

Audubon Christmas Bird Count (121st)

The 72nd annual Ulster County **Mohonk Lake/Ashokan Reservoir** (NYML) Audubon Christmas Bird Count (CBC) was conducted on December 18, 2021 under challenging weather conditions. A total of 54 participants (47 field observers and 7 feeder watchers) in 19 field parties encountered a total of **17,670 individuals** representing **83 species**, plus five additional count week species. For historical context, diversity was five species above our ten-year average, and total abundance was up 3,865 individuals. Participation was also above average this year, approaching if not exceeding a record high effort. Our all-time high count for this circle is 87 species and 22,307 individuals, both recorded in 2017.

Overall, most species were present in near average numbers, with a few noteworthy exceptions. Several field parties reported large flocks of **American Robins**, difficult to accurately count as they foraged on an exceptional abundance of berries. Our final conservative tally of 5,949 individuals sets a new record high while greatly surpassing our previous high count of 3,504 in 2017. New record high counts were also established for **Bufflehead** (11, compared to 8 in 2018), **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** (46, eclipsing 40 in 2017, 20 avg.), **Hermit Thrush** (16, eclipsing 13 in 2017, 6.6 avg.), **American Pipit** (138, greatly surpassing 41 in 2015), and **Yellow-rumped Warbler** (28, double our previous high count of 14 in 2017).

Four **Northern Pintail** (4th occurrence), one **Peregrine Falcon** (6th), three **Chipping Sparrows** (7th), and three **Gadwall** (8th) are unusual species for this count, with few previous records. Three additional unusual species were encountered during the count week period, three days before or three days after count day. A count week **Palm Warbler** represents a first record for the historical count composite, **Golden Eagle** (previously one in 2017 and 1998), and **Cackling Goose** (4th occurrence) were also found during the count week.

Roving flocks of **Canada Geese** and ubiquitous **American Crows** were diminished or inactive this year, each amounting to less than half their current ten-year averages. Personally, over more than four decades of participation in various CBCs, I can not recall ever going all day without seeing or hearing an American Crow, encountering just two individuals very late in the day in waning light. Birds that typically flock in large numbers have a significant influence on our total abundance number, and this year the impressive flocks of robins effectively balanced the lack of geese and crows.

There were no new record low counts, and no particular species stands out as a bad miss, with all of the expected species detected this year. **Common Loon**, **Rough-legged Hawk**, **Great Black-backed Gull**, and **Eastern Meadowlark** are species previously encountered in at least twenty or more years that were not detected this year. **Ruffed Grouse** (46 past years) and **Evening Grosbeak** (34 years) were also missed, but are no longer expected on this count.

Environmental conditions can best be described as wet and dreary with low visibility on count day, and exceptionally mild with no hard freezing or snowfall during the weeks prior to the count. Temperatures were relatively mild (34 – 39 °F), changing little throughout the day. Early morning provided the best surveying conditions, with no wind or precipitation under heavy overcast skies. Light rain with occasional sleet and mist moved in by late morning and persisted for the duration of the count day. There was no snow cover, and all bodies of water were open with moderate flow rates, providing little incentive for birds to congregate, with most feeders attracting relatively little activity.

Mark DeDea noted his field party “had a very unusual day but I don’t know if I could blame it on the weather, we just missed congregations of birds with the exception of American Robins. Frustratingly, more than 200 waterfowl observed on Williams Lake last week, including a pintail, Green-winged Teal, and 90 Ring-necked Ducks, were reduced to 7 birds on count day! Aside from the incredible numbers of robins, we enjoyed the most Hermit Thrushes (8) I’ve ever encountered on a CBC, including one singing!”

Lynn and Allan Bowdery noted “it was a strange count this year. There were very few active bird feeders, possibly accounting for the low numbers of feeder birds (no House Sparrows! One Mourning Dove!) and an unusually heavy crop of all sorts of berries. The light rain, low light, and later rising mist made for difficult viewing. Robins were probably undercounted, although we did our best to count them as they moved about in large groups in vine-draped trees or junipers. We did find one Red-headed Woodpecker in a marsh on Plutarch Road, as well as one in the usual Weston Road marsh. Large areas seemed devoid of birds.”

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 to the sector leaders for recruiting and organizing their field parties and submitting their data in a timely manner. Hopefully we can return to the tradition of more inclusive field parties and a post-count compilation in the near future. Next year's Mohonk Lake/Ashokan Reservoir CBC is scheduled for the traditional first Saturday of the CBC count period, **December 17, 2022**.

