

111th Audubon Christmas Bird Count (CBC) Mohonk Lake / Ashokan Reservoir (NYML) – December 18, 2010

Thirty observers in ten field parties recorded **11,840 individuals** of **72 species** (plus one additional count week species) during our 61st annual survey of this Ulster County CBC circle centered at the Ulster County Community College in Stone Ridge. This year's count represents only the third 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). Species diversity was well above the recent ten-year average of 64.3 species, and we exceeded last year's (2009) count by one species and 209 individuals.

Weather conditions this year were quite favorable for conducting the count, if not for concentrating birds in limited areas. Temperatures were typically cold and near average, ranging from an early morning low of 15° (F) in the southwest sector to an afternoon high of 38° (F) at Ashokan Reservoir. No precipitation was recorded during the count, with mostly sunny skies and little or no wind. The higher elevations of Mohonk Lake experienced light winds and recorded trace amounts of snow cover, while the rest of the count area was generally devoid of any snow. Smaller ponds and slow moving bodies of water were largely frozen. Fast moving streams, Esopus Creek, and the lower basin of Ashokan Reservoir were entirely open, and approximately one third of Stone Ridge Pond on Mill Dam Road retained open water.

Highlights include three species previously recorded only once during this count's 61-year history. A very late **Broad-winged Hawk** was observed perched in a tree on the edge of a horse paddock on Klienekill Farm in the Mohonk Lake sector; two **Northern Saw-whet Owls** responded to Peter Schoenberger's vocal imitation on Sundale Road in Accord; and a total of eight **Wood Ducks** in two groups were encountered in two sectors, eclipsing our first record of 3 recorded in 2005. Two additional species were encountered for only the third time; two **Merlins** (previously 1 in 1988 and 1 in 2008) and a late **Killdeer** (3 in 1973 and 1 in 1991). Six **Ring-necked Ducks**, last recorded 19 years ago and on four previous occasions (1/1991, 14/1987, 2/1975, 14/1974, 4/1966) were an unusual find for this count circle.

Additional noteworthy records include new high counts of 767 Mallards (eclipsing 715 in 2008), 5 Bald Eagles (eclipsing 4 in 2009 and 2007), 7 Cooper's Hawks (surpassing last year's record 6), 4 Red-shouldered Hawks (eclipsing 2 in 2008), 80 Red-tailed Hawks (surpassing last year's record 65), 7 Barred Owls (eclipsing 4 in 2006), 9 Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers (eclipsing 8 in 2008), 53 Carolina Wrens (eclipsing 47 in 2006), and 98 Song Sparrows (eclipsing 95 in 2007). Two White-crowned Sparrows represent our 7th count record, and two Ruby-crowned Kinglets, three Field Sparrows, one Fox Sparrow, and three American Kestrels were nice half-hardy additions to the compilation.

Red-tailed Hawk, Mourning Dove, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Northern Mockingbird, European Starling, White-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, and Northern Cardinal were encountered by all of the ten field parties. Ring-necked Duck, Common Goldeneye, Horned Grebe, Broad-winged Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, Killdeer, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Hermit Thrush, Fox Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Snow Bunting, and Common Grackle were recorded by only one field party.

Stone Ridge Pond continues to attract and account for significant numbers of Canada Geese, Mallards, and a few Mute Swans, but lacked additional waterfowl diversity this year, and the overall population density continues to decline from the high counts of 2,000+ individuals of recent past years. Several large flocks of Canada Geese were observed in flight over the Lomontville Flats, heading in no consistent direction or with any apparent objective, and the compost mounds off Fording Place continue to attract large numbers of Ring-billed Gulls along with a few Herring Gulls. Canada Geese and American Crows once again accounted for a large percentage of the total number of individuals (38%).

Three typically abundant species were notable for their relative scarcity. Downy Woodpecker completely evaded detection in one large sector, White-throated Sparrows (200) were below average and fewer than half of the 403 detected last year, and Dark-eyed Juncos were well below recent averages and down 60% compared to 2009 (631 vs. 1,558). No winter finches (Purple Finches, Siskins, Redpolls, Grosbeaks, or Crossbills) and no Yellow-rumped Warblers were encountered by any of the field parties, and blackbirds were limited to just one lone Common Grackle! For the fourth consecutive year, relatively few vultures (12) were observed in the vicinity of a known roosting site in New Paltz that is currently hosting over 100 individuals, including 40+ Black Vultures. Common Loon was once again absent from the lower basin of Ashokan Reservoir.

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 thank all of the participants for their time and effort and especially extend my thanks to Mark DeDea and Kyla Haber for providing the facilities, hot food, and beverages for our well-attended post-count compilation at Hasbrouck Park in Kingston.

Mohonk Lake/Ashokan Reservoir Christmas Bird Count Sector Summary – December 18, 2010

