

## 112<sup>th</sup> Audubon Christmas Bird Count (CBC) Mohonk Lake / Ashokan Reservoir (NYML) – December 17, 2011

Forty-one observers in ten field parties, and one feeder-watcher, recorded **10,786 individuals** of **74 species** during the 62<sup>nd</sup> annual survey of this Ulster County CBC circle centered at the Ulster County Community College in Stone Ridge. The 2011 census produced our second highest number of species (record-high of 79 species in 2007) and our fifth highest number of individuals. Species diversity exceeded the 70 benchmark for the third consecutive year and for only the fourth time in the 62-year history of this count.

Persistently mild temperatures leading up to count week resulted in very favorable field conditions, free of snow and ice cover, with predominantly unfrozen bodies of water. Count Day temperatures dipped to more reasonable levels but remained above freezing for most of the day, ranging from an early morning low of 31°F on the Lomontville Flats to an afternoon high of 37°F at Ashokan Reservoir. Flurries were recorded early morning at the higher elevations of Mohonk Lake, followed by mostly cloudy skies with no additional precipitation and calm to very light winds.

Four **White-winged Scoters** on the lower basin of Ashokan Reservoir, and two **American Woodcocks** along the edge of a beaver pond in Stone Ridge, constituted this year's outstanding highlights and were first time records for both species. Peter Schoenberger's field party located a **Northern Saw-whet Owl** in his Accord sector for a second consecutive year, representing only our third historical record for this count. Two **Wood Ducks** represented our third overall record following last year's high count of eight, and fourteen **Ring-necked Ducks** on Ashokan Reservoir tied the old record high from 1974 and was only the 7<sup>th</sup> count record. Three **Red-headed Woodpeckers** observed in the Weston Road swamp on the Esopus/New Paltz town line also equaled the previous high count from 1984 and was the 7<sup>th</sup> time this species has been recorded on the count and the first recent record following a 14-year absence.

Consistent with the exceptionally mild season, a late-day flock of 1,000 Common Grackles was observed flying over the Lomontville cornfields to a roosting site in the City of Kingston, contributing to a new high grackle count of 1,002 individuals, far exceeding the previous record of 265 in 2008. A lone **Ruffed Grouse** recorded by Gene McGarry in his Clove Valley Road sector was another indication of changing times. Once commonplace, this much beleaguered species has only been detected in one out of the last ten years, after previously being recorded on this count in all of the first 34 years, and 41 of the first 43 years, with a record high count of 14 in 1960.

Additional noteworthy records include new high counts for Wild Turkey (124, eclipsing 91 in 2004), Bald Eagle (6, eclipsing last year's record 5), Cooper's Hawk (8, eclipsing last year's record 7), Red-bellied Woodpecker (75, eclipsing 71 in 2005), Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (14, eclipsing last year's record 9), Pileated Woodpecker (31, nearly double the previous high count of 17 in 1998), Winter Wren (6, eclipsing 4 in 1999), and Song Sparrow (123, eclipsing last year's record 98). A sizable flock of 191 Snow Geese, 57 Red-winged Blackbirds, one Yellow-rumped Warbler, and one Gray Catbird were nice half-hardy additions to the final tally.

Considering this was a season characterized by widespread reports of very few feeder birds and small numbers of typical wintering species in the field, surprisingly few expected species were absent from the 2011 count. With the exception of four Purple Finches, no winter finches (Siskins, Redpolls, Grosbeaks, or Crossbills) were encountered by any of the field parties. No Common Loons, Horned Grebes, or Goldeneye were detected in the lower basin of Ashokan Reservoir. Horned Larks and Snow Buntings were absent, and none of the field parties encountered any Brown-headed Cowbirds, despite the mild conditions and good numbers of grackles and blackbirds. Stone Ridge Pond on Mill Dam Road was a disappointment, with only a few dozen Mallards and three Mute Swans in difference to high counts of 2,000+ waterfowl and gulls of recent past years.

