

## Audubon Christmas Bird Count (120<sup>th</sup>)

The **70th** annual Ulster County **Mohonk Lake/Ashokan Reservoir** (NYML) Audubon Christmas Bird Count (CBC) was conducted on December 14, 2019 under very challenging field conditions. Fifty-one participants in sixteen field parties encountered a total of **10,711 individuals** representing **75 species**, plus five additional count week species.

Extremely dense fog and rain showers persisted throughout the count day, severely limiting visibility. Mild air temperatures (35- 48 degrees F) and mostly exposed ground and open water provided little incentive for birds to congregate. Species diversity was three species below our ten-year average of 78/year and twelve shy of our all-time record high 87 species recorded in 2017. Total abundance was well below our ten-year average of 13,897 individuals and less than half our record high 22,307 in 2017. Birds that typically flock in large numbers and have a great influence on the abundance number (geese, crows, starlings, robins, etc.) were difficult to detect and account for this year with the abysmal conditions.

Despite the visual impediments, there were numerous highlights and several record-setting observations. Two **Marsh Wrens** were seen in Harcourt Sanctuary in New Paltz, representing a new species to the count composite and advancing our historical cumulative to 148 species. Also noteworthy for this count circle, a **Barn Owl** was heard in Cottekill for only our second historical record, previously encountered on this CBC in 1953! A field party surveying for sparrows in open farmland habitat inadvertently flushed a **Short-eared Owl** from a patch of tall cover crop, representing our second count record for this species previously recorded only during the count week period in 1985. One **Northern Saw-whet Owl** was heard within this year's count week period, but not on count day.

Two species of shorebirds lingered in the count circle, a **Killdeer** seen in Stone Ridge (6th record), and a **Wilson's Snipe** flushed from pondside vegetation in High Falls (5th count record). A total of **14 Red-headed Woodpeckers** were found dispersed over multiple locations, a remarkable increase compared to our previous high of 7 recorded last year and our recent ten-year average of 1.9 individuals/year. **Northern Flickers** were also encountered in remarkably high numbers, establishing a new high count of 77 compared to 47 in 2017 and a ten-year average of 20/year.

New record high counts were also established for **Field Sparrow** (13, eclipsing 12 in 2018), **White-throated Sparrow** (1,029 / 984 in 2017), and **Song Sparrow** (234 / 222 in 2017). Four widely-dispersed **Merlins** tied our previous high count from 2016, and three **Gray Catbirds** tied a previous high count from 1967. Four **Ruby-crowned Kinglets**, five **Hermit Thrushes**, four **Yellow-rumped Warblers**, two **Fox Sparrows**, and a single **Eastern Towhee** were detected on count day. **Red-winged Blackbirds** (90), **Common Grackles** (82), and **Brown-headed Cowbirds** (10) were present in small numbers, and a total of 120 **Carolina Wrens** was just one shy of our previous record-high count.

Irruptive winter finches were non-existent, and poor visibility influenced an unremarkable tally of waterfowl, with Ashokan Reservoir completely engulfed in dense fog and effectively eliminating any chance of documenting loons, grebes, or most species of diving ducks. The absence of both vultures and Wild Turkey on count day was also likely a consequence of the limited visibility and unfavorable flying conditions, with Black Vulture and Wild Turkey documented during the count week period. **Horned Larks** (11) and **Snow Buntings** (16) were found at just one agricultural site; **Belted Kingfishers** (5) and **Great Blue Herons** (5) were widely scattered throughout the count area. No species detected on this year's survey were encountered in record-low numbers.

The following table summarizes the count results by sector, followed by area descriptions with observer and effort information. Asterisks indicate unusual species for this count circle, "cw" indicates a count-week only species. Thanks to all of the field participants and feeder watchers (FW) for excellent coverage and another great effort under adverse conditions, and a special thanks again this year to Kyla Haber, Mark DeDea, and everyone that helped with preparing the food and facilities for our post-count compilation at Hasbrouck Park in Kingston. Next year's Mohonk Lake/Ashokan Reservoir CBC is scheduled for the traditional first Saturday of the count period, **December 19, 2020**.