Total	Species	A	B	C	C2	D	E	F	G	H	M
3,354	Canada Goose		950	24	201	93	304	1,342	90	335	15
8	Mute Swan					1		5			2
8	Wood Duck *						3	5			
28	American Black Duck				10	3	13		2		
767	Mallard		2		28	17	42	507	158	13	
6	Ring-necked Duck*						6				
cw	Bufflehead										
2	Common Goldeneye				2						
8	Hooded Merganser				5		3				
46	Common Merganser				31	2	10			3	
55	Wild Turkey				45	3					7
7	Horned Grebe							7			
5	Great Blue Heron			1			2		1	1	
4	Black Vulture		2								2
8	Turkey Vulture		1	1		3					3
5	Bald Eagle				1		3		1		
8	Northern Harrier		1	1				1	1	4	
3	Sharp-shinned Hawk			2					1		
7	Cooper's Hawk				1		3		1	2	cw
4	Red-shouldered Hawk		1	2					1		
1	Broad-winged Hawk *	1									
80	Red-tailed Hawk	2	9	4	11	12	17	6	7	9	3
1	Rough-legged Hawk								1		
3	American Kestrel						1		1	1	
2	Merlin *					1				1	
1	Killdeer *								1		
570	Ring-billed Gull				4	23	116	410	2		15
65	Herring Gull	11			1		39	7			7
6	Great Black-backed Gull						2				4
369	Rock Pigeon		12		20	84	5		103	115	30
285	Mourning Dove	1	8	18	24	22	41	5	35	125	6
3	Eastern Screech-Owl							2		1	
2	Great Horned Owl				1	1					
7	Barred Owl		1				1	2	2		1
2	Northern Saw-whet Owl *									2	
3	Belted Kingfisher				1			2			
63	Red-bellied Woodpecker	5	3	6	8	8	8	11	7	6	1
9	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	2		1	3		1	1	1		
82	Downy Woodpecker	7		4	15	9	10	16	14	4	3
29	Hairy Woodpecker	2	1	2	1	5	1	12	1	3	1
15	Northern Flicker			1		3	2	2	2	5	
13	Pileated Woodpecker	1	2		1	2	1	1	2	2	1
1	<i>Woodpecker sp.</i>	1									
458	Blue Jay	18	35	35	56	23	51	45	70	108	17
1,165	American Crow	3	320	160	42	73	64	371	34	58	40
6	Common Raven	2							2	1	1
373	Black-capped Chickadee	33	3	22	79	37	35	39	45	77	3
298	Tufted Titmouse	19	8	23	71	41	47	31	23	24	11

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Total	Species	A	B	C	C2	D	E	F	G	H	M
14	Red-breasted Nuthatch	1						12		1	
157	White-breasted Nuthatch	19	3	9	37	16	11	26	18	15	3
4	Brown Creeper			2				1		1	
53	Carolina Wren	1		3	7	12	3	12	9	6	
42	Golden-crowned Kinglet			2	4	6		12	1	16	1
2	Ruby-crowned Kinglet				1	1					
109	Eastern Bluebird			7	24	21	17	1	21	15	3
1	Hermit Thrush					1					
11	American Robin					1		1		8	1
55	Northern Mockingbird	2	5	7	2	16	2	2	12	6	1
918	European Starling	5	120	38	27	82	86	117	183	235	25
50	Cedar Waxwing			10			34	1	5		
195	American Tree Sparrow		1	10	7	22	16	43	72	24	
3	Field Sparrow		2						1		
1	Fox Sparrow		1								
98	Song Sparrow			29	5	22	2	7	25	8	
10	Swamp Sparrow					2			7	1	
200	White-throated Sparrow	3	2	18	25	55	11	24	43	18	1
2	White-crowned Sparrow									2	
631	Dark-eyed Junco	21	37	40	109	65	69	47	84	89	70
58	Snow Bunting									58	
192	Northern Cardinal	4	16	21	38	22	17	33	23	11	7
1	Common Grackle						1				
121	House Finch	2	3	31	25	39	5	9	1		6
87	American Goldfinch			18	20	16	8	4	15	3	3
580	House Sparrow		85	49	111	152	6	84	29	59	5
11,840	Total Individuals	166	1,634	601	1,104	1,017	1,119	3,266	1,158	1,476	299
72	Total Species	23	28	33	40	40	43	41	45	42	33

cw = count week (not included in totals)

Mohonk Lake/Ashokan Reservoir Christmas Bird Count Effort – December 18, 2010								
Area Description and Observers (Sector leaders are listed first.)	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, Allan Bowdery, Joe Bridges Jaime Deppen, Doug Robinson, Tom Sarro.	2.5	3.5	6	1	10	11		
Area B: Walkkill River West - New Paltz to Rosendale Selden Spencer, Tom Crepet, Jim Marks.	1	5	6	1	42	43		
Area C: Walkkill River East - New Paltz Christine Guarino, Jennifer Merriam, Tracey Shimer, Steve Stanne.	1	3	4	.5	25	25.5	.75	3
Area C2: Ulster Park Lin Fagan, David Arner, Lynn Bowdery, Maeve Mower.	2.5	6	8.5	0	48	48		
Area D: Hurley/Kingston Mark DeDea, Donna Seymour.	4	5.5	9.5	6	56	62	3	58
Area E: High Falls/Alligerville Matt Corsaro, Mira Bowin, David Rankin.	2	6	8	1	40	41		

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			On Foot	By Car	Total	On Foot	By Car	Total	Hours	Miles
Area F: Hurley/Lomontville Steve Chorvas, Jackie Bogardus.			2.5	7	9.5	1	41	42	2	25
Area G: Marbletown Glen VanGorden, Jeff Nerp, David Nyzio.			2	6	8	2.5	40	42.5	.5	.5
Area H: Kripplebush/Accord Peter Schoenberger, Susan Rogers.			4.5	5	9.5	4	66	70	2	17.5
Area M: Clove Valley Gene McGarry.			.5	8	8.5	0	93	93	1	1
Field Observers - 30	Feeder Watchers - 0	Total Effort →	22.5	55	77.5	17	461	478	9.25	105

SAVE THE DATE – The **2011** Mohonk Lake/Ashokan Reservoir Audubon Christmas Bird Count is scheduled for **Saturday, December 17, 2011.**