

# TAKING FLIGHT

NEWSLETTER OF HAWK RIDGE BIRD OBSERVATORY



The elusive Long-eared Owl

Photo by Chris Neri

## THE LONG-EARED OWL

by CHRIS NERI and NOVA MACKENTLEY

For many birders thoughts of Long-eared Owls invoke memories of winter visits to pine stands in search of this often elusive species. It really is magical to enter a pine stand, find whitewash and pellets at the base of trees and realize that Long-eareds are using the area that you are searching. You scan up the trees examining any dark spot, usually finding it's just a tangle of branches or a cluster of pine needles, until suddenly your gaze is met by a pair of yellow eyes staring back at you from a body cryptically colored and stretched long and thin. This is often a birders first experience with Long-eared Owls. However, if you are one of those that have journeyed to Hawk Ridge at night for one of their evening owl programs, perhaps you were fortunate enough to see one of these beautiful owls up close.

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## NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR

by JANELLE LONG, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As I look back to all of the accomplishments of this organization, I can't help but feel proud for Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory and to be a part of it. My gratitude for our hard-working board, staff, and volunteers overflows. As a small nonprofit, I'm always amazed of what we make happen, especially during the fall. The saying, "Attitude is Everything!", sure rings true with us. I hope I had a chance to thank you personally this past year. If I didn't, I hope to have an opportunity to do so in this new year. Your membership and support in so many ways is helping us shine. Thanks to all for believing in us and sharing that positive attitude. We will continue to work hard and achieve great things for the good of the birds!

## COMMENTS FROM THE BOARD

by KAREN STUBENVOLL, BOARD CHAIR

Thanks to our dedicated staff and volunteers, we have completed another successful season at Hawk Ridge. We continue to welcome visitors from all over the country, and also internationally, to witness the spectacular migration through northern Minnesota. We introduce local 5th graders and other students to the science of bird migration. We continue our 40+ years of raptor count and raptor banding research, and we have now completed our 7th year of a non-raptor count, documenting more than 280,000 non-raptors migrating through the Duluth area this fall. The magnitude of this migration continues to astound.



HRBO Board Chair, Karen Stubenvoll, with Rough-legged Hawk Photo by Nova Mackentley

The Hawk Ridge Board of Directors continues its ongoing strategic planning to develop a framework for growth that will lead us into the next decade.

We want to thank John Baumgarten for his term on the board. John's wise counsel and his business-perspective will be missed. We also thank Ken Zakovich for his service to the Hawk Ridge board, especially for creating our new logo, the new design for our newsletter, and beginning the development of our new website. We will miss Ken's creativity and his marketing expertise.

We welcome our newest board member Myron Peterson. Myron and his wife Holly became enthusiastic supporters of Hawk Ridge after their first visit in 2008, and now enjoy birding throughout Minnesota and also in Florida. Myron is retired from Wells Fargo Bank, where he was manager of the College of Commercial Credit. Myron and Holly live in Eden Prairie, MN.

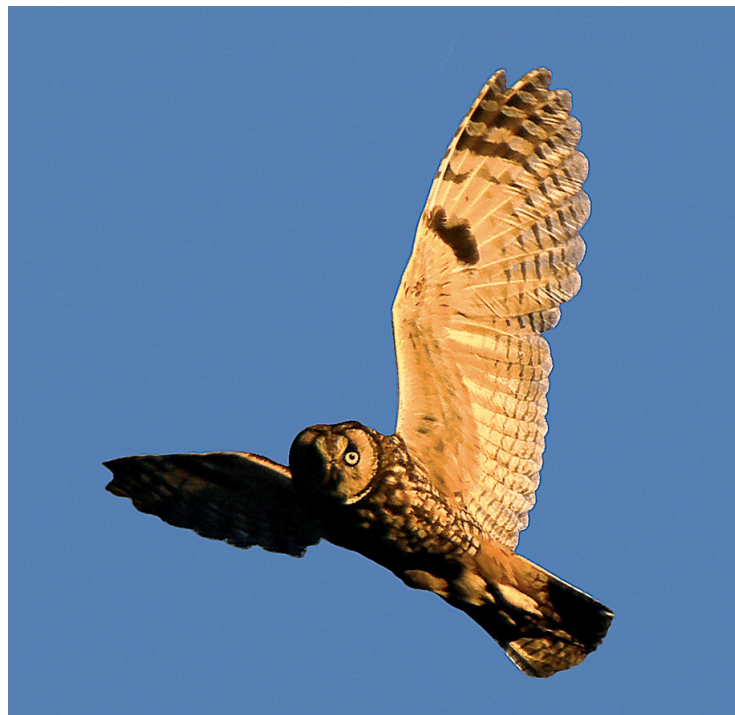
We depend on YOU -- our members and our donors -- for our success! We hope to see you at our upcoming events, including the St. Louis County Birdathon on May 17, and throughout the fall season.

