

115th Audubon Christmas Bird Count

The **65th annual Mohonk Lake-Ashokan Reservoir** (NYML) Christmas Bird Count (CBC) was conducted on Saturday, December 20, 2014, under relatively good weather conditions. Forty-four participants in ten field parties encountered **15,661 individuals of 79 species**, plus two additional count week species. This year's effort resulted in our second-highest abundance total, just 431 individuals short of our record high 16,092 in 2008, and equaled our previous high diversity count of 79 species in 2012 and 2007.

Temperatures remained just below freezing throughout the count day, ranging from an early morning low of 27° (F) to an afternoon high of 30° (F) on the Lomontville Flats in Hurley. Winds were calm or very light over most of the count terrain and visibility was good under cloudy skies with no precipitation. Field conditions were characterized by a complete lack of snow cover and significant areas of water open, with most sources of water devoid of ice or minimally infringed along stagnant edges. Night skies were solid overcast, precluding any moonlight.

Three Cackling Geese associating with a large flock of Canada Geese on Spring Lake off Lucas Avenue in Kingston represent a new addition to the count composite and advances the total species number to 146 for this count circle. Sector leader Mark DeDea noted that this large flock of Canada Geese consisted of numerous smaller Lesser/Richardson's types, and considerable time and patience was required to sort out the Cackling Geese. Five **Northern Pintail** (three off Clearwater Road in New Paltz, and a pair in a pond off Lapla Road in Marletown) represent our second count record for this species, previously recorded as two individuals observed on a small pond in Krumville in 2012.

Record-high counts were established for a remarkable twenty species, including three **Iceland Gulls** along Mohonk Road in New Paltz (our fourth overall CBC record), three **Northern Saw-whet Owls** from two separate locations (fifth record), and three reports of individual **Merlins** from three distinct locations, representing our fifth CBC record. Two adult **Red-headed Woodpeckers** were also observed again this year in the Weston Road marsh on the Esopus/New Paltz town line.

Additional high counts were recorded for **Ring-necked Duck** (28, eclipsing 14 in 2013), **Bald Eagle** (10, eclipsing 6 in 2011), **Cooper's Hawk** (9, eclipsing 8 in 2012 and 2011), **Red-shouldered Hawk** (7, eclipsing 5 in 2012), **Great Horned Owl** (7, eclipsing 5 in 1966), **Red-bellied Woodpecker** (85, eclipsing 77 in 2013), **Downy Woodpecker** (161, eclipsing 126 in 2009), **Hairy Woodpecker** (40, eclipsing 36 in 1965), **Common Raven** (25, eclipsing 16 in 2006), **Tufted Titmouse** (364, eclipsing 331 in 2006), **White-breasted Nuthatch** (267, significantly exceeding our previous high count of 158 in 2006), **Carolina Wren** (68, eclipsing 61 in 2012), **Eastern Bluebird** (195, eclipsing 145 in 2012 and 2006), **Savannah Sparrow** (14, eclipsing 9 in 1967), **Northern Cardinal** (257, eclipsing 245 in 2009), and **American Goldfinch** (335, significantly exceeding our previous high count of 266 in 1972). **Pileated Woodpecker** matched our previous high count of 31 from last year.

Canada Geese were once again the most numerous species recorded during the count, accounting for 26% (4,086) of our total number of individuals. A flock of 250 Snow Geese were a nice addition, more often than not missed entirely on this count. Irruptive winter finches were modestly represented with a single Purple Finch, four Common Redpolls, and 41 Pine Siskins.

One Eastern Towhee, one Field Sparrow, four Great Blue Herons, four Belted Kingfishers, and eight Hermit Thrushes lingered in the count circle, otherwise half-hardies were surprisingly absent during this relatively mild December. We did not detect any warblers, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, or Gray Catbirds during the count, and blackbirds also appeared scarce, with only two Red-winged Blackbirds, a single Common Grackle, and two count week Brown-headed Cowbirds detected. No record-low counts were set for any species previously encountered on this count, though our total number of Swamp Sparrows (5) was half the current ten-year average of 10.1/year and well below our record high count of 46 in 2006.

