

2011 Ulster County May Census Report

Seventeen individuals in nine field parties participated in the 2011 annual *John Burroughs Natural History Society* Ulster County May Census (a/k/a “Century Day”). This “Big Day” county-wide count is an attempt to document bird diversity by identifying as many species of birds as possible within Ulster County in one day. Eight field parties recorded a total of **149 species** on the target date (May 14th), plus one additional species of questionable origins (Ring-necked Pheasant), and one additional field party added two count week species on May 13th.

Weather conditions on 14 May were generally pleasant early and late day with mostly cloudy skies and light SSE winds. Persistent rain showers mid-day in the mountainous terrain created challenging conditions and hampered detection of what few birds were apparently present and singing. Leaf-out appeared to be typical for this time of the year, if not a little behind average. Overall we experienced an early and relatively short movement of birds again this year, with a big push of migrants during the last week of April that tapered off significantly the first week in May. Significant rainfall during the period immediately preceding the count resulted in high water levels and fewer opportunities for shorebirds.

Seasonally rare waterfowl topped this year’s list of highlights. Several **Ruddy Ducks** and **White-winged Scoters** were observed in the lower basin at Ashokan Reservoir, a **Red-breasted Merganser** was in the Hudson River at the confluence of Rondout Creek, and a **Snow Goose** lingered on Stone Ridge Pond. Additional noteworthy highlights were a **Ruffed Grouse** drumming in Kenneth Wilson State Park at dawn, **Least Bittern** and a **Black-crowned Night-Heron** detected in the pre-dawn hours at Kingston Point, an astonishing five **Sora** rails at Harcourt Wildlife Sanctuary in New Paltz, two **Common Moorhen** at The Great Vly in Saugerties, and multiple **Red-headed Woodpeckers** at a beaver swamp on Weston Road in New Paltz. **Great Horned Owl** vocalizing at SGNWR was a difficult and very infrequent occurrence for this time of the season, and **Alder Flycatcher** at Kenneth Wilson State Park, **Black-billed Cuckoo** on the Rail Trail off Denniston Road in Gardiner, **Whip-poor-will** at Onteora Lake, **Hooded Merganser** at Kenneth Wilson State Park, **Osprey**, **Swainson’s Thrush**, and a flock of **Brant** were all uncommon additions that are frequently missed on this census.

The flooded farm field on Denniston Road once again hosted an impressive seven species of shorebirds, including **Semipalmated Sandpiper** and **Semipalmated Plover**, and **Upland Sandpiper** was found by one field party at Blue Chip Farm. Twenty-two species of warblers were detected during the count, including **Tennessee**, **Hooded**, **Wilson’s**, and **Blackpoll**. Unusual count-week additions from the previous day include a **Lincoln’s Sparrow** and **Herring Gull**; a **Ring-necked Pheasant** of unknown origins was observed on the count day, and a strange gull on the Rondout Lighthouse jetty appeared to be a hybrid of undetermined origins.

Migrants were generally scarce with relatively small numbers of individuals for the few species that were encountered, with little in the way of significant flocks of warblers. Pied-billed Grebe, Cooper’s Hawk, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Common Nighthawk, **Red-breasted Nuthatch**, Golden-crowned Kinglet, and Nashville Warbler represent the most noteworthy misses.

Field party effort and a summary table of species found by group is attached below. Thanks to all of the participants for their effort and timely reports.

Steve M. Chorvas – compiler

Field party effort:

Group A – Larry Alden, Jackie Bogardus, Steve Chorvas (2:45 a.m.– 8:45 p.m., 200+ miles)

Group B – Deb Ferguson, Frank Murphy (2:15 a.m.– 8:30 p.m.)

Group C – Lynn and Allan Bowdery (Wallkill Valley Land Trust easements)

Group D – Mira Bowin, Matt Corsaro (Wallkill Valley Rail Trail and Harcourt Wildlife Sanctuary)

Group E – Mark DeDea, Glenn Nystrup, Peter Schoenberger (19 hours, 295 miles)

Group F – Nancy and Doug McBride (Woodland Pond easement)

Group G – Alan Beebe (local patch and Falling Waters Preserve, Saugerties)

Group M – Christine Guarino (highlights of Wallkill Valley Rail Trail early morning effort only)

Group X – Lin Fagan (May 13, 5:00 a.m.– 4:00 p.m., 51 miles, Temps. 50-57, mostly overcast, some afternoon sun)

2011 Ulster County May Census Summary

Species	Group						
Snow Goose					E		
Brant					E		
Canada Goose	A	B	C	D	E		X
Mute Swan	A	B		D	E		X
Wood Duck	A	B		D	E		X
American Black Duck					E		
Mallard	A	B	C	D	E	F	X
White-winged Scoter	A	B			E		
Hooded Merganser		B			E		
Common Merganser	A	B	C		E		
Red-breasted Merganser	A				E		
Ruddy Duck	A	B					
Ring-necked Pheasant		B					
Ruffed Grouse	A				E		
Wild Turkey	A	B	C		E		X
Common Loon	A	B			E		X
Double-crested Cormorant	A	B			E		X
Least Bittern		B					
Great Blue Heron	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Green Heron	A	B		D	E		X
Black-crowned Night-Heron		B					
Black Vulture	A	B	C	D	E		X
Turkey Vulture	A	B	C	D	E		X
Osprey					E		
Bald Eagle	A	B			E		
Northern Harrier	A	B			E		
Red-shouldered Hawk	A			D			
Broad-winged Hawk	A				E		
Red-tailed Hawk	A	B	C	D	E		X
American Kestrel	A				E		
Virginia Rail	A	B		D	E		X
Sora				D	E		X
Common Moorhen					E		
Semipalmated Plover	A	B			E		
Killdeer	A	B	C	D	E		X
Greater Yellowlegs	A	B		D	E		
Lesser Yellowlegs	A	B		D	E		
Solitary Sandpiper	A	B	C	D	E		X
Spotted Sandpiper	A	B	C	D	E		
Upland Sandpiper		B					
Semipalmated Sandpiper		B					
Least Sandpiper	A	B		D	E		
American Woodcock	A	B		D	E		
Ring-billed Gull	A	B			E		X
Herring Gull							X
Great Black-backed Gull	A	B			E		X
Rock Pigeon	A	B	C	D	E		
Mourning Dove	A	B	C	D	E	F	X
Black-billed Cuckoo					E		M
Eastern Screech-Owl	A				E		
Great Horned Owl		B					
Barred Owl	A	B			E		
Whip-poor-will					E		

