

109th Audubon Christmas Bird Count Mohonk Lake/Ashokan Reservoir (NYML) – December 20, 2008

Twenty-four observers in nine field parties recorded **16,092 individuals** of **69 species** (plus an additional four count week (cw) only species), during our 59th annual survey of this Ulster County CBC circle centered at the Community College in Stone Ridge. We recorded 1,930 more individuals of ten fewer species in comparison to last year's record 79 species/14,162 individuals. A slow-moving overnight snow storm lingered until mid-day, resulting in significant snow accumulation, very difficult road conditions, and limited stopping opportunities. Canada Geese accounted for greater than 46% (7,454) of all individuals recorded on this year's count.

Temperatures were slightly below average, ranging from an early morning low of 13° (F) at Lake Mohonk to an afternoon high of 22° (F) at Ashokan Reservoir. A steady snowfall continued until about 12:00 noon, with dark overcast skies the remainder of the count day. Winds were calm to light at 0-5 mph, snow cover was 100%, averaging 12" in depth with a range of 9"-14". Stone Ridge Pond on Mill Dam Road retained a central core of open water, while most other ponds and slow moving bodies of water were completely frozen. Ashokan Reservoir was inaccessible due to an unplowed road, as were several additional sites traditionally surveyed.

Highlights include our first CBC record of a **Lincoln's Sparrow**, found by Lin Fagan's group in the marsh on Loughran Road in the Town of Esopus; an **Eastern Phoebe** photographed by Peter Schoenberger (only our second record for this species previously recorded in 1976); a **Merlin** observed by Mark DeDea off Hurley Avenue in Hurley (3rd count record); and an **Orange-crowned Warbler** in a marsh off Spillway Road in Hurley (3rd count record). Two White-crowned Sparrows represent the fifth record for this species on our count, and one count week Lapland Longspur represents our second record for this species previously recorded in 1988.

Additional noteworthy records include 14 Northern Harriers (more than double the previous high count of six recorded in 2007), 2 Red-shouldered Hawks (equals our all-time high count), 5 Rough-legged Hawks (equals our high count record from 1985), 8 Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers (new high count, eclipsing 5 in 1998), 9 Northern Flickers, 120 Horned Larks, 21 Red-breasted Nuthatch, 9 Brown Creepers, 108 Eastern Bluebirds, 4 Hermit Thrushes, 414 Cedar Waxwings (new high count, eclipsing 360 in 1984), 2 Yellow-rumped Warblers, 4 Field Sparrows, 1 Fox Sparrow, 6 Swamp Sparrows, 488 White-throated Sparrows (new high count, eclipsing 299 in 2007), 31 Snow Buntings, 72 Red-winged Blackbirds (new high count, double the previous high of 36 in 1985), 265 Common Grackles (an astonishing new high count in comparison to the previous high of only 8 individuals recorded in 1973!), and 76 Pine Siskins (always nice to record some nomadic finches from the far north).

Stone Ridge Pond continues to be a major foraging and resting site for large numbers of Canada Geese, Mallards, Ring-billed Gulls, and a few Mute Swans, accounting for 1,896 of our total number of individuals. Most of the additional Canada Geese were encountered in numerous small to mid-sized flocks observed flying south throughout the count day by multiple field parties. The vast expanse of corn fields on the Lomontville/Hurley flats were eerily devoid of bird activity, and covered in snow, while the fording on Esopus Creek, and the adjacent holding ponds and compost piles, were inaccessible due to road conditions. Spillway Road marsh continues to be a productive location in the Ashokan Reservoir sector.

We missed Common Loon, Horned Grebe, American Wigeon, Wild Turkey (seemingly inexplicable), Turkey Vulture, Great Horned Owl, and Barred Owl. Individual numbers of Black Vultures (2) were down considerably for the second consecutive year in comparison to recent past years (high count of 41 in 2006), and we failed to locate any Crossbills in the count circle, despite bumper crops of spruce cones in the Ashokan basin, and multiple Crossbill reports from adjacent areas of the Ulster County Catskill Mountains. None of the field parties encountered any shrikes, pipits, redpolls, Pine or Evening Grosbeaks in their count sectors.

The following table summarizes the count results by sector, including count circle totals, followed by area descriptions, observer, and effort information (asterisks indicate unusual species for this count circle, "cw" indicates a count-week only species). I sincerely wish to thank all of the participants for their fine effort and dedication under very challenging weather and road conditions, and extend a very special thanks to Julie and Steve Noble for providing home-cooked hot food, soups, and beverages for our post-count compilation, and to Mark DeDea and Lin Fagan for making the arrangements for our use of the indoor facilities at Hasbrouck Park.