The following table summarizes 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. Thanks to all of the participants for their fine effort in conducting this annual bird survey. It was particularly gratifying to see several young birders engaged in this project this year, and once again I would like to extend a very special thanks to Mark DeDea, Kyla Haber, and everyone that helped with the facilities, hot food, and beverages for our very enjoyable post-count compilation at Hasbrouck Park in Kingston .

Steve M. Chorvas
Mohonk Lake/Ashokan Reservoir CBC Compiler

SAVE THE DATE – Next year's Mohonk Lake-Ashokan Reservoir CBC is scheduled for Saturday, **December 19, 2015**.

65th Mohonk Lake/Ashokan Reservoir (NYML) Christmas Bird Count Sector Summary – December 20, 2014

Total	Species	A	B	C1	C2	C3	D	E	F	G	H
251	Snow Goose						250		1		
3	Cackling Goose *						3				
4,086	Canada Goose	125	717	111	50	6	710	1	1,924	22	420
1	Mute Swan							1			
94	American Black Duck				32	4	11		45	2	
405	Mallard		47	65	62	22	35	4	86	51	33
2	<i>Mallard x Black Hybrid</i>			2							
5	Northern Pintail *			3					2		
28	Ring-necked Duck							28			
2	Bufflehead								2		
1	Common Goldeneye								1		
14	Hooded Merganser				6		5		3		
51	Common Merganser		5		34		4	6	2		
36	Wild Turkey					1		12	6	1	16
4	Great Blue Heron		1		1	1	1				
7	Black Vulture		5	2							
1	Turkey Vulture			1							
10	Bald Eagle (<i>Age</i>)		2A		3J			1A 1J	3A		
2	Northern Harrier								2		
1	Sharp-shinned Hawk								1		
9	Cooper's Hawk			1		2	3			1	2
cw	Northern Goshawk						cw				
7	Red-shouldered Hawk		2	1				2	1		1
67	Red-tailed Hawk		9	5	5	4	6	9	9	5	15
138	Ring-billed Gull				3		17		113	5	
505	Herring Gull		500						5		
3	Iceland Gull *		3								
14	Great Black-backed Gull		14								
14	<i>Gull sp.</i>	6		1	7						
506	Rock Pigeon		27		18		49	6	200	93	113
342	Mourning Dove	6	8	13	50	30	18	7	17	131	62
3	Eastern Screech-Owl			1					1		1
7	Great Horned Owl		2							4	1
6	Barred Owl		1				2		2		1
3	Northern Saw-whet Owl								2		1
4	Belted Kingfisher				1		1		2		
2	Red-headed Woodpecker				2						
85	Red-bellied Woodpecker	1	9	8	15	9	3	9	16	12	3
9	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker		1	1		1	3		1	2	
161	Downy Woodpecker	7	13	9	26	23	15	18	17	24	9
40	Hairy Woodpecker	4	2		3	8	4	2	10	6	1
13	Northern Flicker		2	1		3	2	2	1	1	1
31	Pileated Woodpecker	3	1	2	6		4	1	7	3	4
1	American Kestrel			1							
3	Merlin *						1		1	1	
427	Blue Jay	1	40	26	52	61	18	35	51	96	47
1,557	American Crow	14	703	177	73	22	106	63	292	39	68
25	Common Raven	11	5					1	2		6
84	Horned Lark										84
407	Black-capped Chickadee	34	34	32	41	53	32	29	76	45	31
364	Tufted Titmouse	13	31	25	63	28	29	62	29	48	36
14	Red-breasted Nuthatch						4	2	6	1	1
267	White-breasted Nuthatch	17	26	14	34	22	19	28	38	44	25
17	Brown Creeper		1	2	2	3	1	4	4		
3	Winter Wren						2		1		
68	Carolina Wren	1	7	4	5	2	13	7	17	5	7
31	Golden-crowned Kinglet		1	2		4	8	1	7	3	5