Species	Group						
	A	B	C		E		
Chimney Swift	A	B	C		E		
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	A	B	C				
Belted Kingfisher	A	B			E		
Red-headed Woodpecker	A	B			E		X
Red-bellied Woodpecker	A	B	C	D	E	G	X
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	A	B			E		
Downy Woodpecker	A	B	C	D	E	G	X
Hairy Woodpecker	A	B	C		E		
Northern Flicker	A	B	C	D	E	G	X
Pileated Woodpecker	A	B	C	D	E		X
Eastern Wood-Pewee				D	E	G	X
Alder Flycatcher					E		
Willow Flycatcher				D	E		X
Least Flycatcher	A	B			E		
Eastern Phoebe	A	B	C	D	E		X
Great Crested Flycatcher	A	B	C	D	E		X
Eastern Kingbird	A	B	C	D	E		X
Yellow-throated Vireo	A	B			E		
Blue-headed Vireo	A	B		D			
Warbling Vireo	A	B	C	D	E		X
Red-eyed Vireo	A	B	C	D	E		X
Blue Jay	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
American Crow	A	B	C	D	E		X
Fish Crow	A	B			E	F	G
Common Raven	A	B		D	E		
Purple Martin	A				E		X
Tree Swallow	A	B	C	D	E	F	X
No. Rough-winged Swallow	A	B	C	D	E		X
Bank Swallow					E		
Cliff Swallow	A	B	C		E		
Barn Swallow	A	B	C	D	E		X
Black-capped Chickadee	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Tufted Titmouse	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
White-breasted Nuthatch	A	B		D	E		
Brown Creeper	A	B		D	E		
Carolina Wren	A	B	C	D	E		X
House Wren	A	B	C	D	E		X
Winter Wren	A	B			E		
Marsh Wren	A	B			E		X
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	A	B		D	E		X
Eastern Bluebird	A	B	C	D	E	F	X
Veery	A	B			E		X
Swainson's Thrush				D			X
Hermit Thrush		B					
Wood Thrush	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
American Robin	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Gray Catbird	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Northern Mockingbird	A	B		D	E	G	X
Brown Thrasher	A	B		D	E		
European Starling	A	B	C	D	E	G	X
Cedar Waxwing					E		
Blue-winged Warbler	A	B			E	F	X
Tennessee Warbler					E		

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Species	Group							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	x
Northern Parula	A				E			x
Yellow Warbler	A	B	C	D	E	F		x
Chestnut-sided Warbler	A	B	C	D	E	F		x
Magnolia Warbler	A	B			E			x
Black-throated Blue Warbler	A	B			E		G	x
Yellow-rumped Warbler	A	B	C		E			x
Black-throated Green Warbler	A	B			E			
Blackburnian Warbler	A	B			E			
Pine Warbler	A	B		D	E	F		
Prairie Warbler	A	B			E			x
Blackpoll Warbler	A	B			E			
Black-and-white Warbler	A	B	C	D	E		G	x
American Redstart	A	B		D	E			x
Worm-eating Warbler	A	B		D	E	F		
Ovenbird	A	B	C	D	E		G	x
Northern Waterthrush		B			E			x
Louisiana Waterthrush	A	B	C	D	E			x
Common Yellowthroat	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	x
Hooded Warbler					E			
Wilson's Warbler	A		C	D	E			
Canada Warbler	A				E			
Scarlet Tanager	A	B	C	D	E			x
Eastern Towhee	A	B	C	D	E	F		x
Chipping Sparrow	A	B	C	D	E	F		x

Species	Group							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	x
Field Sparrow	A	B			E			x
Savannah Sparrow	A			D	E			x
Song Sparrow	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	x
Lincoln's Sparrow								x
Swamp Sparrow	A	B			E			x
White-throated Sparrow					E			
White-crowned Sparrow				D			G	
Dark-eyed Junco	A	B			E			
Northern Cardinal	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	x
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	A	B	C	D	E		G	x
Indigo Bunting	A	B			E			x
Bobolink	A	B	C	D	E			x
Red-winged Blackbird	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	x
Eastern Meadowlark	A	B	C	D	E			x
Common Grackle	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	x
Brown-headed Cowbird	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	x
Orchard Oriole	A		C		E			x
Baltimore Oriole	A	B	C	D	E	F		x
Purple Finch	A	B						
House Finch	A	B	C		E	F	G	
American Goldfinch	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	x
House Sparrow	A	B	C	D	E		G	x
Totals: 149* Species (+ 2 cw)	123	119*	64	80	136	28	28	1 86

*Excluding Ring-necked Pheasant