

Ulster County Spring Census, May 11-17, 2005

Eight individuals in four field parties ventured out across Ulster County to conduct our annual Big Day count, a/k/a "Century Day", in an attempt to locate as many species of birds as possible during a single day within the confines of Ulster County. Counts were conducted on two separate days during the count period, recording a total of **145 species**.

Weather conditions on the target date, Saturday 14 May, were generally very good, with no precipitation and pleasant temperatures (54-70 degrees F) under mostly cloudy skies with calm to very light southerly winds. An unusually cool spring preceded the count period and tree leaf-out appeared to be about a week delayed in comparison to typical mid-May conditions. Nectar producing flowers were very abundant, with Red Columbine and Flowering Quince still at or near peak bloom.

Best birds-of-the-day were a KENTUCKY WARBLER at the Blue Mountain Reservoir in Saugerties and a CAPE MAY WARBLER at Onteora Lake. Additional highlights include an OSPREY at the Great Vly, two COMMON MOORHENS at Humpo Marsh, ACADIAN FLYCATCHER on Peekamoose Road, ALDER and WILLOW FLYCATCHER, both species of KINGLETS, a lone AMERICAN PIPIT and an UPLAND SANDPIPER at Bluechip Farm, twenty-three species of WARBLERS, PINE SISKIN, and several large flocks of BRANT flying over the Ashokan Reservoir just before and after dusk, with at least one flock containing ~500 individuals.

Disappointments include missing Hooded Merganser, Red-shouldered Hawk, Eastern Screech-Owl, Red-headed Woodpecker, Brown Creeper, and Cedar Waxwing. Several species of warblers continue to elude us on count day, including Tennessee, Bay-breasted, Wilson's, and the third consecutive year that Cerulean Warbler has not been present at a traditionally reliable location. Grassland sparrows are now regularly absent from this count.

On a personal note, our field party was treated to a close-up view of a Savannah Sparrow with bright yellow lores, bathing in a crystal clear pool of water adjacent to the roadside, the yellow coloration so extensive as to give the appearance of a bright yellow supercillium. I also particularly enjoyed the sight of a Common Nighthawk flying low over the Ashokan Reservoir at dusk, and the sound of a singing Whip-poor-will from Stone Road. Nightjars and Nighthawks are declining rapidly in Ulster County and increasingly difficult to locate or absent from traditional strongholds. With each passing year, I conclude the count day seriously wondering if this will be the last time that these (and other) species will be recorded on this annual census.

Field parties:

Group A – Henry Halama (May 14, partial list)

Group B – Glenn Nystrup (May 14)

Group C – Larry Alden, Jackie Bogardus, Steve Chorvas, and Frank Murphy (May 14, 3:00 AM - 10:00 PM)

Group D – Kellen and Tristan Mortensen (May 17, 5:00 AM – 8:00 PM)

2005 Century Day Composite List

Species	Group			
Brant			C	D
Canada Goose			C	D
Mute Swan			C	D
Wood Duck	A		C	D
American Black Duck				D
Mallard		B	C	D
Green-winged Teal				D
Ring-necked Duck				D
Common Merganser	A		C	D
Ruffed Grouse		B	C	
Wild Turkey			C	D
Common Loon				D
Pied-billed Grebe			C	
Double-crested Cormorant	A		C	D
Great Blue Heron		B	C	D

Species	Group			
Green Heron	A			D
Black Vulture		B		
Turkey Vulture		B	C	D
Osprey	A		C	D
Bald Eagle	A			
Sharp-shinned Hawk				D
Broad-winged Hawk	A	B	C	D
Red-tailed Hawk			C	D
American Kestrel			C	
Virginia Rail			C	
Common Moorhen			C	
Killdeer	A		C	D
Greater Yellowlegs			C	
Solitary Sandpiper	A		C	D
Spotted Sandpiper	A		C	D

