

# Esopus Bend Nature Preserve



## Annual Winter Bird Count Report 2021

Esopus Creek Conservancy, Inc., PO Box 589, Saugerties, New York, 12477

## 2021 Winter Bird Count Esopus Bend Nature Preserve, Saugerties, New York

The 16<sup>th</sup> annual Esopus Bend Nature Preserve (EBNP) Winter Bird Count (WBC) was conducted on Saturday, January 09, 2021 under cold, snow-free conditions. One field party surveyed the 160-acre preserve from 5:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., recording a total of **616 birds** representing **34 species** during a 12.5 hour effort that included 2.5 hours of nocturnal "owling" (two hours pre-dawn, one-half hour after dusk). Our recent ten-year average for this count is 38 species/514 individuals, and our all-time historical average is 36/541.

Seasonally cold air temperatures prevailed throughout the count day, ranging from an early morning low of 21°F to an afternoon high 34°F. Combined with harsh wind velocities (10-15 mph) and relatively poor viewing conditions under heavy overcast skies, survey conditions were less than ideal and likely influenced the presence and detection of birds in the Preserve. Most species appeared to be hunkered down most of the day, or foraging outside of the Preserve at neighboring bird feeders. Species that occasionally congregate in large flocks at this time of the year (Canada Geese, Mallard, and Red-winged Blackbird) inflated our abundance number disproportional to the general population.

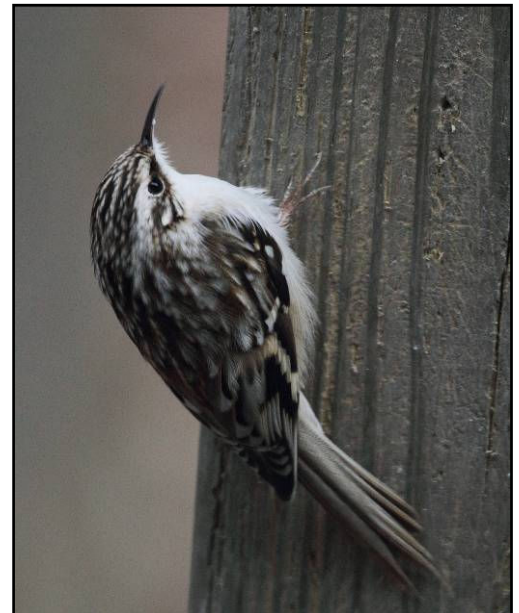
Despite lower than expected general abundance and diversity, there were several noteworthy observations. The aforementioned rafts of **Canada Geese** (43), **Mallards** (124) and a foraging flock of **Red-winged Blackbirds** (64) were found in atypically large numbers, with Mallards surpassing their previous high count of 86 from last year and the geese nudging past 41 individuals we tallied in 2020. In each instance, single large flocks were encountered, eliminating any chance of duplication. A new record high count was also established for **Hooded Merganser** (10), exceeding 5 from 2017. Waterfowl are typically absent on this count in winters when Esopus Creek is mostly or entirely frozen. This year the creek was running high and chocolate-brown turbid, with only the delta covered in a layer of ice.

We had an exceptionally good look at a very cooperative **Red-shouldered Hawk** perched very low and in plain sight, representing only the second time this formerly migratory species has been recorded on this count. Two soaring **Black Vultures** (fourth count record) and three **Field Sparrows** perched side-by-side on top of a rose bush were noteworthy, the sparrows matching their previous high tally. **Brown Creepers** (7) continue to do well in the Preserve and this year all seven provided good views of a species that can be visually elusive. We also enjoyed good looks at several **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers**.

**Blue Jays** and **Northern Cardinals** were inexplicably scarce, both establishing record low counts. We did not detect **Mourning Dove** (second time over the past ten years), **Hermit Thrush** (only the second time in count history, following last year's absence, a species significantly dependant on a declining Asiatic Bittersweet fruit mast), and **American Robin** (also the second time in count history, another thrush closely associated with bittersweet production). It was also disappointing to not encounter any irruptive winter finches or Red-breasted Nuthatches during a winter experiencing a region-wide invasion of these species. The majority of winter finches may have moved farther south by this time, but I suspect the absence of **Red-breasted Nuthatch** is a strong indication that the Preserve lacks a sufficiently attractive food resource for this species, namely pine cones.

