

2010 Ulster County May Census Report

Eleven individuals in six field parties participated in the 2010 annual John Burroughs Natural History Society Ulster County May Census (a/k/a “Century Day”), a county-wide “Big Day” effort to locate and document as many species of birds within Ulster County in one day.

This year’s relatively late count date (May 15th) provided an opportunity to document traditionally late migrants, but also limited the presence of most other bird species to resident breeders. Five field parties recorded a total of **154 species** on the target date (and one field party added two additional count week species on May 14th), resulting in a relatively high composite number in comparison to the previous six year period and matching our exceptional 2007 total: **139** (2009), **143** (2008), **154** (2007), **144** (2006), **145** (2005), **133** (2004). We also experienced exceptionally high participation effort this year (parties and hours in the field), which clearly factored in successfully locating a number of challenging species.

Weather conditions on 15 May were very pleasant with mostly sunny skies and a clear, moonless night. Winds were generally light at 5-15 mph with occasional stronger gusts, initially from the south, shifting to NW by late morning. Temperatures were very comfortable at 54-72 degrees (F). Very warm temperatures (high 80’s and 90+) over an extended period of time during the month of April accelerated leaf-out to two weeks ahead of traditional conditions in the valley, and pushed large numbers of early and mid-season migrants through our area in record time. Insignificant rainfall over the same time period eliminated the presence of flooded fields and reduced area mudflats.

Highlights of the 2010 May Census include a **Surf Scoter** (Onteora Lake), two **Black-crowned Night-Herons** (West Saugerties Road, and Ashokan spillway marsh), **Merlin** (SGNWR), **Sora** (Humpo Marsh), **Semipalmated Plover** and **Semipalmated Sandpiper** (Denniston Rd. farm pond), two **Bonaparte’s Gulls** (Kingston Point), **Olive-sided Flycatcher** (SGNWR), **Alder Flycatcher** (Wilson State Park), **Tennessee Warbler** (Plutarch Rd.), **Cape May Warbler** (Denniston Rd.), **Hooded Warbler** (Jenny Lane Trail at Lake Awosting), and four reports of **Mourning Warbler** from three locations. Lin Fagan also reported finding one **Caspian** and ten **Common Terns** near the Rondout Lighthouse during her count week census one day prior to our target date, but the birds apparently departed the area by the following day.

Additional noteworthy birds for an Ulster County spring census include three reports of **Snow Geese** in small numbers, **Ring-necked Duck** and **Pied-billed Grebe** (Great Vly), two **Ruffed Grouse** (Wilson State Park - increasingly difficult to locate in the valley), **Osprey** (Black Creek), two **Virginia Rails** (Great Vly, and Ashokan Reservoir Spillway marsh), three reports of **Willow Flycatcher**, two **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** (Saugerties Reservoir, and Shaupeneak Ridge), **Swainson’s Thrush** (Mohonk Preserve), multiple reports of **Wilson’s Warbler**, and one **Lincoln’s Sparrow** (Esopus Bend Nature Preserve).

Eastern Screech-Owls were detected at three locations, **Black Vultures** continue to be predictable in the southern part of the county, **Northern Harriers** and **American Kestrel** continue to be reliable at SGNWR, **Bald Eagle** and all three expected **buteos** were encountered on count day, and a remarkable ten species of **shorebirds** (including **Upland Sandpiper**) represented unusually good diversity for this particular count. A single **Whip-poor-will** was heard on West Saugerties Road, two **Red-headed Woodpeckers** continue at Humpo Marsh in New Paltz (with patience), and a third individual was observed on West Saugerties Road. **Cedar Waxwings** were surprisingly numerous and widespread, **Worm-eating Warblers** continue to be reliable on River Road and along Black Creek, **Northern Waterthrush** was encountered at Wilson State Park and Pine Road in New Paltz, and multiple reports were submitted for both **White-throated** and **White-crowned Sparrows**. **Orchard Oriole** is now very reliable throughout Ulster County in mid-May.