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 time and effort, and especially extend my thanks to Mark DeDea and Kyla Haber for providing the facilities, hot food, and beverages for our post-count compilation at Hasbrouck Park in Kingston. Next year's Mohonk Lake-Ashokan Reservoir Christmas Bird Count is scheduled for the traditional first Saturday of the count period, **15 December 2012**.

Steve M. Chorvas  
Mohonk Lake-Ashokan Reservoir CBC Compiler

62<sup>nd</sup> Mohonk Lake/Ashokan Reservoir (NYML) Christmas Bird Count Sector Summary – December 17, 2011

Total	Species	A	B	C	C2	D	E	F	G	H	M
191	Snow Goose					191					
2,634	Canada Goose	124	130	236	631	314	287	50	255	592	15
6	Mute Swan				1	1	1	3			
2	Wood Duck *										2
57	American Black Duck				30	3	3	12		9	
279	Mallard		4	27	21	23	2	130	20	49	3
14	Ring-necked Duck*							14			
4	White-winged Scoter *							4			
31	Hooded Merganser							13	6	12	
33	Common Merganser				22	1	4	6			
1	Ruffed Grouse										1
124	Wild Turkey						31	86			7
5	Great Blue Heron		2			2		1			
20	Black Vulture	6	1	8		3					2
24	Turkey Vulture		11	5		1					7
6	Bald Eagle					3	1		1	1	
7	Northern Harrier			1			1		3	1	1
8	Sharp-shinned Hawk		1	2	2		1		2		
8	Cooper's Hawk			1	2	2	1			1	1
1	<i>Accipiter sp.</i>							1			
4	Red-shouldered Hawk			2		1					1
56	Red-tailed Hawk	3	5	1	9	9	11	4	2	9	3
5	American Kestrel		1				1		1	1	1
2	American Woodcock *								2		
77	Ring-billed Gull					27	2	48			
2	Herring Gull				2						
1	Great Black-backed Gull			1							
8	<i>Gull sp.</i>	1					7				
317	Rock Pigeon		24		26	46	27	24	20	120	30
234	Mourning Dove	7		16	29	27	20	54	54	20	7
4	Eastern Screech-Owl							1	1	1	1
5	Great Horned Owl			2				1		1	1
3	Barred Owl							1		2	
1	Northern Saw-whet Owl *									1	
4	Belted Kingfisher			1		1		1		1	
3	Red-headed Woodpecker				3						
75	Red-bellied Woodpecker	3	8	8	7	6	16	9	12	5	1
14	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker		1	1		2	5	1	3	1	
93	Downy Woodpecker	5	3	8	11	11	11	14	18	9	3
25	Hairy Woodpecker	2	3	3	2	3	4	3	2	1	2
16	Northern Flicker		3			5		1	4	3	
31	Pileated Woodpecker	4	1	3	11	4	2	3		2	1
279	Blue Jay	6	38	22	31	12	30	20	67	34	19
829	American Crow	8	26	330	20	29	97	255	23	24	17
9	Common Raven	4					1		2		2
208	Black-capped Chickadee	10	7	9	18	21	58	30	26	24	5
247	Tufted Titmouse	9	8	14	62	15	45	31	30	20	13
4	Red-breasted Nuthatch						1		3		

