

2011 Birdathon Summary

We celebrated the 25th annual Hawk Ridge Birdathon in St. Louis County this past weekend. We had several teams of dedicated birders help carry on this tradition by participating for the good of birds and Hawk Ridge. We truly thank those that participated and pledged.

Annmarie Genuisz won the Big Sit category counting 20 species - all at Frank Nicoletti's bird feeders! Team "Ped, Peddle, Precipitation" (Tim Bates and Andrew Webster) camped, canoed, biked, and walked to win the Non-motorized category counting 94 species. Team "Better Bittern Birders" (Barb Akre, Cindy & Chris Edwardson, and Lori Hutcheions) hit triple digits of 101 species, which beat their previous year totals! Team "Treats n' Tweets" defended their first place title for the fifth year in a row. Dave Benson, Lars Benson, and new member - Lori Williams (also providing yummy treats!) counted 150 species to win the St. Louis County Big Day category! The prized owl traveling trophy returns to its happy home for another year.

We also had one team "Our Pheasants Count" (Anya Illes & John, Jesse, and Alex Ellis) that competed on behalf of Hawk Ridge in Douglas County finding 142 species, including the elusive Ring-tailed Pheasant. ☺

In all, a grand total of 164 species were counted on May 21, 2011. This was the lowest total in all 25 years, likely due to fewer teams and a significant lack of shorebirds. This was also the first year no Eastern Meadowlarks were seen. The St. Louis County Birdathon 25-year average is 190 species with a 25-year grand total of 265 species. 218 species was the highest total count in 1996 and 170 was the second lowest count in 2010.

Highlights: Cackling Goose (2nd year seen during Birdathon), Great Black-backed Gull (5th year seen), Rough-legged Hawk (7th year seen), Ruddy Duck (9th year seen), Northern Mockingbird (10th year seen), and 25 species of warblers!

A big THANKS goes out to the prize sponsors. Thank you to Eagle Optics, Wild Birds Unlimited, Sawbill Canoe Outfitters, Chris & Cindy Edwardson, and Mike Furtman for your wonderful prize donations. The winning prizes **for the "Most \$\$ Raised" category** are still to be awarded to the person that raised the most pledges, so get your pledges in!

A very special thanks goes out to **Dave Benson** for serving as the compilation emcee, **Debbie Waters and Barbara Patten** for web maintenance, and **Pat Miller** for helping with the compilation brunch. Thank you and congratulations again to all that participated and helped make this event possible!

P.S. If you have remaining pledges, please have your donors pledge (donate) online at <http://www.hawkridge.org/birdathon.html>, then send an email to birdathon@hawkridge.org with what team participant the pledge should be applied to. Or, mail pledges to: **Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory, P.O. Box 3006, Duluth, MN 55803**. Checks should be made payable to the **Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory**, note who pledges should be applied to, and note in the Memo section "**Birdathon**". Pledges should be received **no later than June 30th, 2011**.