

114th Audubon Christmas Bird Count

The **64th annual Mohonk Lake-Ashokan Reservoir** Christmas Bird Count (CBC) was conducted on Saturday, 14 December 2013, under very challenging winter weather conditions. Despite an abbreviated count day for some territories, and an overall lack of access to some secondary roads, 31 participants in nine field parties managed to survey a significant portion of all sectors, recording a very respectable **72 species and 14,043 individuals** (plus three additional count week species).

Our first major snowstorm of the season materialized overnight and continued to produce light snowfall throughout the count day. Temperatures remained below freezing, ranging from an early morning low of 8° (F) to a high of 18° (F) by mid-day on the Lomontville Flats in Hurley. Winds were calm over most of the count terrain, but visibility was less than ideal under dark foreboding skies with a persistent snowfall. Night skies were solid overcast, precluding any moonlight. Snow continued to accumulate throughout the day, amounting to an average of four to six inches of ground cover by day's end. Major bodies of water and fast moving creeks and streams were predominantly open, smaller ponds and stagnant marshes varied from completely frozen to partially open, providing some small areas of liquid water.

Considering the challenging weather conditions and abbreviated count routines for some sectors, species diversity (72) was very good, two above our ten-year average of 70 species/year and only the sixth time in 64 years that we have exceeded 70 species in this count circle. Total individuals (14,043) were also exceptional, representing our most prolific count since our record-setting 16,092 in 2008, and just 119 species shy of our second highest count of 14,162 in 2007. It should be noted however, our tally was greatly influenced this year by large flocks of Canada Geese moving throughout the count day, accounting for nearly 5,000 individuals and 35% of our total number of individuals.

No new species were added to the historical count composite this year, but we did not lack for highlights. Best birds of the day were a **Dickcissel** visiting bird feeders in New Paltz (our fourth overall record, and first since 1966), and a juvenile **Iceland Gull** associating with a few hundred Herring Gulls at the Mohonk Mountain House composting site in New Paltz (third overall record, first since 1995).

Two **American Pipits** foraging on compost mounds off Fording Place in Hurley represent our sixth historical record; two **Red-headed Woodpeckers**, apparently wintering on territory in the Weston Road marsh on the Esopus/New Paltz town line, represent our ninth record for this count; two separate **White-crowned Sparrows** represent our ninth historical record; and a lingering **Gray Catbird** along the Hurley Avenue section of the rail trail in Kingston is our 12th count record for this half-hardy species.

Fourteen **Ring-necked Ducks** tied our previous high count from 1974, and represents only our 8th historical record. New high counts were recorded for **Snow Goose** (870, more than double last year's high count of 425), **Red-bellied Woodpecker** (77, eclipsing 75 in 2011), **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** (16, eclipsing 14 in 2011), **Hermit Thrush** (12, far exceeding our previous high count of 4 in 2009), and **Dark-eyed Junco** (1,722, significantly eclipsing 1,558 recorded in 2009). One **Ruby-crowned Kinglet**, 645 **American Robins**, 312 **Cedar Waxwings**, 7 **Yellow-rumped Warblers**, 2 **Field Sparrows**, 1 **Savannah Sparrow**, and 17 **Swamp Sparrows** are also noteworthy for this count.

Irruptive winter finches were essentially absent, with only one count week Purple Finch noted. Blackbirds were very modestly represented with single-digit numbers of Red-wings, grackles, and cowbirds. Waterfowl diversity was average and typical for this count, with the exception of the aforementioned Ring-necked Ducks and large flocks of Snow and Canada Geese on the move. Perhaps our most surprising negative was a total lack of Turkey and Black Vultures in historical winter roost areas, though the inclement weather may have very well factored in keeping these soaring birds down and out of sight. Only one Wild Turkey was encountered, one Belted Kingfisher was active, and four Great Blue Herons were recorded.

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 conducting their assigned routes under adverse conditions, and also to those who attempted to make it out into the field but were not able to do so. And once again this year, a very special thanks to Mark DeDea and Kyla Haber, with help from Amy, Lynn, Lin, Jessica, Donna, and Wendy, for providing the facilities, hot food, and beverages for our very enjoyable post-count compilation at Hasbrouck Park in Kingston.

Please note that next year's Mohonk Lake-Ashokan Reservoir Christmas Bird Count will be approximately one week later, scheduled again for the first Saturday of the count period, **20 December 2014**.

64th Mohonk Lake/Ashokan Reservoir (NYML) Christmas Bird Count Sector Summary – December 14, 2013