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Total	Species	A	B	C	C2	D	E	F	G	H	M
112	White-breasted Nuthatch	6		6	24	12	16	21	21	3	3
11	Brown Creeper			2			5	3			1
33	Carolina Wren			4	3	12	1	6	2	4	1
6	Winter Wren					2		4			
27	Golden-crowned Kinglet				3		10	4		9	1
1	Ruby-crowned Kinglet							1			
125	Eastern Bluebird	4	23		1	7	16	28	24	21	1
4	Hermit Thrush				1	1		1	1		
91	American Robin		6	12	2	14	21	1	22	5	8
1	Gray Catbird					1					
41	Northern Mockingbird		3	7	4	9	3	5	5	4	1
916	European Starling		68	38	115	136	138	38	207	141	35
130	Cedar Waxwing			31			78				21
1	Yellow-rumped Warbler			1							
142	American Tree Sparrow			7		23	2	6	81	23	
4	Field Sparrow								3	1	
123	Song Sparrow	4		4		10	15	25	54	8	3
23	Swamp Sparrow						1	2	20		
241	White-throated Sparrow	2	13	3	20	47	55	49	35	10	7
2	White-crowned Sparrow										2
745	Dark-eyed Junco	41	32	30	125	70	145	74	63	145	20
121	Northern Cardinal	4	4	3	18	20	24	19	14	12	3
57	Red-winged Blackbird				47	3	7				
1,002**	Common Grackle					502		1,001	1		
4	Purple Finch						1				3
67	House Finch			4	9	12	4	11	27		
231	American Goldfinch	2	3	16	27	19	18	58	21	32	35
514	House Sparrow		44	29	64	172	59	27	39	75	5
<b>10,786**</b>	<b>Total Individuals</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>473</b>	<b>898</b>	<b>1,403</b>	<b>1,835</b>	<b>1,289</b>	<b>2,205</b>	<b>1,197</b>	<b>1,437</b>	<b>296</b>
<b>74</b>	<b>Total Species</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>42</b>

\*\* Total number of Common Grackles and Total Individuals adjusted down 502 to reflect probable duplication across two sectors (D and F)

\* Unusual species cw = count week (not included in totals)

62 <sup>nd</sup> Mohonk Lake/Ashokan Reservoir (NYML) Christmas Bird Count - December 17, 2011								
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
<b>Area A: Mohonk Lake</b> John Thompson, Allan Bowdery, Joe Bridges, Barbara Hart, Corbin Robinson, Doug Robinson, Jonathan Rosenthal, Tom Sarro, Shanan Smiley.	3.25	3.25	<b>6.5</b>	1	10	<b>11</b>		
<b>Area B: Walkkill River West - New Paltz to Rosendale</b> Selden Spencer, Bea Conover, Paul Comstock, Jim Marks, Lisa Weinstein. FW-Sue Zucherman.	0.75	7	<b>7.75</b>	0.75	27	<b>27.75</b>		
<b>Area C: Walkkill River East - New Paltz</b> Christine Guarino, Jennifer Merriam, Steve Stanne.	2	2.75	<b>4.75</b>	1.5	21	<b>22.5</b>	1	6
<b>Area C2: Ulster Park</b> Lin Fagan, David Arner, Lynn Bowdery, Maeve Maurer.	0.5	6.5	<b>7</b>	0.5	46	<b>46.5</b>	0.5	1
<b>Area D: Hurley/Kingston</b> Mark DeDea, Alan Beebe, Donna Seymour, Lynn Woods.	5.5	4	<b>9.5</b>	8	41.25	<b>49.25</b>	3	57.5

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<b>Area E: High Falls/Alligerville</b> Evelyn and Bob Rifenburg Matt Corsaro, Mira Bowin, David Rankin.	3.5	4	7.5	3	40	43		
<b>Area F: Hurley/Lomontville</b> Steve Chorvas, Deb Ferguson, Frank Murphy.	3.5	6	9.5	1.5	65	66.5	2.25	24
<b>Area G: Marbletown</b> Glen VanGorden, Jeff Nerp, Eileen Cunningham, Dave Nyzio.	2	6	8	0.5	41.5	42	0.75	0
<b>Area H: Kripplebush/Accord</b> Peter Schoenberger, Laura Steadman, Susan Rogers.	3.5	6	9.5	6.7	85.5	92.2	2.5	20.5
<b>Area M: Clove Valley</b> Gene McGarry.	2.5	2.5	5	3	75	78	2.5	17
<b>Field Observers: 41    Feeder Watchers: 1    Total Effort</b>	<b>23.75</b>	<b>44.75</b>	<b>68.5</b>	<b>25.45</b>	<b>442.25</b>	<b>467.7</b>	<b>12.5</b>	<b>126</b>

**SAVE THE DATE** – The 2012 Mohonk Lake/Ashokan Reservoir Christmas Bird Count will be conducted on **Saturday, December 15, 2012.**