## THE LONG-EARED OWL CONT'D

The Long-eared Owl (*Asio otus*) is a medium-sized owl that occurs across North America and Eurasia. They are one of the two members of the genus *Asio* that breed in the continental U. S., the other being the Short-eared Owl. The North American breeding range of this species spans central Canada from Nova Scotia to southeast Yukon with populations extending south to Baja California, s. Arizona, and s. New Mexico in the west, and into the Appalachian Mountains of Virginia in the east (AOU 1983). Although they inhabit a wide variety of habitats throughout their range, they are most frequently associated with dense coniferous or mixed coniferous tree stands adjacent to semi-open fields. The trees provide dense cover for daytime roost sites and nest sites during the breeding season. The nearby fields provide the favored hunting grounds of these opportunistic hunters. Studies of prey remains in pellets have shown their main prey to be voles and mice, but they are opportunistic hunters and have been reported taking prey as large as Long-tailed Weasel and Ruffed Grouse. They have the lightest wing-load among the North American owls making their flight appear amazingly buoyant. While not federally listed, many New England and Midwestern states have listed Long-eared Owls as threatened or of special concern due to recent local population declines.

Long-eared Owls (LEOW) are rare breeders in Minnesota, with most reports coming from the northern portion of the state. They are very tolerant of other LEOW and will sometimes form loose breeding colonies, with adults or family groups hunting the same field and fledglings from multiple nests roosting together. Although they have been documented nesting in tree cavities, canyon walls and on the ground, LEOW typically use the abandoned stick nests of crows and ravens for nesting. Magpie nests are also used where their ranges

overlap. Courtship includes a beautiful aerial display flight by the male complete with the sound of wing-claps. Once the eggs are laid the female will do all the incubating, rarely leaving the nest while the male provides her with food. If their nesting is successful, a pair will produce on average two to five young. As is pointed out in many breeding bird atlases, it is very difficult to accurately determine the breeding status of LEOW. In 2005, with efforts led by Dave Grosshuesch, Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory (HRBO) was instrumental in the development of the first large scale, long-term volunteer-based owl survey to detect



Long-eared Owl in flight

Photo by Chris Neri

potential breeders in the western Great Lakes region. Over the first eight years, the Western Great Lakes Owl Monitoring Project produced an impressive 64 LEOW reports in MN, with a high of 21 in 2006 and a low of three in 2008.

After the nesting season some populations will migrate south, while others will remain on or near the breeding grounds. Studies in Idaho and Montana have documented breeding populations remaining in the nesting area through the winter. Other populations, presumably those from the northern portion of their range, are highly migratory. Several LEOW banded in the

northern U. S. and Canada have been recovered thousands of miles to the south in Mexico, including one from HRBO. For over 40 years HRBO's fall raptor banding project has documented one the largest migrations of LEOW in North America. Over 2,600 LEOW have been banded at HRBO, making it the second most commonly banded owl species and fifth most commonly banded raptor species at the Ridge. However, their numbers have decreased over recent decades. The project averaged 81 LEOW banded per fall during the first 20 years with a peak of 172 in 1978. This average dropped to 37 during the following 19 years with a peak of 61 in 2009. In an effort to increase the number of LEOW banded, HRBO's Banding Director, Frank Nicoletti made changes to the owl banding protocol in 2011. These changes proved successful and for the first time since 1990 over 100 LEOW were banded during the 2011 season. This success has continued and a total of 336 LEOW have been banded during the last three seasons. Although LEOW have been observed as early as September 4 and as late as November 19, their peak time at the Ridge is mid to late October.

While some of the LEOW migrating along the Ridge in the fall may travel as far south as southern Mexico, other LEOW will remain in MN through the winter. Winter roosts are often communal with multiple birds using the same area, or even the same tree. Particularly productive roosts may contain a dozen or more individuals. While reports in MN averaged just four from 1970-2000, targeted efforts by Paul and Anthony Hertzel yielded 47 individuals in southern MN over just two winters. Although breeding may begin in March, winter roosts in the region may remain active into late April. The northward migration of LEOW returning to their breeding grounds in spring appears to be more dispersed than is the fall migration.

## THE LONG-EARED OWL CONT'D

However, significant numbers of spring migrants occur at Braddock Bay in NY and at Whitefish Point in MI. As many as 170 have been banded in a spring season along the southeastern shore of Lake Superior by Whitefish Point Bird Observatory (WPBO) and as many as 80 have been observed during a single evening flight. The timing of the return journey north can vary considerably from year to year, but usually peaks Mid-April through early May at WPBO.