The following table summarizes the 2021 survey in comparison with our most recent nine-year history. Thanks to Marilyn Abend, Alan Beebe, Andrea Giarraputo, and Renee Lucier for assisting with this year's count.

Steve M. Chorvas  
Count Coordinator  
Esopus Creek Conservancy, Stewardship and Land Management



**Brown Creeper – EBNP WBC 2021**  
Photo: Steve Chorvas



**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker – EBNP WBC 2021**  
Photo: Steve Chorvas

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

Species	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012
Canada Goose	43	41	26			4	1		10	10
Mute Swan										
American Black Duck						10				
Mallard	124	86	31		49	18			6	22
Hooded Merganser	10	2	3		5					2
Common Merganser	4	4	8		2	2			10	2
Wild Turkey		1		7	8	4	11		1	14
Great Blue Heron			1						1	
Black Vulture	2		1							
Bald Eagle		2	1		1		1	1		
Northern Harrier										
Sharp-shinned Hawk										
Cooper's Hawk		1							1	1
Red-shouldered Hawk	1			1						
Red-tailed Hawk	1	2	2	2	2	1	3	2	1	
Ring-billed Gull	3	10	21		6	4	1		12	33
Herring Gull										1
Great Black-backed Gull									2	
Rock Pigeon						16			2	
Mourning Dove		8	4	8	2	5		4	1	28
Eastern Screech-Owl	1	1		1	1		1	1	1	
Great Horned Owl						1	1			
Barred Owl		2								
Belted Kingfisher						1				
Red-bellied Woodpecker	8	12	10	12	4	8	10	8	14	7
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	3	4	2	2	3	1	8	3	1	3
Downy Woodpecker	12	11	13	18	10	15	28	10	24	11
Hairy Woodpecker	3	3	4	4	5	7	7		8	6
Northern Flicker		1	3	2	1	1		1		
Pileated Woodpecker	4	5	6	4	5	5	1	6	6	3
Peregrine Falcon						1				
Blue Jay	3	10	10	22	12	13	12	9	5	10
American Crow	7	6	9	12	8	6	6	16	19	14
Common Raven		5	2							
Black-capped Chickadee	80	24	42	44	62	57	94	44	79	49
Tufted Titmouse	34	28	18	51	34	36	66	38	49	26
Red-breasted Nuthatch										

Species	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012
White-breasted Nuthatch	20	20	16	20	22	16	31	17	31	8
Brown Creeper	7	7	7	1	4	2	5	2	12	1
Winter Wren	3	5	8	2	1	4	8	2	6	
Carolina Wren	21	19	22	17	10	8	16	14	14	8
Golden-crowned Kinglet		18		15	5		14	2	29	
Ruby-crowned Kinglet				1						1
Eastern Bluebird	8	8	8	4	20	4	58	4	6	3
Hermit Thrush			1	3	1	3	7	7	10	8
American Robin		2	12	74	1	68	10	78	2	12
Gray Catbird							2			
Northern Mockingbird	1	2	1	1			1			1
European Starling		6	1	10	2	69		17	2	
Bohemian Waxwing										
Cedar Waxwing		12				35		53		
Common Yellowthroat			1							1
Yellow-rumped Warbler								2		
American Tree Sparrow	10	3	30	10	10	6	10	8	11	8
Field Sparrow	3	1	3				2			
Savannah Sparrow										
Song Sparrow	21	12	22	12	26	7	13	6	14	10
Swamp Sparrow		1	1	2	1		2			
White-throated Sparrow	56	76	59	56	38	34	30	16	15	44
Dark-eyed Junco	34	34	60	16	28	38	51	30	23	42
Northern Cardinal	6	12	21	20	15	16	31	18	22	16
Red-winged Blackbird	64	5	56			34				
Common Grackle		1								
House Finch	4	29	21	4	5	16	10	22	2	6
Purple Finch										
White-winged Crossbill										
Common Redpoll							1			
Pine Siskin							4			
American Goldfinch	4	40	4	15	45	24	51	3	2	39
House Sparrow	11	14	12	4	43	12	5	4	2	6
<i>Unidentified passerines</i>										40
<b>Total Individuals</b>	<b>616</b>	<b>596</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>Total Species (Hist.= 70)</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>45</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>