

## 110<sup>th</sup> Audubon Christmas Bird Count (CBC) Mohonk Lake/Ashokan Reservoir (NYML) – December 19, 2009

Thirty-six observers in eleven field parties recorded **11,631 individuals** of **71 species** (plus an additional four count week species), during our 60<sup>th</sup> annual survey of this Ulster County CBC circle centered at the Ulster County Community College in Stone Ridge. Counts conducted over the last decade have typically recorded 64-69 species. This year's count represents only the second time we have recorded 70 or more species (record-high of 79 species in 2007), and our third highest total number of individuals (previously 16,092 in 2008 and 14,162 in 2007).

Temperatures were typically cold and slightly below average, ranging from an early morning low of 15° (F) at Mohonk Lake to an afternoon high of 24° (F) at Ashokan Reservoir. No precipitation was recorded during the count despite dark gray skies and solid cloud cover throughout the day. Winds were generally calm to light at 0-5 mph with occasional strong gusts at the higher elevations of Mohonk Lake. Snow cover was 100% with a hard icy crust, averaging 3"-4" in depth. Smaller ponds and slow moving bodies of water were completely frozen. Fast moving streams, Esopus Creek, Williams Lake, Ashokan Reservoir, and approximately half of Stone Ridge Pond on Mill Dam Road retained open water.

Highlights include our first CBC record of a **Peregrine Falcon**, observed by Peter Schoenberger, Matt Corsaro, and Mira Bowin on Whitelands Road in Kripplebush; our first count day record of **Red-breasted Merganser** (previously recorded as a count week species in 1984), observed by Ev and Bob Rifenburg along the near side of Williams Lake in the Town of Rosendale; four **American Wigeon** (only our second count record, and a new high count eclipsing our first record of 3 in 2007), observed by Jackie Bogardus and I on Stone Ridge Pond; and our fourth count record of two **American Pipits**, also observed by Jackie and I, feeding on and around the base of a compost pile on Fording Place Road out on the Lomontville flats.

Selden Spencer's field party encountered the traditional "pie-bald" Red-tailed Hawk inhabiting an area of open agricultural fields in Rosendale for the past 20 years or more, roosting this year with an apparent leucistic mate! The smaller second bird (probable male) had a "powdered red" tail with a dark head and more flecks of black feathers on the back and shoulders. Dave Nyzio encountered an astonishing 15 Swamp Sparrows on his property in Kripplebush, resulting in a new record count total of 22, more than three times our previous high count of 7 in 1992.

Additional noteworthy records include the following new high counts (except were noted): 4 Bald Eagles (equals our high count in 2007), 8 Sharp-shinned Hawks (eclipsing 6 in 2007), 6 Cooper's Hawk (eclipsing 4 in 2007), 1 Red-shouldered Hawk (uncommon record), 65 Red-tailed Hawks (eclipsing 55 in 2006), 8 Eastern Screech-Owls (eclipsing 7 in 2007), 126 Downy Woodpeckers (eclipsing 108 in 1988), 20 Brown Creepers (eclipsing 18 in 1965), 75 Golden-crowned Kinglets (eclipsing 44 in 1987), 4 Hermit Thrushes (equals our high count in 2008), 1 White-crowned Sparrow (only our 6<sup>th</sup> count record), 1,558 Dark-eyed Juncos (eclipsing 1,252 in 2007), and 245 Northern Cardinals (eclipsing 211 in 2008).

Stone Ridge Pond continues to attract and account for significant numbers of Canada Geese, Mallards, and Ring-billed Gulls; a few Mute Swans, American Black Ducks, and American Wigeon; however, the overall population density was considerably less this year at 672 individuals in comparison to the 2,000+ of recent years. Four species accounted for 52% (6,096) of all individuals recorded on this year's count: Canada Goose (2,177), Dark-eyed Junco (1,558), European Starling (1,328), and American Crow (1,033).

With the exception of just one Purple Finch, no winter finches (Crossbills, Redpolls, Siskins, or Grosbeaks) were encountered by any of the field parties, and blackbirds were limited to only a few count week individuals. For the third consecutive year, relatively few vultures (12) were observed in the vicinity of their former roost in New Paltz, responsible for producing record-high counts of 108 Turkey and 41 Blacks in 2006. No Common Loons were observed in the lower basin of Ashokan Reservoir.

