

Dave Rintoul, compiler for Manhattan CBC

The 60<sup>th</sup> annual Manhattan Christmas Bird Census (CBC) was held on Dec. 20, 2008. The weather was unpromising (overcast, bits of snow, ice and packed snow on the roads, stiff north winds and temps in the single digits); it did not seem like a good day to mobilize a lot of counters or count a lot of birds. That prediction turned out to be true.

Fifty-four intrepid observers (plus 5 feeder-watchers) found 32,686 birds (84 species). There were also three species of birds seen during the count-week period (Northern Pintail, Merlin and Townsend's Solitaire). Although the number of observers was higher than our turnout last year, this was the lowest total for party hours and party miles since 1973 (when a total of 36 observers found 81 species of birds). This was our lowest species total since 1991, when 78 observers found 83 species of birds.

The weather conditions made it difficult to get out and walk, and the road conditions (many back roads were snow-packed and icy) made it difficult to drive to some favorite hot-spots. In addition, the cold weather and snow of the previous week had driven out most of the waterfowl; we missed finding many duck species that are normally still here in small numbers for our CBC.

Nevertheless, some good birds were found by the hardy souls who braved these conditions. A Caspian Tern (who apparently did not watch the Weather Channel) was sighted along the Kansas River; if accepted by the state editor, this would be the first Manhattan CBC sighting for this species, and perhaps a first for the state of Kansas. A Northern Shrike was seen for the first time since 1978, although we did have a count-week record for this bird in 1999. A near-record number of Horned Larks (989) were found; our high for the previous 59 years was 1070 birds seen in 1983. Black-capped Chickadees and Tufted Titmouses continued their slow recovery from a West Nile-induced population crash in 2003. And my daughter Ellen and I rescued a very fancy rooster who was apparently abandoned; he was cold, hungry, and headed toward the vehicle as soon as I opened the door. He was grateful for a warm place, food and water, and is now ruling the roost at a farm near Alma. And no, this chicken is not included in the species total above..But he was very handsome!

Thanks to all the intrepid counters and the slightly less-intrepid feeder watchers, the 60<sup>th</sup> Manhattan CBC was a success. The cooks and organizers for the compilation chili dinner again provided a splendid meal for all those cold and hardy souls who contributed to the count totals.

Species list below

**Snow Goose (white phase)**

**Snow Goose (blue phase)**

Canada Goose

**Cackling Goose**

Gadwall

Am. Wigeon

Mallard

**N. Shoveler**

N. Pintail

Gr-wnged. Teal

Com. Goldeneye

Hooded Merganser

Com. Merganser

Ring-necked Pheasant

Wild Turkey

N. Bobwhite

Gr. Blue Heron

Bald Eagle

N. Harrier

Sh-shnd. Hawk

Cooper's Hawk

Red-tailed Hawk

**Krider's Red-tail**

**Harlan's Red-tail**

Rough-leg. Hawk

*Buteo* sp.

Am. Kestrel

Merlin

Prairie Falcon

Am. Coot

Wilson's Snipe

Ring-bill. Gull

**California Gull**

Herring Gull

**Caspian Tern**

Rock Pigeon

**Eurasian Collared-Dove**

Mourning Dove

E. Screech Owl

Gr. Horned Owl

Barred Owl

Belted Kingfisher

Red-head. Woodpecker

Red-bell. Woodpecker

Ylw-bell. Sapsucker

Downy Woodpecker

Hairy Woodpecker

N. Flicker (sp)

yellow-shafted flicker

red-shafted flicker

**N. Shrike**

Blue Jay

Am. Crow

Horned Lark

Blk-cap. Chickadee

Tufted Titmouse

Wh-brstd. Nuthatch

Brown Creeper

Carolina Wren

Bewick's Wren

Winter Wren

G-crwnd. Kinglet

Rub-crwnd. Kinglet

E. Bluebird

Townsend's Solitaire

**Hermit Thrush**

Am Robin

Euro. Starling

Cedar Waxwing  
Ylw-rump. Warbler  
Spotted Towhee  
Am. Tree Sparrow  
Field Sparrow  
Fox Sparrow  
Song Sparrow  
Lincoln's Sparrow  
Wh-thrtd. Sparrow  
Harris' Sparrow  
Wh-crnd. Sparrow  
Dk-eyed Junco (slate-colored)  
Oregon Junco

**Lapland Longspur**

N. Cardinal  
Red-wing. Blackbird  
E. Meadowlark  
W. Meadowlark  
*Sturnella* sp.  
Rusty Blackbird  
Com. Grackle  
Br-head. Cowbird  
Purple Finch  
House Finch  
Pine Siskin  
Am. Goldfinch  
House Sparrow