

116th Audubon Christmas Bird Count

The **66th** annual **Mohonk Lake/Ashokan Reservoir** (NYML) Audubon Christmas Bird Count (CBC) was conducted on Saturday, December 19, 2015, under exceptionally mild and pleasant field conditions. Fifty participants in twelve field parties encountered a total of **13,953 individuals** representing **78 species**, plus two additional count week species. This year's total diversity was one shy of our record high 79 recorded in the years 2014, 2012, and 2007. Our total number of individuals was 1,708 fewer than last year's effort, and 2,139 short of our record high 16,092 set in 2008, but above the most recent ten-year average of 12,302 individuals/year.

Temperatures remained above freezing throughout the count day, ranging from an early morning low of 33° (F) to an afternoon high of 38° (F) on the Lomontville Flats in Hurley. Winds were persistently strong overnight with gusts up to 35 mph, potentially hampering some of our efforts to detect owls. Clear sunny skies and calmer winds predominated early to mid-morning, followed by overcast skies during the afternoon period. No precipitation was recorded during the count day. Field conditions were characterized by a complete lack of snow cover and ground frost, and entirely open water throughout the count area. Night skies were mostly overcast, with minimal moonlight.

This year's count did not record any new species, however, two species were encountered for only the second time in the count's sixty-six year history. Two **Cackling Geese** associating with a large flock of Canada Geese on Spring Lake off Lucas Avenue in Kingston were previously recorded for the first time last year from the same location, and one **American Woodcock** in full courtship display over a private field in Marletown was recorded once previously on this count in 2011.

Stone Ridge Pond on Mill Dam Road in Stone Ridge hosted two unusual species of waterfowl for this December count. Five **American Wigeon** represent a new high count and only the fourth occurrence for this species on the NYML CBC; and eight **Gadwall** tied our previous high count and represent our sixth overall occurrence. Two **Wood Ducks** on Maple Ridge Community property in Ulster Park were recorded for only the fifth time, one **Northern Saw-whet Owl** and two **Merlin** were recorded for the sixth time, and a lone **Chipping Sparrow** represented our seventh historical record. One **Pied-billed Grebe** was observed in the Wallkill River in New Paltz, two **Red-headed Woodpeckers** were present in their breeding swamp along Weston Road on the New Paltz/Esopus town line, and a **Northern Shrike** was observed in a field off Lenape Lane in New Paltz during the count week period, but was not detected on count day.

New high counts were also established for **Bald Eagle** (18, eclipsing 10 in 2014), **Cooper's Hawk** (12, eclipsing 9 in 2014), **Red-bellied Woodpecker** (97, eclipsing 85 in 2014), **Northern Flicker** (24, eclipsing 22 in 1992), **Tufted Titmouse** (419, significantly exceeding 364 from 2014), **American Pipit** (41 in two flocks of 25 and 16 on the Lomontville cornfields, representing our seventh overall record and eclipsing our previous high count of 21 in 1994), and **Fox Sparrow** (7, including a remarkable six in one shrub, eclipsing the previous high count of 5 in 1989). Twenty-five **Common Ravens** tied last year's record high count.

American Robins were well represented with 592 individuals, one **Hermit Thrush** was found, and blackbirds were modestly represented by 15 **Red-winged Blackbirds**, 4 **Common Grackles**, and 37 **Brown-headed Cowbirds**. We were not able to locate a lingering Gray Catbird, and we also did not detect any irruptive winter finches in the count area (siskins, redpolls, and grosbeaks) or half-hardy warblers, compared to 26 past occurrences of Yellow-rumped Warbler on this count. Common Goldeneye (previously recorded in 31 years), Common Loon (18 prior years), Rough-legged Hawk (22 years), Horned Lark (33 years), and Ruby-crowned Kinglet (19 years) were also missed on this year's count.

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 providing extensive coverage of the count circle, and special thanks to Mark DeDea for making the arrangements for our post-count compilation at the Olympic Diner 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 17, 2016**.

66th Mohonk Lake/Ashokan Reservoir (NYML) Christmas Bird Count Sector Summary – December 19, 2015