2005 Century Day Composite List (continued)

Species	Group			
Upland Sandpiper			C	
Least Sandpiper			C	
American Woodcock			C	D
Ring-billed Gull			C	D
Herring Gull				D
Great Black-backed Gull			C	D
Rock Pigeon			C	D
Mourning Dove		B	C	D
Black-billed Cuckoo			C	
Great Horned Owl			C	
Barred Owl			C	
Common Nighthawk			C	
Whip-poor-will			C	
Chimney Swift	A		C	D
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	A		C	D
Belted Kingfisher	A		C	D
Red-bellied Woodpecker			C	D
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	A		C	
Downy Woodpecker			C	D
Hairy Woodpecker		B	C	
Northern Flicker			C	D
Pileated Woodpecker			C	
Eastern Wood-Pewee	A		C	D
Acadian Flycatcher			C	
Alder Flycatcher			C	
Willow Flycatcher			C	D
Least Flycatcher	A		C	D
Eastern Phoebe		B	C	D
Great Crested Flycatcher			C	D
Eastern Kingbird		B	C	D
Yellow-throated Vireo			C	D
Blue-headed Vireo			C	D
Warbling Vireo			C	
Red-eyed Vireo		B	C	D
Blue Jay		B	C	D
American Crow		B	C	D
Fish Crow			C	D
Common Raven			C	D
Purple Martin			C	D
Tree Swallow		B	C	D
No. Rough-winged Swallow	A		C	
Bank Swallow			C	
Cliff Swallow			C	D
Barn Swallow			C	D
Black-capped Chickadee		B	C	D
Tufted Titmouse			C	D
White-breasted Nuthatch			C	D

Species	Group			
Red-breasted Nuthatch	A			
Carolina Wren			C	D
House Wren		B	C	D
Winter Wren			C	
Marsh Wren			C	
Golden-crowned Kinglet			C	
Ruby-crowned Kinglet				D
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher			C	D
Eastern Bluebird			C	D
Veery	A		C	
Swainson's Thrush	A			
Hermit Thrush	A		C	D
Wood Thrush	A	B	C	D
American Robin		B	C	D
Gray Catbird		B	C	D
Northern Mockingbird		B	C	D
Brown Thrasher	A		C	D
European Starling		B	C	D
American Pipit			C	
Blue-winged Warbler	A		C	D
Nashville Warbler			C	
Northern Parula	A		C	
Yellow Warbler		B	C	D
Chestnut-sided Warbler	A		C	D
Magnolia Warbler	A		C	D
Cape May Warbler	A			
Black-throated Blue Warbler	A		C	D
Yellow-rumped Warbler			C	D
Black-throated Green Warbler			C	D
Blackburnian Warbler	A		C	D
Pine Warbler			C	D
Prairie Warbler			C	
Blackpoll Warbler			C	D
Black-and-White Warbler	A	B	C	D
American Redstart		B	C	D
Worm-eating Warbler			C	D
Ovenbird			C	D
Northern Waterthrush			C	
Louisiana Waterthrush			C	D
Kentucky Warbler			C	
Common Yellowthroat			C	D
Canada Warbler			C	
Scarlet Tanager			C	D
Eastern Towhee	A	B	C	
Chipping Sparrow		B	C	D
Field Sparrow			C	D
Savannah Sparrow			C	D

2005 Century Day Composite List (continued)

Species	Group			
	A	B	C	D
Song Sparrow		B	C	D
Lincoln's Sparrow			C	
Swamp Sparrow			C	D
White-throated Sparrow			C	
White-crowned Sparrow	A	B		
Dark-eyed Junco	A	B	C	D
Northern Cardinal		B	C	D
Rose-breasted Grosbeak			C	D
Indigo Bunting	A	B	C	D
Bobolink			C	D
Red-winged Blackbird		B	C	D

Species	Group				
	A	B	C	D	
Eastern Meadowlark			C	D	
Common Grackle			C	D	
Brown-headed Cowbird			C	D	
Orchard Oriole		B	C		
Baltimore Oriole			C	D	
Purple Finch	A		C		
House Finch			C	D	
Pine Siskin		B			
American Goldfinch		B	C	D	
House Sparrow		B	C	D	
Totals:	Composite - 145	36	36	130	101

Compiler – Steve M. Chorvas