



## HAWK MOUNTAIN

1700 Hawk Mountain Road  
Kempton, PA 19529  
[www.hawkmountain.org](http://www.hawkmountain.org)

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Contact:** Mary Linkevich  
Communication Manager  
[linkevich@hawkmountain.org](mailto:linkevich@hawkmountain.org)  
610-756-6961

### **Hawk Mountain releases Hamburg Christmas Bird Count results**

Hawk Mountain Sanctuary announced that the 45th Annual Hamburg Area Christmas Bird Count held December 27, 2009, tallied 19,145 birds representing 87 species including a Eurasian Collared Dove, the first-ever spotted during 45 years of counts.

Biologists call the dove sighting “a very exciting find,” and explained that although the species has been expanding its range in the eastern United States, the bird has only been seen in Pennsylvania since 1996. The December 27 sighting represents the second confirmed record in Berks County. The bird was recorded and photographed in a backyard near Krumsville by volunteer Arlene Koch’s survey team.

Raptor sightings were exciting as well and included two Long-eared Owls heard calling, a Northern Saw-whet Owl, and new records for Red-shouldered Hawk (6), and Merlin (4). In addition, one Bald Eagle was spotted at North Lookout and another along the Little Schuylkill River near New Ringgold. Merlins and Red-shouldered Hawks appear to be wintering in Pennsylvania in greater numbers in recent years.

Other new records included five Wood Ducks and four Grey Catbirds. The most numerous species were 5,528 European Starlings, 1,986 Canada Geese, 1,507 Dark-eyed Juncos and 884 White-throated Sparrows.

The National Audubon Society has coordinated this continental bird survey every year since 1900. Christmas Bird Counts are conducted across the country on one day during a two-week period surrounding Christmas. Hawk Mountain Sanctuary biologists have coordinated and compiled the Hamburg count since the late 1970s. Hawk Mountain Senior Monitoring Biologist Laurie Goodrich compiled the data with assistance by volunteer Jack Holcomb.

Participating in the survey were 36 volunteer counters in 19 parties who covered more than 900 miles during 123 combined hours in the field. Despite warm and sunny conditions—ideal weather for birdwatching—the 19,145 total fell below average for this area. The lower number could be the result of a poor nesting season in United States and Canada, particularly for small birds, and lower migration movement south. A cold, wet spring in the northeast is reported to have caused nest failure in some birds and a lack of snow cover to our north allowed hardy migrants to linger in New England.

The 2010 count is scheduled for Sunday, December 26. For more information about Hawk Mountain, call 610-756-6961 or [info@hawkmountain.org](mailto:info@hawkmountain.org). For more information about the Christmas Bird Count visit [www.audubon.org/Bird/cbc/](http://www.audubon.org/Bird/cbc/).

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