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Total	Species	A	B	C1	C2	C3	D	E	F	G	H
195	Eastern Bluebird	6	44	13	9	44	12	33	15	2	17
8	Hermit Thrush					2	3		2	1	
170	American Robin						29	1		139	1
48	Northern Mockingbird		3		1	16	13	2	7	3	3
1,313	European Starling	4	154	53	70	95	132	40	31	501	233
3	Cedar Waxwing									3	
76	Snow Bunting								76		
1	Eastern Towhee		1								
170	American Tree Sparrow		14	4	6	19	44	2	29	37	15
1	Field Sparrow								1		
14	Savannah Sparrow								12		2
170	Song Sparrow	3	1	18	5	37	27	5	28	41	5
5	Swamp Sparrow									3	2
421	White-throated Sparrow		56	29	102	35	52	37	38	45	27
2	White-crowned Sparrow								2		
1,388	Dark-eyed Junco	17	91	79	199	137	114	183	241	232	95
257	Northern Cardinal	2	30	21	29	42	38	14	32	32	17
2	Red-winged Blackbird				1	1					
1	Common Grackle						1				
cw	Brown-headed Cowbird		cw								
185	House Finch		16	29	23	16	17		47	15	22
1	Purple Finch									1	
4	Common Redpoll									4	
41	Pine Siskin				3				3		35
335	American Goldfinch	4	33	59	18	15	43	26	82	20	35
609	House Sparrow		32	61	37	48	245	24	16	61	85
15,661	Total Individuals	279	2,694	876	1,097	816	2,149	709	3,668	1,785	1,588
79	Total Species	20	42	35	37	34	46	37	58	42	42

* Denotes unusual species cw = count week (not included in totals)

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, Barbara Hart, Tom Sarro, Halley Schwab.	3	3.5	6.5	1	10	11	0	0
Area B: Walkkill River West - New Paltz to Rosendale Jessica Prockup, Annie Mardiney, Wendy Tocci.	5.25	5.25	10.5	3	53.3	56.3	1.5	14.3
Area C1: Walkkill River East - New Paltz/Esopus Christine Guarino, Elizabeth Moffett, Steve Stanne.	2	4.25	6.25	1.5	20	21.5	1	1.5
Area C2: Ulster Park Lin Fagan, David Arner, Lynn Bowdery, Maeve Maurer.	0.5	9	9.5	0.5	48	48.5	0.5	2.2
Area C3: Maple Ridge Community Arnold Meier, Kent Warner, Sammy Decker, Joseph Ben-Eliazer, Jon Johnson, Joel Meier, Malcolm Meier, Travis Meier.	6	0	6	6	0	6	0	0
Area D: Hurley/Kingston Mark DeDea, Donna Seymour.	5	4.5	9.5	4	68.8	72.8	3	28.9
Area E: High Falls/Alligerville Matt Corsaro, Mira Bowin, Dave Hayes.	2	7	9	2	54	56	0	0
Area F: Hurley/Lomontville Frank Murphy, Steve Chorvas, Jim Clinton, Deb Ferguson, Jon Hilowitz, Alexandra Scheumann.	2.5	7	9.5	1.5	80	81.5	1.5	15
Area G: Marbletown Glen VanGorden, Jeff Nerp, Dave Nyzio, George Rodenhausen, Evelyn Leigh (FW).	2	6	8	2	27	29	1	0.5
Area H: Kripplebush/Accord Peter Schoenberger, Christina Baal, Amy Fradon, Susan Rogers.	4.25	5	9.25	3.5	72.9	76.4	2.25	27
Observers: 43 Feeder Watchers (FW): 1 Total Effort:	32.5	51.5	84	25	434	459	10.75	89.4