| Total | Species | A | B | C1 | C2 | D | E | F | G | H | Feeder |
|-------|--------------------------|----|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|-------|-----|------|--------|
| 286 | Snow Goose | | 23 | | | 193 | | | 70 | | |
| 7,454 | Canada Goose | 2 | 342 | 682 | 377 | 1192 | 407 | 1,552 | 900 | 2000 | |
| 8 | Mute Swan | | | | | 2 | | 6 | | | |
| 7 | American Black Duck | | | | | | | 7 | | | |
| 715 | Mallard | | | | 39 | 12 | | 600 | 34 | 30 | |
| 20 | Hooded Merganser | | | 5 | 11 | 4 | | | | | |
| 18 | Common Merganser | | | | 12 | 5 | | | | 1 | |
| | Ring-necked Pheasant | | | | | | | | cw | | |
| 2 | Great Blue Heron | | 1 | | | 1 | | | | | |
| 2 | Black Vulture | | | 2 | | | | | | | |
| 2 | Bald Eagle | | | 1 | | 1 | | | | | |
| 14 | Northern Harrier | | 1 | | 1 | 10 | | | | 2 | |
| 1 | Sharp-shinned Hawk | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| 3 | Cooper's Hawk | | 1 | | | 1 | | | 1 | | |
| 2 | Red-shouldered Hawk | | 1 | | | cw | | | | 1 | |
| 18 | Red-tailed Hawk | 1 | | 2 | | 6 | | 2 | 3 | 4 | |
| 5 | Rough-legged Hawk | | | | | 2 | | | | 3 | |
| 1 | American Kestrel | | | | | | | | | 1 | |
| 1 | Merlin * | | | | | 1 | | | | | |
| 161 | Ring-billed Gull | | | | 1 | 10 | | 90 | 60 | | |
| | Herring Gull | cw | | | | | | | | | |
| | Great Black-backed Gull | cw | | | | | | | | | |
| 147 | Rock Pigeon | | 50 | 1 | | 5 | | 4 | 24 | 63 | |
| 308 | Mourning Dove | 3 | 10 | 17 | 24 | 14 | 12 | 61 | 79 | 88 | |
| 1 | Eastern Screech-Owl | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| 2 | Belted Kingfisher | | 1 | | | 1 | | | | | |
| 53 | Red-bellied Woodpecker | 3 | 4 | 6 | 10 | 8 | 4 | 8 | 3 | 7 | |
| 8 | Yellow-bellied Sapsucker | | | | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | | |
| 92 | Downy Woodpecker | 5 | 6 | 9 | 19 | 9 | 10 | 12 | 16 | 6 | |
| 17 | Hairy Woodpecker | 1 | | 1 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | | 5 | |
| 9 | Northern Flicker | 1 | | | 2 | 3 | | 1 | | 2 | |
| 11 | Pileated Woodpecker | | | | 4 | 2 | | 4 | 1 | | |
| 1 | Eastern Phoebe * | | | | | | | | | 1 | |
| 336 | Blue Jay | 22 | 34 | 33 | 69 | 20 | 31 | 26 | 63 | 38 | |
| 444 | American Crow | 67 | 169 | 35 | 26 | 50 | 31 | 15 | 22 | 29 | |
| 3 | Common Raven | 2 | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| 120 | Horned Lark | | | | | | | | | 120 | |
| 269 | Black-capped Chickadee | 13 | 12 | 11 | 14 | 14 | 28 | 131 | 15 | 31 | |
| 210 | Tufted Titmouse | 7 | 17 | 16 | 34 | 15 | 39 | 22 | 25 | 35 | |
| 21 | Red-breasted Nuthatch | | | | | 2 | | 16 | | 3 | |
| 51 | White-breasted Nuthatch | 3 | 2 | 5 | 9 | 7 | 2 | 9 | 6 | 8 | |
| 9 | Brown Creeper | | | 1 | | | 1 | 4 | | 3 | |
| 14 | Carolina Wren | 1 | | 1 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | |
| 2 | Winter Wren | | | 1 | | | | 1 | | | |
| 19 | Golden-crowned Kinglet | | | | | 2 | | 13 | | 4 | |
| 108 | Eastern Bluebird | 20 | 4 | | 3 | 13 | 9 | 25 | 1 | 33 | |
| 4 | Hermit Thrush | | | | 1 | cw | | 3 | | | |
| 289 | American Robin | | | 5 | 26 | 55 | 30 | 75 | | 98 | |