In recognition of our 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary, I thought it of some interest to look back and compare the winter population trends of two non-migratory Game species as reflected in this count's historical data. Ruffed Grouse were recorded in each of the first 40 years of this count (1950-1989) but were absent the last six years and 13 out of the last 16 years. In contrast, Wild Turkeys were recorded only once in the first 34 years (1950-1983) but have now been encountered 15 out of the last 17 years with double-digit numbers in all but one year and a high count of 91 in 2004. Finally, Great Blue Herons were not recorded on this count for the first 34 years (1950-1983) but have now been encountered 18 out of the last 19 years, typically as one or two individuals, with a high count of 11 in the mild winter of 1998.

The following tables summarize the count results by sector, 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 record-high effort and continued support of this annual Ulster County tradition, and extend a very special thanks once again this year to Mark DeDea for providing the facilities, hot food, and beverages for our well-attended post-count compilation at Hasbrouck Park in Kingston.

Steve M. Chorvas  
Mohonk Lake/Ashokan Reservoir CBC Compiler

**Mohonk Lake/Ashokan Reservoir Christmas Bird Count Sector Summary – December 19, 2009**

<b>Total</b>	<b>Species</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C1</b>	<b>C2</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F1</b>	<b>F2</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>M</b>
1	Snow Goose							1				
2,177	Canada Goose	39	532	4	509	141	15	189		76	655	17
7	Mute Swan					2		4			1	
4	American Wigeon *							4				
27	American Black Duck				3	5		12	2	5		
601	Mallard		3	2	25	51	10	405	4	80	19	2
18	Hooded Merganser		2		15	cw	1					
26	Common Merganser		12		11	cw		3				
1	Red-breasted Merganser *						1					
1	Ruffed Grouse											1
47	Wild Turkey		cw		7	cw				12	25	3
2	Horned Grebe								2			
1	Great Blue Heron							1				
8	Black Vulture		cw	8								
4	Turkey Vulture			1								3
4	Bald Eagle		cw		1	2				1		
4	Northern Harrier						1			2	1	
8	Sharp-shinned Hawk		1	1		1		1		2	2	
6	Cooper's Hawk			1	1	1		1			1	1
1	<i>Accipiter sp.</i>										1	
1	Red-shouldered Hawk										1	
65	Red-tailed Hawk	4	5	4	6	12	2	6	4	6	12	4
4	American Kestrel									1	3	
1	Peregrine Falcon *										1	
262	Ring-billed Gull		9	5	1	8		180	40		2	17
92	Herring Gull	9			3			5				75
14	Great Black-backed Gull	cw	1									13
4	<i>Gull sp.</i>	4										
226	Rock Pigeon		15			10				50	131	20
379	Mourning Dove	9	16	45	31	41	23	44	6	82	66	16
8	Eastern Screech-Owl							3		1	3	1
2	Great Horned Owl							1			1	
2	Barred Owl					2						
4	Belted Kingfisher				1	1		1		1		
65	Red-bellied Woodpecker	6	8	7	10	7	1	9	6	8	2	1
6	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker			1		4		1				
126	Downy Woodpecker	9	8	10	26	9	7	16	11	17	10	3
28	Hairy Woodpecker	2	3	1	1	2	1	6	3	6	3	
16	Northern Flicker	1	6			4		1		2		2
13	Pileated Woodpecker	1			2	1	1	3	1		3	1
484	Blue Jay	27	54	26	63	26	37	52	31	89	72	7
1,033	American Crow	33	150	130	139	53	63	164	18	37	46	200
12	Common Raven	7								2		3
19	Horned Lark										19	
335	Black-capped Chickadee	24	13	10	40	21	26	36	56	31	72	6
324	Tufted Titmouse	8	19	19	74	19	25	27	36	33	53	11
17	Red-breasted Nuthatch					cw	1	12	2		2	
155	White-breasted Nuthatch	11	13	7	17	7	5	35	14	21	18	7