Steve M. Chorvas  
Mohonk Lake/Ashokan Reservoir CBC Compiler

**SAVE THE DATE** – The 2020 Mohonk Lake-Ashokan Reservoir CBC is scheduled for Saturday, **December 19, 2020**.

70th Mohonk Lake/Ashokan Reservoir (NYML) Christmas Bird Count Sector Summary – December 14, 2019															
Total	Species	A	B	C1	C 2	C3/4	D	E	F1	F2	F3	G1/3	G2	H	I
1,057	Canada Goose		543	16			141		284	20	1	16	3	33	
	Wood Duck *								cw						
11	American Black Duck		4	1			2				2			2	
288	Mallard		39	50	22	16	50		42			27	8	25	9
5	Ring-necked Duck						5								
4	Hooded Merganser						4								
20	Common Merganser			3	5		5				4		2	1	
cw	Wild Turkey			cw		cw									
5	Great Blue Heron			1	1	1								2	
cw	Black Vulture					cw									
4	Northern Harrier	1	1	1						1					
2	Sharp-shinned Hawk	1				1									
5	Cooper's Hawk				1	1		1						2	
12	Bald Eagle				3				4		2	1	1	1	
3	Red-shouldered Hawk			1			1					1			
52	Red-tailed Hawk	7	10	11	3	2	4		2	2		3		8	
cw	Rough-legged Hawk											cw		cw	
1	Killdeer *											1			
1	Wilson's Snipe *	1													
3	Ring-billed Gull						3								
71	Herring Gull	71													
1	Great Black-backed Gull	1													
604	Rock Pigeon	2		25			317		98				65	96	1
302	Mourning Dove		30	20	53	7	46	4	23	49	1	11		57	1
1	Barn Owl *							1							
1	Eastern Screech-Owl								1						
2	Great Horned Owl					1			1						
3	Barred Owl	1							1			1			
1	Short-eared Owl *									1					
cw	Northern Saw-whet Owl													cw	
5	Belted Kingfisher			1			1		2					1	
14	Red-headed Woodpecker			3	11										
149	Red-bellied Woodpecker	21	22	12	15	8	16	7	13	2	5	4	4	15	5
22	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker		2	1	2	2	3	2	2		1	3		2	2
156	Downy Woodpecker	6	15	17	27	10	17	5	21	1	3	16	3	12	3
33	Hairy Woodpecker	3	1	4	6	2	4		5		1	1	1	4	1
77	Northern Flicker	2	5	9	9	7	18		4	4		8		9	2
31	Pileated Woodpecker	4	2	4	1	4	5	3	3	1	1	3			
3	American Kestrel	1	1											1	
4	Merlin						2		1					1	
466	Blue Jay	45	42	45	47	21	38	32	19	11	20	56	4	73	13
629	American Crow	61	321	39	79	52	27	5	8	10	4	5		17	1
12	Common Raven	1				2		1	1			2	1	3	1
11	Horned Lark									10				1	
250	Black-capped Chickadee	11	19	14	18	6	38	8	47		13	25	13	31	7
280	Tufted Titmouse	17	27	8	51	15	31	10	34		22	13	6	35	11
1	Red-breasted Nuthatch													1	
174	White-breasted Nuthatch	9	15	15	30	12	17	4	21		11	11	4	23	2
13	Brown Creeper		1	4		2			3		1			2	
10	Winter Wren			2			2	2	1		1	1		1	
2	Marsh Wren *			2											
120	Carolina Wren	9	6	10	5	8	36	5	6	3	9	10		12	1
64	Golden-crowned Kinglet			1	2	8	11	1	5		17	3	4	12	
4	Ruby-crowned Kinglet						1		2				1		
112	Eastern Bluebird	10	11		10	15	7	10	10	9	10	4		8	8
5	Hermit Thrush						3		1			1			

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Total	Species	A	B	C1	C 2	C3/4	D	E	F1	F2	F3	G1/3	G2	H	I
305	American Robin		1	10	1	2	93	2	32		5	143		15	1
3	Gray Catbird						1		2						
35	Northern Mockingbird	1	2	6	5	6	8		1			3	1	2	
1,180	European Starling	115	172	48	2	50	165	102	255	36		21	24	188	2
112	Cedar Waxwing	50		15	8		25			7	2	5			
16	Snow Bunting									16					
4	Yellow-rumped Warbler								4						
169	American Tree Sparrow		1	1	2	10	73		2	7		70	1	1	1
13	Field Sparrow		2	2			1					8			
2	Fox Sparrow													1	1
1,016	Dark-eyed Junco	35	78	37	191	75	151	4	87	43	78	82	52	80	23
3	White-crowned Sparrow			1	1				1						
1,029	White-throated Sparrow	85	134	45	171	110	128	23	67	35	59	33	2	100	37
4	Savannah Sparrow		3							1					
234	Song Sparrow	34	15	24	5	28	38	2	17	32	3	11	1	19	5
11	Swamp Sparrow			5			2					3		1	
1	Eastern Towhee													1	
233	Northern Cardinal	12	16	24	20	27	41	8	14	1	6	30	1	19	14
90	Red-winged Blackbird				76					14					
82	Common Grackle								82						
10	Brown-headed Cowbird				5				4					1	
217	House Finch		25	55	26	12	13	3	2	1		27	2	31	20
359	American Goldfinch	45	7	13	17		28		14	201	8	8	10	8	
477	House Sparrow		39	48	124	25	48	3	14	16		28		130	2
<b>10,711</b>	<b>Total Individuals</b>	<b>662</b>	<b>1,612</b>	<b>654</b>	<b>1,055</b>	<b>548</b>	<b>1,670</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>1,263</b>	<b>534</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>699</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>1,088</b>	<b>174</b>
<b>75</b>	<b>Total Species (+5 cw)</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>26</b>

