

# Esopus Bend Nature Preserve

## Annual Winter Bird Count Report

# 2019

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## 2019 Winter Bird Count – Esopus Bend Nature Preserve, Saugerties, New York

The 14<sup>th</sup> annual Esopus Bend Nature Preserve (EBNP) Winter Bird Count (WBC) was conducted on Sunday, January 06, 2019 under mixed weather conditions. One field party surveyed the 160-acre preserve from 5:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., recording a total of **42 species** and **583 individual birds** during a twelve-hour effort that included 2.5 hours of nocturnal “owling” (two hours pre-dawn, one-half hour post-dusk). Our ten-year average for this count is 37 species and 514 individuals, and the overall historical average is 36/541.

Mild air temperatures, abundant open water, and entirely exposed ground apparently influenced a number of half-hardy species to linger in the Preserve through early winter, resulting in an above average diversity of water-dependant birds and a new record high number of species, surpassing our previous high counts of 40 in 2016 and 2009.

Our outstanding highlight this year was a female-type **Common Yellowthroat** seen and heard very briefly in brushy habitat bordering the wetlands. **Common Ravens** have become regular year-round in the skies over EBNP but have eluded us during the winter bird count until this year. Two ravens were simultaneously seen and heard flying over the Preserve, and a possible third individual was observed overhead later in the day harassing a **Black Vulture**. This new addition to the count composite advances our historical total to 68 species.

**Canada Goose** (26), **Mallard** (31), **Hooded Merganser** (3 hens), **Common Merganser** (8 hens), **Great Blue Heron** (1), and an immature **Bald Eagle** were all attracted to open water in Esopus Creek. A roving flock of **Red-winged Blackbirds**, initially encountered in the Preserve a week earlier during an Audubon Christmas Bird Count, continued to forage in the meadow. All 56 blackbirds showed nicely and were in female-type plumage, with no adult males present.

Large mixed flocks of sparrows were prevalent in weedy areas, with **American Tree Sparrows** (**30**) especially abundant, well-above our 8.6 yearly average and nearly double our previous high count of 16 during the inaugural 2006 season. **White-throated Sparrow** (**59/34** avg.) and **Dark-eyed Junco** (**60/32** avg.) produced second-highest counts, **Song Sparrows** (22) were also numerous, and three **Field Sparrows** tied our previous high count for this uncommon winter holdover that is often absent in winter, having been detected on just four previous counts.

Eight **Winter Wrens** tied our previous high count, including one in full song at daybreak. **Carolina Wrens** (22) were well above our 12.5 average, seven **Brown Creepers** were twice our 3.6 average, and six **Pileated Woodpeckers** tied our previous high count. Three **Northern Flickers** represent a new record high, previously detected as one or two individuals.

Conversely, **Tufted Titmice** were relatively scarce this year, setting a new record low 18 in comparison to 43 on average. One **Hermit Thrush** was also abnormally low for this survey, averaging 7/year with several double-digit counts. Half-hardy species that overwinter in the Preserve in some years that were not found this year include Gray Catbird and Yellow-rumped Warbler. No Cedar Waxwings or Golden-crowned Kinglets were detected, and there were no indications of irruptive winter finches in the Preserve.

Sporadic precipitation throughout the day in the form of light snow squalls and misting sleet combined with dark overcast skies and high humidity to create somewhat challenging conditions for viewing and identifying poorly lit birds through fogged optics. Mostly calm winds with only an occasional strong breeze enabled very good audio detection. Count day temperatures ranged from an early morning low of 31° to an afternoon high of 37° (F).

Esopus Creek, including the shallow delta and wetland coves, was entirely open with a moderate flow and high water level. The beaver impoundment was open mid-day, but capped with a thin layer of ice at daybreak, when a flock of fourteen Mallards flew in and landed on the ice. Appearing quite uncomfortable with their predicament, they quickly retreated out to the creek. Oriental Bittersweet crops were less than typical, attracting several species of birds to feed on the fruit that remained on the vines.