| Total | Species | A | B | C1 | C2 | D | E | F | G | H | Feeder |
|--------|----------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| 26 | Northern Mockingbird | 2 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 5 | | 2 | | 7 | |
| 1,004 | European Starling | 5 | 170 | 78 | 42 | 406 | 195 | 2 | 46 | 60 | |
| 414 | Cedar Waxwing | | | | 8 | 86 | 12 | | 8 | 300 | |
| 1 | Orange-crowned Warbler * | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| 2 | Yellow-rumped Warbler | | | | | | | 2 | | | |
| 93 | American Tree Sparrow | | 1 | 14 | 8 | 12 | | 31 | 5 | 22 | |
| 4 | Field Sparrow | | | | | 4 | | | | | |
| 1 | Fox Sparrow | | | | | 1 | | | | | |
| 68 | Song Sparrow | 1 | 7 | 23 | 3 | 18 | | 8 | 4 | 4 | |
| 1 | Lincoln's Sparrow * | | | | 1 | | | | | | |
| 6 | Swamp Sparrow | | | 1 | | 2 | | 2 | | 1 | |
| 488 | White-throated Sparrow | 21 | 103 | 44 | 119 | 61 | 74 | 15 | 30 | 21 | |
| 2 | White-crowned Sparrow * | | | 1 | | cw | | | | 1 | |
| 1,239 | Dark-eyed Junco | 36 | 50 | 91 | 212 | 53 | 175 | 161 | 221 | 240 | |
| | Lapland Longspur * | | | | | | | | | cw | |
| 31 | Snow Bunting | | | | | 1 | | | 30 | | |
| 211 | Northern Cardinal | 5 | 9 | 20 | 28 | 31 | 24 | 18 | 44 | 32 | |
| 72 | Red-winged Blackbird | | | 3 | 18 | 13 | 11 | 20 | 5 | 2 | |
| 265 | Common Grackle | | 14 | 137 | 16 | 85 | | 12 | | 1 | |
| 88 | Brown-headed Cowbird | | | 31 | 27 | 27 | | 2 | 1 | | |
| 13 | Purple Finch | | | | | cw | 10 | 3 | | | |
| 203 | House Finch | 1 | 18 | 50 | 42 | 6 | 11 | 12 | 38 | 25 | |
| 76 | Pine Siskin | | | | 20 | 9 | | 27 | | 20 | |
| 199 | American Goldfinch | 1 | 5 | 13 | 19 | 12 | 33 | 32 | 20 | 64 | |
| 317 | House Sparrow | | 38 | 7 | 84 | 32 | 31 | 25 | 52 | 48 | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 16,092 | Total Individuals | 223 | 1,098 | 1,348 | 1,341 | 2,532 | 1,186 | 3,068 | 1,831 | 3,465 | 0 |
| 69 +4 | Total Species Count | 23 +2 | 29 | 34 | 38 | 52 | 25 | 46 | 33 +1 | 43 +1 | 0 |

cw = count week (species included in totals row as a plus [+] number)



Eastern Phoebe (*Sayornis phoebe*) – Kripplebush/Accord Sector

Photograph courtesy of Peter Schoenberger

| Area Description and Observers (Sector leaders are listed first in bold) | Daylight Party Hours | | | Daylight Party Miles | | | Nocturnal | | | |
|--|----------------------|-----------------------|-------|----------------------|--------|-------|-----------|--------|---|----|
| | On Foot | By Car | Total | On Foot | By Car | Total | Hours | Miles | | |
| Area A: Mohonk Lake John Thompson, Jaime Deppen, Catherine Kingsley, Ethan Pierce, Jonathan Rosenthal, Tom Sarro, Radka Wildova. | 5.75 | 0 | 5.75 | 2 | 0 | 2 | | | | |
| Area B: Wallkill River West - New Paltz to Rosendale Selden Spencer, Bea Conover, Jim Marks. | 0 | 5.25 | 5.25 | 0 | 28.5 | 28.5 | | | | |
| Area C1: Wallkill River East - New Paltz Christine Guarino, Steve Stanne. | 1.5 | 3 | 4.5 | 2 | 14 | 16 | 1 | 2 | | |
| Area C2: Ulster Park Lin Fagan, David Arner, Maeve Maurer. | 1 | 6 | 7 | .5 | 46 | 46.5 | | | | |
| Area D: Hurley/Kingston Mark DeDea, Julie Noble, Steve Noble. | 4 | 5.5 | 9.5 | 6 | 58.5 | 64.5 | 2 | 24.5 | | |
| Area E: High Falls/Alligerville Evelyn and Bob Rifenburg. | 1 | 6.25 | 7.25 | 1 | 44 | 45 | | | | |
| Area F: Ashokan Reservoir/Lomontville Steve Chorvas. | 1 | 8 | 9 | .5 | 42.5 | 43 | 1.5 | 6.5 | | |
| Area G: Marbletown Glen Van Gorden, Jeff Nerp. | 1 | 7 | 8 | 2 | 32 | 34 | .5 | 0 | | |
| Area H: Kripplebush/Accord Peter Schoenberger. | 2 | 6.5 | 8.5 | .25 | 81.5 | 81.75 | | | | |
| Field Observers = 24 | Feeder Watchers = 0 | Total Effort → | 17.25 | 47.5 | 64.75 | 14.25 | 347 | 361.25 | 5 | 33 |

SAVE THE DATE – The 2009 Mohonk Lake/Ashokan Reservoir Audubon Christmas Bird Count is scheduled for **Saturday, December 19, 2009.**