	56	48		2	22		12	
634	Mallard	356	52	45	79	2	27		61			32	22
2	<i>Mallard X Black</i>						2						
33	Ring-necked Duck								33				
3	Bufflehead	1			1	1					1		
75	Common Goldeneye	32	15	31			2	7		3			
61	Hooded Merganser	10					7		44				
403	Common Merganser	35	23	50	216	27	23	5	10	12	5	3	101
1	Common Loon									1	1		
6,436	Total Individuals	734	140	161	610	917	4,123	12	312	56	17	66	206
14	Total Species	9	5	6	6	7	8	2	6	5	5	4	4

39	Bald Eagle (20 Adt /19 Sub)	3A/6S	1S	3A/3S	3A/11S		3A		3A	1S		1A	8A/1S
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Note: Species totals and survey total adjusted to account for duplication by multiple field parties. All field effort January 17, except Groups B and E (January 16).

Field Parties, Effort and Area Descriptions

Group A: Steve Chorvas, Alan Beebe (8:30 a.m.- 4:30 p.m.) 8 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; Stone Ridge Pond.

Group B: Peter Schoenberger (Jan. 16, 9:25 a.m.- 12:00 noon) 2.5 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 BC: Frank Murphy (10:20 a.m. – 12:11 p.m.) 2 hours.

Hudson River (Kingston Point, Port Ewen Beach, River Road, Esopus Meadows), Rondout Creek (North St.).

Group C: Allan Bowdery, Lynn Bowdery, Lin Fagan (9:25 a.m.- 2:00 p.m.) 4.5 hours.

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

Group D: Dave Hayes (8:35 a.m.- 1:05 p.m.) 4.5 hours.

Hudson River (Lamont Landing, Black Creek Preserve, Highland Landing Park, Oakes Road, Milton Station Park); Black Creek, Chodikee 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 (Jan. 16, 9:05 a.m.-11:20 a.m.) 2.25 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.

Group E2: Peter Schoenberger (11:05 a.m. – 1:16 p.m.) 2.25 hours.

Additions to area E not encountered on Jan. 16.

Group F: Jessica Prockup, Wendy Tocci (8:27 a.m.- 12:44 p.m.) 4.25 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: Loren Quinby, Dan Spencer (7:30 a.m. - 1:10 p.m.) 5.75 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 G2: Ariane Giudicelli, Wes John-Alder (10:45 a.m. – 2:20 p.m.) 3.5 hours.

Ashokan Reservoir, Kenozia Lake; Onteora Lake, Stone Ridge Pond.

Group H: Pat Dechon, Riley Dechon (8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.) 3 hours.

Ellenville area ponds and creeks (Beerkill and Sandburg); Rondout Reservoir; Minnewaska Lake.

Group M: Arnie Meier, Kelian Meier, Dennis Wareham (10.30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.) 3.5 hours.

Hudson River - Mount Community; Spring House Pond - Mapleridge Community.



Canada Geese and Mute Swan on Lazy Swan Golf Course, Saugerties – January 17, 2021 Waterfowl Count. Photo: Steve M. Chorvas