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20	Brown Creeper	3					1	10	3		2	1
31	Carolina Wren		2	1	4	11		7	3		2	1
1	Winter Wren		1									
75	Golden-crowned Kinglet	11				2		13	11	8	29	1
1	Ruby-crowned Kinglet		1									
58	Eastern Bluebird	4	3		8	6	5	8	6	6	11	1
4	Hermit Thrush					1		3				
140	American Robin				4	53	1	52	7	5	18	
30	Northern Mockingbird	cw	3	2	1	7	1	4		5	5	2
1,328	European Starling	34	172	319	300	91	45	51	7	170	139	
2	American Pipit *							2				
128	Cedar Waxwing					56	23			15	27	7
217	American Tree Sparrow		5	17	15	12	1	2	5	146	13	1
1	Field Sparrow		1									
cw	Fox Sparrow		cw									
93	Song Sparrow	1	2	10	4	7	3	19	6	34	5	2
22	Swamp Sparrow					3		1	2	15	1	
403	White-throated Sparrow	10	24	27	72	55	13	61	8	75	48	10
1	White-crowned Sparrow										1	
1,558	Dark-eyed Junco	50	185	81	299	34	199	148	130	177	180	75
1	Snow Bunting								1			
245	Northern Cardinal	9	11	29	44	21	14	28	17	38	27	7
cw	Red-winged Blackbird		cw			cw						
cw	Common Grackle		cw									
cw	Brown-headed Cowbird		cw									
1	Purple Finch		cw				1					
79	House Finch		10	11	15	10		17		6	4	6
166	American Goldfinch	1	11	4	20	14	7	14	7	26	42	20
381	House Sparrow	cw	52	53	31	38	59	36	6	30	68	8
<b>11,631</b>	<b>Total Individuals</b>	317	1,353	836	1,803	851	593	1,699	455	1,321	1,847	556
<b>71</b>	<b>Total Species</b>	24	34	29	35	41	31	47	31	38	45	37

cw = count week (not included in totals)



**Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) – Whitelands Road, Kripplebush/Accord Sector. Photo by Peter Schoenberger**

<b>Mohonk Lake/Ashokan Reservoir Christmas Bird Count Effort – December 19, 2009</b>										
<b>Area Description and Observers</b> (Sector leaders are listed first.)	<b>Daylight Party Hours</b>			<b>Daylight Party Miles</b>			<b>Nocturnal</b>			
	On Foot	By Car	Total	On Foot	By Car	Total	Hours	Miles		
<b>Area A: Mohonk Lake</b> John Thompson, Allan Bowdery, Joe Bridges Jonathon Rosenthal, Tom Sarro, Shanan Smiley.	5.5	0	5.5	4	0	4				
<b>Area B: Walkkill River West - New Paltz to Rosendale</b> Selden Spencer, Bea Conover, Tom Crepet, Jim Marks.	.5	5	5.5	1	38	39				
<b>Area C1: Walkkill River East - New Paltz</b> Christine Guarino, Jennifer Merriam, Tracey Shimer, Steve Stanne.	1	3	4	.5	16.5	17	1	2		
<b>Area C2: Ulster Park</b> Lin Fagan, David Arner, Lynn Bowdery, Jayne Dean, Charlie Woodruff.	0	6.5	6.5	0	40	40	1	6		
<b>Area D: Hurley/Kingston</b> Mark DeDea, Alan Beebe, Julie Noble, Donna Seymour.	4	5	9	6	50.5	56.5	3	59		
<b>Area E: High Falls/Alligerville</b> Evelyn and Bob Rifenburg.	.5	6.75	7.25	.5	50.5	51				
<b>Area F1: Hurley/Lomontville</b> Steve Chorvas, Jackie Bogardus.	1.5	7.5	9	1	34	35	2	22		
<b>Area F2: Ashokan Reservoir</b> Frank Murphy, Debra Ferguson.	1	7	8	1	55	56				
<b>Area G: Marbletown</b> Glen VanGorden, Jeff Nerp, David Nyzio.	2	4.5	6.5	5	45	50	.75	.5		
<b>Area H: Kripplebush/Accord</b> Peter Schoenberger, Matt Corsaro, Mira Bowin.	1	7	8	1	82	83	2	28		
<b>Area M: Clove Valley Miscellaneous</b> Gene McGarry.	.5	8.5	9	1	93	94	1.5	12		
Field Observers - 36	Feeder Watchers - 0	<b>Total Effort →</b>	17.5	60.75	78.25	21	504.5	525.5	11.25	129.5

**SAVE THE DATE** – The **2010** Mohonk Lake/Ashokan Reservoir Audubon Christmas Bird Count is scheduled for **Saturday, December 18, 2010.**