CW - Denotes species found during the count week (three days before or after count day), but not on count day. Not included in totals.  
 \* Denotes unusual species for this count circle.

70th Mohonk Lake/Ashokan Reservoir (NYML) Christmas Bird Count - December 14, 2019								
Area Description and Observers (Sector leaders are listed first.)	Daylight Party Hours			Daylight Party Miles			Nocturnal	
	Foot	Car	Total	Foot	Car	Total	Hours	Miles
<b>Area A: Mohonk Lake - Mohonk Preserve</b> Megan Napoli, Elizabeth Long, Mallory Pierce, Zach Smith.	6		<b>6</b>	5.7		<b>5.7</b>		
<b>Area B: Walkkill River West - New Paltz to Rosendale</b> Wendy Tocci, Jessica Prockup. FW: Lynn & Allan Bowdery, Annie Mardiney.	3	5.75	<b>8.75</b>	3	51	<b>54</b>	3.25	31
<b>Area C1: Walkkill River East - New Paltz/Esopus</b> Christine Guarino, Nicholas Martin, Tom O'Dowd, Liz Olivere, Dan Porter, Steve Stanne.	4	4	<b>8</b>	6	30	<b>36</b>	0.5	3
<b>Area C2: Ulster Park</b> Lynn and Allan Bowdery, Lin Fagan, Elizabeth Moffett, Deb Weltsch. FW: Deborah Busby, Jim Yates.		7.5	<b>7.5</b>		48.6	<b>48.6</b>		
<b>Area C3 and C4: Maple Ridge Community</b> Arnold Meier and Dwight Wareham, Dennis Hofer, Joel Meier, Kelian Meier, Yoobin Park, Reuben Weeks, Brandon Woolsten.	8.5		<b>8.5</b>	8		<b>8</b>	0.5	0.5
<b>Area D: Hurley/Kingston</b> Mark DeDea, Jim Clinton, Donna Seymour.	4	5.3	<b>9.3</b>	3	74	<b>77</b>	2	20
<b>Area E: High Falls/Alligerville</b> George and Mary Moxham.	6	2	<b>8</b>	6	40	<b>46</b>	0.25	0
<b>Area F1: Hurley/Lomontville</b> Steve Chorvas, Alan Beebe, Mark Damian, Ariane and Wes Giudicelli. FW: Dave Hayes, Ariane Giudicelli.	3.5	6	<b>9.5</b>	2	54	<b>56</b>	2.5	16
<b>Area F2: Hurley/Lomontville Farm Hub</b> Anne Bloomfield, Paige Cranfield, Dixon Onderdonk, Dan Spencer.	4	2	<b>6</b>	2.25	6.25	<b>8.5</b>	1	5
<b>Area F3: Ashokan Reservoir</b> Frank Murphy, Debra Ferguson.	2	2.25	<b>4.25</b>	0.5	30	<b>30.5</b>		
<b>Area G1 and G3: Marbletown South</b> G1: Glen VanGorden, Jeff Nerp. G3: Dave Nyzio.	2	6	<b>8</b>	4	32	<b>36</b>		
<b>Area G2: Marbletown North</b> Dave Hayes.	8		<b>8</b>	3		<b>3</b>	2.5	0
	3	4	<b>7</b>	3.6	33	<b>36.6</b>		

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Area Description and Observers (Sector leaders are listed first.)	Daylight Party Hours			Daylight Party Miles			Nocturnal		
	Foot	Car	Total	Foot	Car	Total	Hours	Miles	
<b>Area H: Kripplebush/Accord</b> Peter Schoenberger, Susan Rogers. FW: Cheryl Hecht	3	5	8 (1)	3.9	76.5	80.4	2.75	16.6	
<b>Area I: Clove Valley</b> Zack Smith	4		4	2.5		2.5			
<b>Field Observers: 47 Feeder Watchers (FW): 4</b> <b>Total Effort:</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>49.8</b>	<b>110.8</b>	<b>53.45</b>	<b>475.35</b>	<b>528.8</b>	<b>15.25</b>	<b>92.1</b>	

Note: Feeder Watch hours not included in total party hours.