72nd Mohonk Lake/Ashokan Reservoir (NYML) Christmas Bird Count Sector Summary – December 18, 2021

Total	Species	A	B	C1A	C1B	C1C	C2A	C2B	C2C	C3	D	E	F1	F2	F3	G1	G2	G3	H	I
1	Snow Goose												1							
cw	Cackling Goose*												cw							
1,258	Canada Goose		510	30	30	128	62		30		145	16	226	46	10	36		38	27	
5	Mute Swan						1		4											
3	Gadwall*													3						
44	American Black Duck										1		7	4	15	7				10
341	Mallard	7	20			15	28	12	20	10	92		75			16	8	2		36
4	Northern Pintail*												2							2
20	Ring-necked Duck										4				16					
11	Bufflehead												3			8				
5	Common Goldeneye												5							
28	Hooded Merganser						2		8				2	13						3
43	Common Merganser					3	31		1			2			6					
21	Wild Turkey	2					1						1		2			15		
8	Horned Grebe												2		8					
6	Great Blue Heron		1			1			1				2							1
3	Black Vulture									3										
14	Turkey Vulture									14										
cw	Golden Eagle*																		cw	
9	Northern Harrier	1												3				3		2
cw	Sharp-shinned Hawk									cw										
13	Cooper's Hawk			1			2		1	3	3					1	1			1
1	<i>Accipiter sp.</i>																			1
8	Bald Eagle					1			2	1	1		2		1					
5	Red-shouldered Hawk						2					1				1				1
50	Red-tailed Hawk	5	6	3	2	3	4		2	2	2	3	3	1		1	2	1		9
16	Ring-billed Gull										9						5			2
132	Herring Gull	110	21				1													
423	Rock Pigeon		11		34		11				141		94	72		45	7			8
322	Mourning Dove	7	49	3		2	18	3	4	2	27	3	106	10		25		31		32
4	Eastern Screech-Owl					1							1							2
4	Great Horned Owl										1		1					2		
7	Barred Owl											3	1	1						2
7	Belted Kingfisher					2			1			1	1			1				1
5	Red-headed Woodpecker		1			2	2													
119	Red-bellied Woodpecker	17	9	3	3	5	12	4	4	3	7	1	10	1	3	5	2	14	8	8
46	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	3	1	5		6	2	1		2	3	2	6	1	2	2		4	3	3
138	Downy Woodpecker	11	9	10	3	4	15	3	9	4	5	9	22	5	9	5	3	1	5	6
23	Hairy Woodpecker	2	1	2		1	2			4	3		2		3	1				2
49	Northern Flicker	4	3	1		5	3			2	9	4	4	2	1			4	6	1
22	Pileated Woodpecker				1	2		2		3		2	4	1	2		2		1	2
3	American Kestrel													1						2
1	Merlin														1					
1	Peregrine Falcon*												1							
395	Blue Jay	34	19	4	5	19	47	2	11	9	19	11	72	3	4	38	2	21	59	16
533	American Crow	160	76	7	2	108	13		1	75	19	6	2	3	2	19	2	2	25	11
32	Common Raven	2	2		1		2			6		3	1			4		4		7
5	Horned Lark												5							
313	Black-capped Chickadee	55	15	5	12	32	10	26	9	14	30	4	28		9	11	5	14	22	12
305	Tufted Titmouse	20	25	3	2	9	22	24	15	13	29	16	33	1	11	2	14	10	42	14
9	Red-breasted Nuthatch																	4	1	4
171	White-breasted Nuthatch	14	11	8	2	16	15	12	3	7	13	7	20	2	8	8	3	4	13	5
18	Brown Creeper		2	2		3	1	1		1	1		1		4					2
8	Winter Wren			1							2			1	2			2		
72	Carolina Wren	5	3	2	1	3	3		5	2	12	1	10	4		5		3	9	4
14	Golden-crowned Kinglet	1	2			2				3			2		1					3

72 nd Mohonk Lake/Ashokan Reservoir (NYML) Christmas Bird Count Sector Summary – December 18, 2021																				
Total	Species	A	B	C1A	C1B	C1C	C2A	C2B	C2C	C3	D	E	F1	F2	F3	G1	G2	G3	H	I
3	Ruby-crowned Kinglet						1			1			1							
155	Eastern Bluebird	10	22	8	4	8	1	3		21	7	5	19	11	4	5	3	16	8	
16	Hermit Thrush			1	1	1					8	3	1						1	
5,949	American Robin	385	997	1	58	396	408		43	1,163	1,474	112	15	1	26	98	145	145	416	66
2	Gray Catbird										1							1		
33	Northern Mockingbird	4	2				2		1	3	9		4			2		2	4	
2,216	European Starling		143			52	400		17	14	748	80	6	18		182		9	418	129
138	American Pipit												138							
267	Cedar Waxwing		5				15			30	27	17					3		158	12
1	Snow Bunting												1							
cw	Palm Warbler*											cw								
28	Yellow-rumped Warbler		4	5	3	2				2	4		6						1	1
154	American Tree Sparrow		1			24	1			3	10	1	4	66				33	11	
3	Chipping Sparrow*																		3	
4	Field Sparrow																	4		
5	Fox Sparrow				1						1							3		
1,236	Dark-eyed Junco	121	78	34	86	31	174	95	19	102	46	18	107	23	107	42	42	12	60	39
7	White-crowned Sparrow												7							
965	White-throated Sparrow	92	64	38	20	36	54	32	34	50	190	18	122	11	22	36	3	26	65	52
9	Savannah Sparrow												5	2					2	
192	Song Sparrow	5	6	5		25	4			4	35	4	42	22	2			26	12	
20	Swamp Sparrow		1			3					2		2					10	2	
1	Eastern Towhee			1																
192	Northern Cardinal	10	14	6	5	7	24		10	14	29	4	22	2	8	7		13	12	5
44	Red-winged Blackbird		17		6	8	2		5										2	4
25	Common Grackle		4			12	9													
16	Brown-headed Cowbird		2				9			1			4							
141	House Finch	4	33	13	4	14	7		8	10	17	2	8	6	2		1	10		2
55	Purple Finch	15					18			1					1	1	1	10	8	
2	Common Redpoll	2																		
cw	Pine Siskin											cw								
395	American Goldfinch	104	33	29	3	19	23	2	2	12	26	1	14	14	23	1	19	7	27	36
298	House Sparrow		25	52		3	1		35	11	60		48			10			45	8
17,670	Total Individuals	1,212	2,248	283	289	1,014	1,465	222	305	1,625	3,272	360	1,334	354	315	625	273	506	1,601	445
83	Total Species (+5 cw)	30	40	29	24	40	44	15	29	39	42	31	57	32	31	31	21	36	50	27