Consistent with recent past years, migrants were few and far between, with no significant flocks of warblers and only small numbers of individuals for the few migrating species encountered. We missed Brant (despite the ideal date and reports of large migrating flocks prior to and after count day), American Widgeon, American Black Duck, Green-winged Teal, and Wilson’s Snipe. Accipiters were only represented by one unidentified species, Great Horned Owl continues to be very elusive in the month of May, and Black-billed Cuckoo, Common Nighthawk, Acadian Flycatcher, Horned Lark, Golden-crowned Kinglet, and Nashville Warbler were disappointing misses.

Bufflehead, Horned Grebe, Least Bittern, Common Moorhen, American Coot, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Bay-breasted Warbler, Cerulean Warbler, Vesper Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, and Henslow's Sparrow are now frequently missed on this count and continue to elude all of the field parties.

Field party effort and a summary analysis is appended below. Thanks to all of this year's participants for their effort and dedication to documenting Ulster County bird life.

Steve M. Chorvas – compiler

Field party effort:

Group A – Larry Alden, Jackie Bogardus, Steve Chorvas (2:45 a.m.– 8:45 p.m.)

Group B – Deb Ferguson, Frank Murphy (2:30 a.m.– 8:45 p.m.)

Group C – Matt Corsaro (5:00 a.m.– 5:00 p.m.)

Group D – Lynn Bowdery (casual effort)

Group E – Mark DeDea, Glenn Nystrup, Peter Schoenberger (3:00 a.m.– 8:30 p.m.)

Group F – Lin Fagan (May 14, 6:00 a.m.– 1:00 p.m., 2:30 p.m.– 5:30 p.m., 8:00 p.m. river visit)

2010 Ulster County May Census Summary

Species	Group				
	A	B	C	D	E
Snow Goose			C	D	E
Canada Goose	A	B	C		E
Mute Swan	A	B			E
Wood Duck	A	B	C		E
Mallard	A	B		D	E
Ring-necked Duck	A				
Surf Scoter					E
Hooded Merganser		B	C		
Common Merganser	A	B			E
Ruffed Grouse					E
Wild Turkey	A	B	C	D	E
Common Loon	A				E
Pied-billed Grebe	A				
Double-crested Cormorant	A	B	C		E
Great Blue Heron	A	B	C		E
Green Heron	A		C		E
Black-crowned Night-Heron					E
Black Vulture	A		C		E
Turkey Vulture	A	B	C	D	E
Osprey		B			
Bald Eagle	A	B			E
Northern Harrier	A	B			
Accipiter sp.		B			
Red-shouldered Hawk		B			E
Broad-winged Hawk	A	B			E
Red-tailed Hawk	A	B	C	D	E
American Kestrel	A	B			E
Merlin					E
Virginia Rail	A				E
Sora					E
Semipalmated Plover	A	B			E
Killdeer	A	B	C		E
Greater Yellowlegs	A				
Lesser Yellowlegs		B			E
Solitary Sandpiper	A	B	C	D	E
Spotted Sandpiper	A	B	C		E
Upland Sandpiper	A				
Semipalmated Sandpiper	A				

Species	Group				
	A	B	C	D	E
Least Sandpiper	A	B	C		E
American Woodcock	A				E
Bonaparte's Gull	A				
Ring-billed Gull	A	B	C		E
Herring Gull					E
Great Black-backed Gull	A	B			E
Caspian Tern					
Common Tern					
Rock Pigeon	A	B	C	D	E
Mourning Dove	A	B	C	D	E
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	A				
Eastern Screech-Owl	A	B			E
Barred Owl	A	B		D	E
Whip-poor-will					E
Chimney Swift	A	B	C		E
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	A		C	D	E
Belted Kingfisher		B	C		E
Red-headed Woodpecker					E
Red-bellied Woodpecker	A	B	C	D	E
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	A	B			E
Downy Woodpecker	A		C	D	E
Hairy Woodpecker	A			D	E
Northern Flicker	A	B	C	D	E
Pileated Woodpecker	A	B			E
Olive-sided Flycatcher					E
Eastern Wood-Pewee	A	B	C	D	
Alder Flycatcher					E
Willow Flycatcher	A	B			E
Least Flycatcher	A	B	C		E
Eastern Phoebe	A	B	C	D	E
Great Crested Flycatcher	A	B	C		E
Eastern Kingbird	A	B	C	D	E
Yellow-throated Vireo	A	B			E
Blue-headed Vireo		B	C		E
Warbling Vireo	A	B	C	D	E
Red-eyed Vireo	A	B	C	D	E
Blue Jay	A	B	C	D	E
American Crow	A	B	C	D	E