The following table summarizes the 2019 survey in comparison with our most recent nine-year historical. Thanks to Alan Beebe, Mary King, Ariane Giudicelli, and Wes Giudicelli for assisting with this year's count.

Steve M. Chorvas – compiler

## Esopus Bend Nature Preserve Winter Bird Count Ten-Year Summary

Species	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
Canada Goose	26			4	1		10	10	24	
Mute Swan										
American Black Duck				10						
Mallard	31		49	18			6	22	19	2
Hooded Merganser	3		5					2		
Common Merganser	8		2	2			10	2		
Wild Turkey		7	8	4	11		1	14		8
Great Blue Heron	1						1			
Black Vulture	1									3
Bald Eagle	1		1		1	1				
Northern Harrier									1	
Sharp-shinned Hawk										
Cooper's Hawk							1	1	1	1
Red-shouldered Hawk		1								
Red-tailed Hawk	2	2	2	1	3	2	1		2	2
Ring-billed Gull	21		6	4	1		12	33		7
Herring Gull								1		1
Great Black-backed Gull							2			
Rock Pigeon				16			2			
Mourning Dove	4	8	2	5		4	1	28	5	7
Eastern Screech-Owl		1	1		1	1	1		1	
Great Horned Owl				1	1					
Belted Kingfisher				1						
Red-bellied Woodpecker	10	12	4	8	10	8	14	7	8	12
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	2	2	3	1	8	3	1	3	12	3
Downy Woodpecker	13	18	10	15	28	10	24	11	11	18
Hairy Woodpecker	4	4	5	7	7		8	6	5	4
Northern Flicker	3	2	1	1		1			2	
Pileated Woodpecker	6	4	5	5	1	6	6	3	5	1
Peregrine Falcon				1						
Blue Jay	10	22	12	13	12	9	5	10	15	19
American Crow	9	12	8	6	6	16	19	14	22	19
Common Raven	2									
Black-capped Chickadee	42	44	62	57	94	44	79	49	66	66
Tufted Titmouse	18	51	34	36	66	38	49	26	28	55
Red-breasted Nuthatch										

Species	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
White-breasted Nuthatch	16	20	22	16	31	17	31	8	11	22
Brown Creeper	7	1	4	2	5	2	12	1	2	2
Winter Wren	8	2	1	4	8	2	6		1	
Carolina Wren	22	17	10	8	16	14	14	8	14	7
Golden-crowned Kinglet		15	5		14	2	29		6	32
Ruby-crowned Kinglet		1						1		
Eastern Bluebird	8	4	20	4	58	4	6	3		1
Hermit Thrush	1	3	1	3	7	7	10	8	3	5
American Robin	12	74	1	68	10	78	2	12	20	2
Gray Catbird					2					
Northern Mockingbird	1	1			1			1		
European Starling	1	10	2	69		17	2		1	
Bohemian Waxwing										
Cedar Waxwing				35		53			1	58
Common Yellowthroat	1							1		
Yellow-rumped Warbler						2				
American Tree Sparrow	30	10	10	6	10	8	11	8	9	2
Field Sparrow	3				2				1	3
Savannah Sparrow										
Song Sparrow	22	12	26	7	13	6	14	10	8	10
Swamp Sparrow	1	2	1		2				1	
White-throated Sparrow	59	56	38	34	30	16	15	44	28	42
Dark-eyed Junco	60	16	28	38	51	30	23	42	4	16
Northern Cardinal	21	20	15	16	31	18	22	16	16	40
Red-winged Blackbird	56			34						
House Finch	21	4	5	16	10	22	2	6		12
Purple Finch										1
White-winged Crossbill										
Common Redpoll					1					
Pine Siskin					4					
American Goldfinch	4	15	45	24	51	3	2	39	8	15
House Sparrow	12	4	43	12	5	4	2	6		4
<i>Unidentified passerines</i>							40			
<b>Total Individuals</b>	<b>583</b>	<b>477</b>	<b>497</b>	<b>612</b>	<b>613</b>	<b>448</b>	<b>496</b>	<b>456</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>502</b>
<b>Total Species (Hist.= 68)</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>35</b>