

The Lewisburg Christmas Bird Count

18 December 2010

Our Christmas Count has come and gone. Seventy-two species is a typical result, where "typical" means that lots of folks saw lots of good birds and had a fine day outdoors with friends and wildlife. The weather was kind to us this year -- chilly, yes, but it was fairly calm with dry roads.

Here are some highlights from our 2010 count.

All time high numbers were reached by **Raven** (9), **Bluebird** (303), and **Mockingbird** (103).

Redhead was found for only the 2nd time on the Lewisburg Count.

We first recorded **Merlin** in 2001, but now we have had it on 7 counts in the past 10 years. This falcon is expanding in range and population. It is nesting ever farther south, even into Pennsylvania.

We had one **Ring-necked Pheasant**. In case you are wondering, we once had 250 pheasants on a Christmas Count.

Saw-whet Owl! What can one say? Such a difficult bird. I've only seen one in the wild in over 45 years of birding. This was the 4th occasion for Saw-whet on the Lewisburg count, but the first since 1976.

The **Mourning Dove** total was exceptionally low, the lowest since 1977, when we had fewer observers. I wonder why.

The **Horned Lark** total was also low, our lowest since 1996.

Bald Eagle first appeared on the Lewisburg count in 1998. This is now the 5th consecutive year for eagle on the list, and the total of 8 eagles ties our previous high.

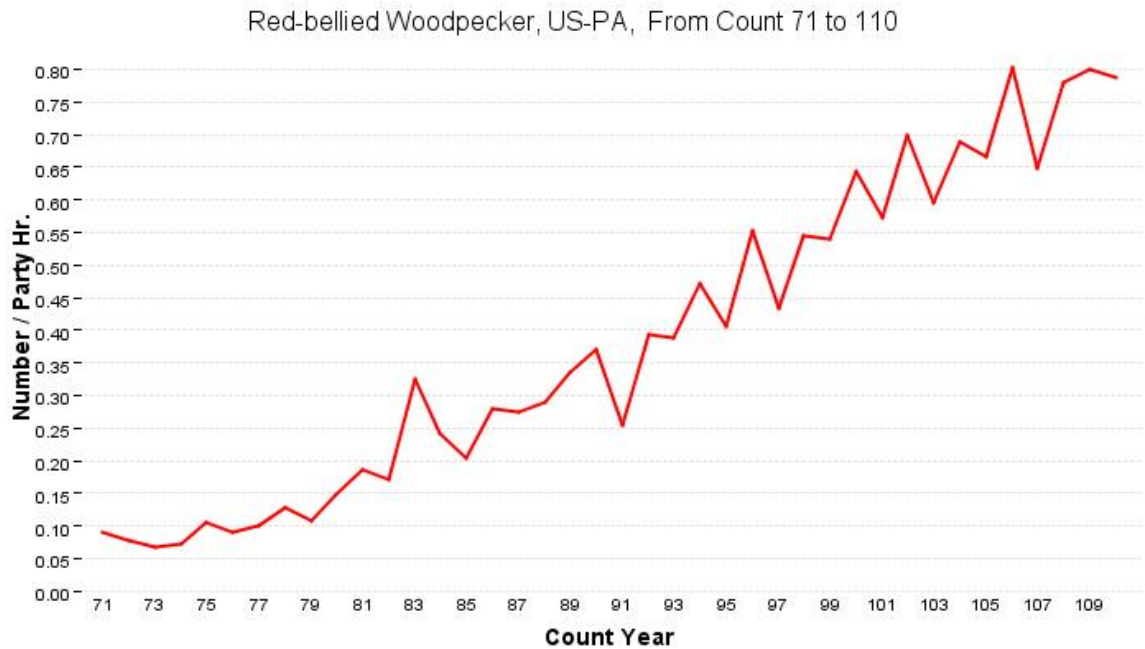
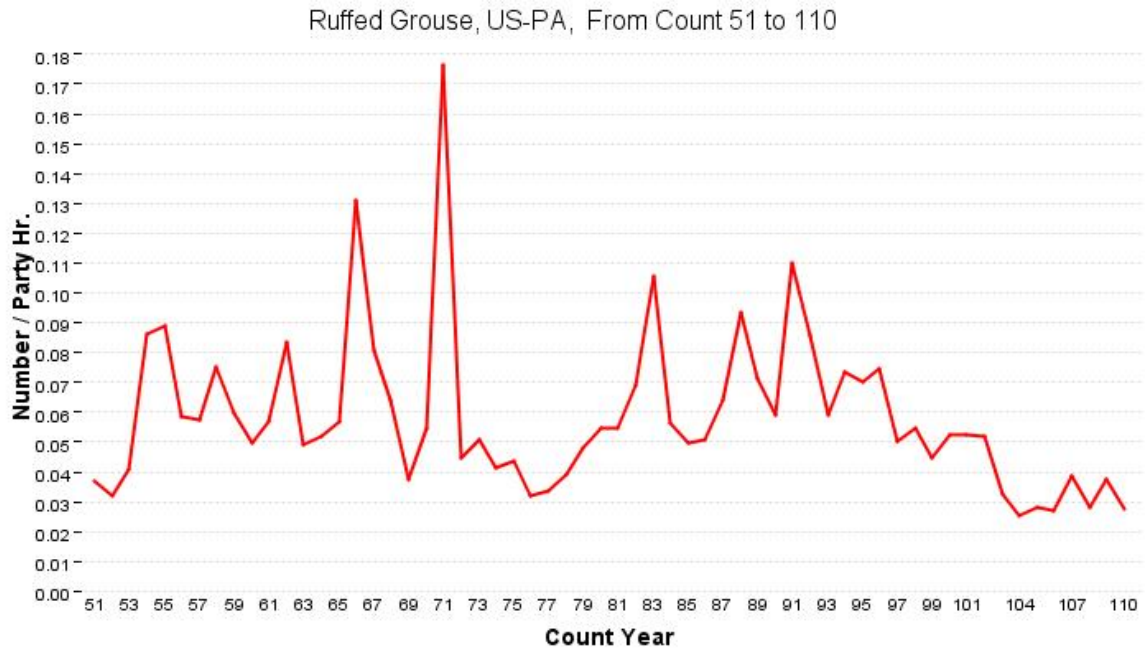
Sixteen species were recorded by only one party. These included **Wood Duck, Canvasback, Redhead, Common Goldeneye, Hooded Merganser, Ring-necked Pheasant, Red-shouldered Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, Merlin, Killdeer, Herring Gull, Saw-whet Owl, Red-headed Woodpecker, Northern Shrike, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, and Brown-headed Cowbird**. Having lots of parties in the field is the key to obtaining a good species count.