Total	Species	A	B	C	C2	D	E	F	G	H	M
870	Snow Goose	160				160				550	
4,940	Canada Goose	218	100	75	75	715	280	1,324	1653	500	
8	Mute Swan						7	1			
63	American Black Duck					12		46	4	1	
135	Mallard				16	35		54	30		
14	Ring-necked Duck						14				
11	Hooded Merganser					6		5			
13	Common Merganser					9		1		3	
1	Wild Turkey	1									
cw	Common Loon								cw		
1	Horned Grebe							1			
4	Great Blue Heron			1		2			1		
cw	Black Vulture	cw		cw							
4	Bald Eagle	1	1					1	1		
3	Northern Harrier							1	1	1	
4	Cooper's Hawk				1	1		1		1	
1	<i>Accipiter sp.</i>							1			
3	Red-shouldered Hawk			1		1	1				
24	Red-tailed Hawk	8	2	1	2	3		2	2	4	
1	Rough-legged Hawk					1					
53	Ring-billed Gull					29	1	23			
442	Herring Gull	440						2			
1	Iceland Gull *	1									
21	Great Black-backed Gull	21									
28	<i>Gull sp.</i>	13						15			
477	Rock Pigeon				4	145		310		18	
324	Mourning Dove	2	11	21	67	22	1	42	43	115	
2	Eastern Screech-Owl							2			
1	Great Horned Owl					1					
3	Barred Owl	1						1		1	
1	Belted Kingfisher							1	cw		
2	Red-headed Woodpecker				2						
77	Red-bellied Woodpecker	4	5	6	11	8	9	6	21	7	
16	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	2		1	1	3	3	3	1	2	
99	Downy Woodpecker	3	9	8	10	8	12	16	18	15	
16	Hairy Woodpecker		1	3	3	2	2	4		1	
18	Northern Flicker		2	1	2	7		3	1	2	
13	Pileated Woodpecker	1	1		1	2	1	6		1	
223	Blue Jay	2	14	21	26	28	23	18	70	21	
686	American Crow	371	24	50	25	28	22	118	30	18	
1	Common Raven		1								
7	Horned Lark									7	
139	Black-capped Chickadee	2	12	6	16	17	17	32	29	8	
125	Tufted Titmouse		26	8	31	14	7	15	17	7	
1	Red-breasted Nuthatch	1									
68	White-breasted Nuthatch		8	7	8	11	5	9	12	8	
5	Brown Creeper	1		1		1		1		1	
6	Winter Wren					4			2		
34	Carolina Wren	2	1	1	1	9	4	4	4	8	
8	Golden-crowned Kinglet					3	1	1		3	
1	Ruby-crowned Kinglet							1			
42	Eastern Bluebird			3	1	14	4	5	9	6	
12	Hermit Thrush					3		4	4	1	
645	American Robin	211		46	9	275	9	9	51	35	
1	Gray Catbird					1					
14	Northern Mockingbird	1		2		3		1	1	6	
661	European Starling		153	97	14	175	63	1	44	114	

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Total	Species	A	B	C	C2	D	E	F	G	H	M
2	American Pipit *							2			
312	Cedar Waxwing	75		41	7	79		30	60	20	
7	Yellow-rumped Warbler			1	1	4	1		cw		
313	American Tree Sparrow			19	2	49		47	174	22	
2	Field Sparrow			2		cw					
1	Savannah Sparrow							1			
154	Song Sparrow	4	1	30	2	26		20	50	21	
17	Swamp Sparrow					2		1	14		
437	White-throated Sparrow	2	38	24	185	26	70	23	44	25	
2	White-crowned Sparrow								1	1	
1,722	Dark-eyed Junco	44	96	52	314	45	194	231	436	310	
177	Northern Cardinal		12	7	45	28	15	22	27	21	
1	Dickcissel *			1							
3	Red-winged Blackbird				2					1	
4	Common Grackle		1			2				1	
9	Brown-headed Cowbird				9						
89	House Finch		16	5	6	8	13	1	34	6	
cw	Purple Finch								cw		
161	American Goldfinch	3	13	18	21	11	10	9	56	20	
257	House Sparrow			21	66	85	12	3	37	33	
14,043	Total Individuals	1,595	548	581	986	2,123	802	2,480	2,982	1,946	
72	Total Species	27	24	33	34	48	29	50	35	42	

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

64th Mohonk Lake/Ashokan Reservoir (NYML) Christmas Bird Count - December 14, 2013									
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, Doug Robinson, Halley Schwab, Nava Tabak.	2.75	2.5	5.25	1	0	1	0	0	
Area B: Walkkill River West - New Paltz to Rosendale Jim Marks, Bea Conover.	0	3.25	3.25	0	35.5	35.5	0	0	
Area C: Walkkill River East - New Paltz/Esopus Christine Guarino, Steve Stanne.	2	2	4	2	16.6	18.6	0.75	1	
Area C2: Ulster Park Lin Fagan, David Arner, Lynn Bowdery, Annie Mardiney (FW).	0.5	7.25	7.75	0.25	52	52.25	0	0	
Area D: Hurley/Kingston Mark DeDea, Thom Grady, Jessica Prockup, Donna Seymour, Wendy Tocci.	5	4	9	5	37	42	3	29	
Area E: High Falls/Alligerville Matt Corsaro, Mira Bowin.	1.5	3.5	5	0.5	22	22.5	0	0	
Area F: Hurley/Lomontville Frank Murphy, Deb Ferguson, Steve Chorvas.	1	8.5	9.5	1.5	65	66.5	3	22	
Area G: Marbletown Glen VanGorden, Jeff Nerp, Dave Nyzio, George Rodenhausen.	2	5	7	3	34	37	1.5	17	
Area H: Kripplebush/Accord Peter Schoenberger, Christina Baal, Susan Rogers.	2.5	7	9.5	3	68	71	2.5	20	
Area M: Clove Valley No coverage.			0			0			
Observers: 30 Feeder Watchers (FW): 1 Total Effort	17.25	43	60.25	16.25	330.1	346.35	10.75	89	

SAVE THE DATE – The 2014 Mohonk Lake/Ashokan Reservoir Christmas Bird Count will be conducted on **Saturday, December 20, 2014.**