Total	Species	A	B	C1	C 2	C3	D	E	F1	F2	G1	G2	H
734	Snow Goose			34		450	250						
2	Cackling Goose *						2						
1,118	Canada Goose		121	84	156		338	47	209		108	16	39
5	Mute Swan				2		3						
2	Wood Duck *					2							
8	Gadwall *								8				
5	American Wigeon *								5				
27	American Black Duck			1	12		3		2			4	5
352	Mallard		42	21	33	26	57	13	50	4	28	6	72
29	Hooded Merganser				1			7	13				8
27	Common Merganser		10		17								
51	Wild Turkey					40			11				
1	Pied-billed Grebe *		1										
1	Horned Grebe								1				
3	Great Blue Heron				1	1		1					
39	Black Vulture	2	4	24	6	2			1				
25	Turkey Vulture		12	12	1								
18	Bald Eagle	3		3	1		1		4	2	3		1
12	Northern Harrier		2	1	1	1			1	5			1
1	Sharp-shinned Hawk			1									
12	Cooper's Hawk		6	1		1	1				1		2
2	<i>Accipiter sp.</i>			2									
5	Red-shouldered Hawk		4	1									
64	Red-tailed Hawk	1	15	6	4	6	11	6	3	4	1		7
1	American Woodcock *										1		
25	Ring-billed Gull				1		15		9				
358	Herring Gull	5	353										
1	Great Black-backed Gull		1										
1	<i>Gull sp.</i>												1
438	Rock Pigeon		46		8		153	11	5		3	130	82
332	Mourning Dove	4	16	33	14	22	48	23	11	19	104	4	34
1	Eastern Screech-Owl										1		
3	Great Horned Owl		1							2			
5	Barred Owl	1							2				2
1	Northern Saw-whet Owl												1
1	Belted Kingfisher						1						
2	Red-headed Woodpecker				2								
97	Red-bellied Woodpecker	3	10	7	15	7	11	12	9	3	7	5	8
9	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker			1	2		1		3		1		1
144	Downy Woodpecker	1	12	10	15	23	31	16	14	5	5	3	9
23	Hairy Woodpecker			2	2	4	3	4	4	1		1	2
24	Northern Flicker			2	3	9	1	1		1	4		3
23	Pileated Woodpecker	1	4	1	4	4		4	3			1	1
3	American Kestrel		1	1						1			
2	Merlin *	1					1						
cw	Northern Shrike *		cw										
423	Blue Jay	10	38	24	61	103	32	37	17	10	46	19	26
1,592	American Crow	146	731	75	45	14	122	140	13	250	24	4	28
25	Common Raven	5	4			2		3		1	5		5
405	Black-capped Chickadee	12	37	23	30	94	36	39	65	9	22	12	26
419	Tufted Titmouse	7	48	19	56	54	37	54	43	4	48	22	27
2	Red-breasted Nuthatch								1				1
228	White-breasted Nuthatch	7	19	19	19	27	27	32	31	6	10	14	17
5	Brown Creeper			3	1			1					
1	Winter Wren								1				
39	Carolina Wren	1	3	2	7	2	4	4	8	1	4	2	1
4	Golden-crowned Kinglet					2		1	1				

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Total	Species	A	B	C1	C 2	C3	D	E	F1	F2	G1	G2	H
174	Eastern Bluebird	3	30	16	5	42	7	14	16	10	11	2	18
1	Hermit Thrush						1						
592	American Robin	1		85	6	154	181	9	15	6	106	18	11
26	Northern Mockingbird		2	4	3	9	3		2	1			2
1,798	European Starling	15	431	54	509	132	117	328	14		113		85
41	American Pipit *								25	16			
259	Cedar Waxwing					49	83	31	15		59		22
cw	Snow Bunting					cw							
200	American Tree Sparrow			3	2	13	38	3	17	31	75		18
1	Chipping Sparrow *						1						
4	Field Sparrow						3				1		
2	Savannah Sparrow									2			
7	Fox Sparrow						6						1
132	Song Sparrow	7	1	16	2	14	29	2	13	11	23	1	13
9	Swamp Sparrow						1				4		4
334	White-throated Sparrow		20	8	23	20	78	93	25	12	21		34
1,521	Dark-eyed Junco	31	149	57	155	180	96	215	197	60	135	60	186
243	Northern Cardinal		26	21	18	42	27	14	37	7	30	3	18
15	Red-winged Blackbird			1	2	4	6			1	1		
4	Common Grackle		2			2							
37	Brown-headed Cowbird								18		9		10
189	House Finch	1	27	37	1	9	63	30	6	6			9
3	Purple Finch							3					
253	American Goldfinch	4	25	46	43	25	22	27	33	1	10	1	16
928	House Sparrow		31	40	145	47	322	23	46	2	22		250
13,953	Total Individuals	272	2,285	801	1,434	1,638	2,273	1,248	1,027	494	1,046	328	1,107
78	Total Species (+2 cw)	24	37	40	42	38	44	34	45	32	35	21	43

* 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 Christy Belardo, Allan Bowdery, Joe Bridges, Andy Chernack, David Chernack, Elizabeth Long, Carl Mueller, Thomas Sarro, Ted Sendler, Sami Shub, Zack Smith.	3	3.5	6.5	1	10	11	0	0
Area B: Walkkill River West - New Paltz to Rosendale Jessica Prockup, Annie Mardiney, Kathie Mock, Wendy Tocci.	5	5	10	2	72.3	74.3	2.5	20.3
Area C1: Walkkill River East - New Paltz/Estopus Christine Guarino, Tom O'Dowd, Dan Porter, Steve Stanne.	2.5	4	6.5	2.5	18	20.5	1	6
Area C2: Ulster Park Lin Fagan, David Arner, Lynn Bowdery, Maeve Maurer.	1.5	8.5	10	1	58	59	0	0
Area C3: Maple Ridge Community Arnold Meier, Joseph Ben-Eliazzer, Dwight Blough, Vincent Compy, Willis Compy, Joel Meier, Malcolm Meier, Stella Meier.	6	0	6	6	0	6	0.5	0.5
Area D: Hurley/Kingston Mark DeDea, Kyla Haber, Donna Seymour.	3.5	5.75	9.25	3	60	63	2.5	34
Area E: High Falls/Alligerville Matt Corsaro, Mira Bowin.	1	7	8	1	67	68	0	0
Area F1: Hurley/Lomontville Frank Murphy, Steve Chorvas, Deb Ferguson, Michael Lavin.	2	8	10	2	54	56	1.75	3.5
Area F2: Hurley/Lomontville Farm Hub Anne Bloomfield, Malcolm Grant.	5	0	5			0	1.75	
Area G: Marbletown G1 South: Glen VanGorden, Jeff Nerp, Dave Nyzio. G2 North: Dave Hayes.	4	4	8	4	42	46	1	9
Area H: Kripplebush/Accord Peter Schoenberger, Christina Baal, Amy Fradon, Susan Rogers.	4	6	10	4.2	87.5	91.7	2.25	24.5
Observers: 50 Feeder Watchers (FW): 0 Total Effort:	37.25	52.25	89.5	27.7	470.8	498.5	15.35	99.8