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.

Total number of Canada Geese and Horned Grebes adjusted down to account for duplication by multiple field parties.

72nd Mohonk Lake/Ashokan Reservoir (NYML) Christmas Bird Count - December 18, 2021								
Area Description and Observers (Sector leaders are listed first.)	Daylight Party Hours			Daylight Party Miles			Nocturnal	
	Foot	Car	Total	Foot	Car	Total	Hours	Miles
Area A: Mohonk Lake - Mohonk Preserve Megan Napoli, Lauren Borer.	8	0	8	8.5	0	8.5		
Area B: Walkkill River West - New Paltz to Rosendale Wendy Tocci, Jessica Prockup. FW: Annie Mardiney.	1.5	7	8.5 (1)	1	56.8	57.8	2.5	26.7
Area C1: Walkkill River East - New Paltz/Esopus A: Christine Guarino, Steve Stanne	2.5	1.5	4	2.5	16.3	18.8	1	0.3
B: Dan Porter	1	2.6	3.6	1	15	16	0.6	0.5
C: Nicholas Martin, Tom O'Dowd, Liz Olivere Matt Oakes, Alexandra and Dan Vanderkam.	8.5	0.5	9	5.6	3	8.6		
Area C2: Ulster Park A: Allan and Lynn Bowdery, Jane Simmons, Leigh Simmons. FW: Joe Bridges and Barbara Hart, Deborah and Jim Busby, Peter Relson.	0	6.25	6.25 (11)	0	65	65		
B: Mark Carabetta	3.5	0	3.5	3	0	3		
C: Nancy Ebel, Peter Heidrich	0	4	4	0	20.6	20.6		
Area C3: Maple Ridge Community Arnold Meier, Davis King, Kelian Meier, Susan Nelson, Brandon Woolston. FW: Anneliese Arnold.	6	0	6 (1)	6	0	6	0.5	0.5
Area D: Hurley/Kingston Mark DeDea, Donna Seymour.	4	5	9	8	58.1	66.1	3	25.4
Area E: High Falls/Alligerville Central George and Mary Moxham, Maeve Maurer.	5.5	3	8.5	4	59	63		
Area F1: Hurley/Lomontville Steve Chorvas, Alan Beebe.	7.5	2	9.5	4	29	33	3	22
Area F2: Hurley/Lomontville Farm Hub Anne Bloomfield, Paige Cranfield, Francis Groeters, Dixon Onderdonk, Dan Spencer.	4	2.25	6.25	2	3	5	1.75	4
Area F3: Ashokan Reservoir Ariane Giudicelli, Wes John-Alder Deborah and Paul Carney	7.5 1	1.5 0.75	9 1.75	2 0.5	16 2	18 2.5		
Area G: Marbletown South G1: Glen VanGorden, Jeff Nerp.	2	6	8	2	45	47		
G3: Dave Nyzio.	7	0	7	2.5	0	2.5	1.5	3
Area G2: Marbletown North Dave Hayes.	2	4	6	3	35	38	0.75	4
Area H: Kripplebush/Accord Peter Schoenberger, Susan Rogers.	4	4.3	8.3	4	80	84	3.3	35
Area I: Clove Valley Deborah Carney, Paul Carney.	3.25	1.5	4.75	1.3	8.4	9.7		
Total Effort: Field Parties: 19 Field Observers: 47 + 7 FW = 54	78.75	52.15	130.9	60.9	512.2	573.1	17.9	121.4

Note: Feeder Watch (FW) hours not included in total party hours.