2010 Ulster County May Census Summary (continued)

Species	Group					
	A	B	C	D	E	
Fish Crow	A	B		D	E	
Common Raven		B			E	F
Purple Martin	A	B	C		E	F
Tree Swallow	A	B	C	D	E	F
No. Rough-winged Swallow	A	B			E	
Bank Swallow	A	B			E	
Cliff Swallow	A	B			E	
Barn Swallow	A	B	C	D	E	F
Black-capped Chickadee	A	B	C	D	E	F
Tufted Titmouse	A	B	C	D	E	F
Red-breasted Nuthatch	A				E	
White-breasted Nuthatch	A	B	C	D	E	
Brown Creeper	A	B			E	
Carolina Wren	A	B	C	D	E	F
House Wren	A	B		D	E	F
Winter Wren	A	B			E	
Marsh Wren	A	B			E	F
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	A		C			
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	A	B			E	
Eastern Bluebird	A	B	C	D	E	F
Veery	A	B	C		E	
Swainson's Thrush			C			F
Hermit Thrush		B	C		E	
Wood Thrush	A	B	C	D	E	F
American Robin	A	B	C	D	E	F
Gray Catbird	A	B	C	D	E	F
Northern Mockingbird	A	B	C	D	E	F
Brown Thrasher	A	B	C	D	E	
European Starling	A	B	C	D	E	F
Cedar Waxwing	A		C		E	F
Blue-winged Warbler	A	B	C	D	E	F
Tennessee Warbler		B				
Northern Parula	A	B			E	
Yellow Warbler	A	B	C	D	E	F
Chestnut-sided Warbler	A	B			E	
Magnolia Warbler	A	B			E	
Cape May Warbler					E	
Black-throated Blue Warbler	A	B	C		E	
Yellow-rumped Warbler	A	B			E	F
Black-throated Green Warbler	A	B	C		E	
Blackburnian Warbler	A	B			E	

Species	Group					
	A	B	C	D	E	
Pine Warbler	A				E	F
Prairie Warbler	A		C		E	F
Blackpoll Warbler	A	B			E	F
Black-and-white Warbler	A	B			E	F
American Redstart	A	B			E	F
Worm-eating Warbler	A	B	C		E	
Ovenbird	A	B	C	D	E	F
Northern Waterthrush			C		E	F
Louisiana Waterthrush	A	B	C	D	E	F
Mourning Warbler	A	B	C		E	
Common Yellowthroat	A	B	C	D	E	F
Hooded Warbler					E	
Wilson's Warbler	A	B			E	F
Canada Warbler	A	B			E	
Scarlet Tanager	A	B	C	D	E	F
Eastern Towhee	A	B	C	D	E	
Chipping Sparrow	A	B	C	D	E	F
Field Sparrow	A	B		D	E	F
Savannah Sparrow	A	B			E	F
Song Sparrow	A	B	C	D	E	F
Lincoln's Sparrow					E	
Swamp Sparrow	A	B			E	F
White-throated Sparrow	A	B			E	
White-crowned Sparrow	A				E	
Dark-eyed Junco		B			E	
Northern Cardinal	A	B	C	D	E	F
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	A	B	C	D	E	F
Indigo Bunting	A	B	C	D	E	F
Bobolink	A	B	C	D	E	F
Red-winged Blackbird	A	B	C	D	E	F
Eastern Meadowlark	A		C	D	E	F
Common Grackle	A	B	C	D	E	F
Brown-headed Cowbird	A	B	C	D	E	F
Orchard Oriole	A	B	C		E	F
Baltimore Oriole	A	B	C	D	E	F
Purple Finch	A	B			E	
House Finch	A	B	C	D	E	F
American Goldfinch	A	B	C	D	E	F
House Sparrow	A	B	C	D	E	F
Totals: 154 Species (+ 2 CW)	127	116	81	58	139	90