Our most notable "miss" was **Ruffed Grouse**, only the 2nd time it failed to make our tally in over 35 years. This normally cyclical species appears to have fallen below its usual lows (see graph below). Pennsylvania Audubon attributes the grouse's recent decline to "loss of forests to development and the loss of old fields ... while overbrowsing by deer makes some early successional forest less suitable for the species."

The best sighting by Allen & Joanne Schweinsberg was ... Kerry Givens! Kerry is an old friend, a Bucknell grad and a spectacular naturalist and photographer. He drove north to join his former mentors, Warren Abrahamson and Wayne McDuffett. Kerry's appearance at our after-birding party more than made up for a somewhat lackluster outing by the Schweinsberg group.

We believe the 47 folks who went afield on Saturday represent an all time high. They included: Warren Abrahamson, Roger Allison, Steve & Cory Anderson, Dave Anderson, George Boone, Mike & Janie Coyne, Tom Duck, Roy Fontaine, Kerry Givens, Geoff Goodenow, Bob Gutheinz, Robert Hazard, David Hafer, Rolf Helbig, Bob Holman, Ben Hoskins, Galen & Bonnie Ingram, Matt Levanowitz, Bill Malone, Alice Marquart, Jack & Jill McCann, Wayne McDuffett, Larry McGraw, Debby Meade, Than Mitchell, Mike Molesevich, Margaret Moyer, Dianne Muchant, Laurel Mutti, Dick Nickelsen, Bob Nylund, Kaustubh Patwardhan, Judy Peeler, Robert Reyda, Allen & Joanne Schweinsberg, Carl Shaffer, Richard Shaffer, Wesley Sigl, Joe Southerton, Logan Stenger, Don Ulrich, Tom Yannaccone Please come back next year!

Here are two graphs generated by National Audubon's Christmas Count data site. They represent Pennsylvania counts for Ruffed Grouse over the past 60 years and Red-bellied Woodpecker for the past 40 years.



The 2010 Lewisburg Area bird list

Canada Goose	872		Hairy Woodpecker	11
Wood Duck	11		Northern Flicker	19
American Black Duck	26		Pileated Woodpecker	15
Mallard	349		Northern Shrike	1
Canvasback	1		Blue Jay	201
Redhead	2		American Crow	1373
Common Goldeneye	1		Fish Crow	3
Hooded Merganser	2		Common Raven	9
Common Merganser	109		Horned Lark	12
Ring-necked Pheasant	1		Black-capped Chickadee	238
Wild Turkey	69		Tufted Titmouse	156
Great Blue Heron	21		Red-breasted Nuthatch	8
Bald Eagle	8		White-breasted Nuthatch	83
Northern Harrier	7		Brown Creeper	10
Sharp-shinned Hawk	2		Carolina Wren	32
Cooper's Hawk	7		Winter Wren	3
Accipiter sp.	2		Golden-crowned Kinglet	12
Red-shouldered Hawk	1		Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1
Red-tailed Hawk	117		Eastern Bluebird	303
Rough-legged Hawk	1		American Robin	5
American Kestrel	77		Northern Mockingbird	103
Merlin	1		European Starling	4266
Killdeer	1		Cedar Waxwing	14
Wilson's Snipe	14		American Tree Sparrow	91
Ring-billed Gull	22		Field Sparrow	18
Herring Gull	1		Song Sparrow	88
Rock Pigeon	617		Swamp Sparrow	2
Mourning Dove	175		White-throated Sparrow	194
Barn Owl	4		White-crowned Sparrow	17
Screech Owl	10		Dark-eyed Junco	653
Great Horned Owl	13		Northern Cardinal	206
Saw-whet Owl	1		Brown-headed Cowbird	1
Belted Kingfisher	17		Purple Finch	13
Red-headed Woodpecker	1		House Finch	206
Red-bellied Woodpecker	36		American Goldfinch	86
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	3		House Sparrow	420
Downy Woodpecker	84			