We feel very fortunate to work with these amazing birds. Our seasons working as banders at both HRBO & WPBO have provided us with some truly incredible experiences with them. Whereas LEOW are notoriously skittish during the day, they become quite brazen in the comfort of the night. There have been nights when it seems as though the woods have come alive with LEOW. On those nights we have repeatedly had to walk within feet of LEOW as they hunted from perches along the trail. Naturally a few flew from their perches, but a surprising number simply sat and watched us as we walked right by. Occasionally, big

movements of LEOW have coincided with large nocturnal migrations of sparrows, a fact that, unfortunately for the sparrows, does not escape the attention of the owls who take full advantage. Once a LEOW ran across the ground about six feet away in hot pursuit of a sparrow, never even looking up as it went by. Another time while watching a Great Gray that was perched on top of a pine, a LEOW suddenly flew into the headlamp beams as it dive bombed the Great Gray. The LEOW flew up high, almost out of reach of the light before stooping again. It repeated this about six times before moving on, an incredible sight.

With their nocturnal habits, cryptic coloration, and relatively early breeding season, LEOW are difficult to study. HRBO's commitment to targeted research projects has contributed significantly to our knowledge of the occurrence of LEOW in MN. The long-term fall banding project regularly documents the largest fall migration of LEOW in North America, an event that would otherwise go virtually undetected. HRBO's involvement in the development and annual coordination of

## HRBO'S COMMITMENT TO TARGETED RESEARCH PROJECTS HAS CONTRIBUTED SIGNIFICANTLY TO OUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE OCCURRENCE OF LEOW IN MN

the Western Great Lakes Owl Monitoring Project has also helped to increase our understanding of LEOW breeding biology in MN. In addition to these research projects, the fall owl programs bring large numbers of visitors to the Ridge at night for the rare opportunity to see these beautiful birds up close. Providing this personal experience is an invaluable tool in raising the public's awareness of migrating owls and the importance of monitoring efforts, as those conducted by HRBO. We feel very fortunate to be part of the HRBO field staff and to have experienced some of the absolutely amazing owl migration at the Ridge.

## FALL EDUCATION SUMMARY

by GAIL JOHNEJACK, EDUCATION DIRECTOR

We had an eventful migration season at the Ridge last fall. Our returning naturalist staff of Margie Menzies, Matti Erpestad, and Katie Swanson all did a great job teaching our many programs and the public. Our substitute naturalists, David Stieler, Kati Kristenson, Kaitlin Erpestad, Brian Scott, and Jenni Stafford were valuable in helping assure adequate education services and programs for our visitors on the weekends and at other needed times. Erik Bruhnke, again as the Count Interpreter, helped connect visitors to the migrating birds by pointing them out and identifying them as they flew by. Sarah Glesner opened up the exciting world of owls during the few evening owl programs this fall that weren't weathered out. Finally, thanks to a generous donation, we were also able to provide weekend demonstrations right at the overlook to learn about songbird banding. We keep growing, learning, and sharing our love of nature and birds at Hawk Ridge.

For the second year, we handed out our new program evaluation forms to group leaders and teachers. We had a high rate of return from 61 forms this year and we received some great feedback. It's always nice to hear that the...

"teacher (was) outstanding at making connections, engaging the students – she had them eating out of her hands...", or "great job keeping lesson/activities going based on class knowledge."

This year we received an 'Excellent' rating on 93% of the 228 possible ratings. These results and the comments tell me that we are doing a great job, and they give me ideas for improving our programming.



HRBO Naturalist, Margie Menzies, with Barred Owl Photo by Annmarie Geniusz

## FALL EDUCATION SUMMARY CONT'D

One teacher's comment effectively summed up our education program. His goals for coming to Hawk Ridge were:

1. Experience outdoor education
2. Connection to state standards
3. Unique setting and subject matter
4. Quality instruction

Were his goals met? "Yes". Comments like these help us feel inspired to continue to do better. Next year, my goal is 95% 'Excellent'

Speaking of programs, we taught 82 this year. Thirty-two of these were 45-minute 'Hawk Ridge Primers' given at an age-appropriate level to Kindergarteners, college classes, senior groups and everything in between. We also taught 33, 90-minute 'Experience Hawk Ridge' programs to area 5th graders. Many of those classes were able to attend, due to education scholarship funds designated by generous donors. We also experimented this year with a few 2-hour programs to include expanded content on adaptations, which relates to one of the Minnesota 5th grade state standards. We plan to continue to involve teacher input in tweaking these programs to create more options focused on their educational needs.

The Kid's Cart hosted a few new items this year. The most popular were the dry-erase scavenger hunts that families and school groups could use, erase and return. They came in both 'easy' and 'intermediate'. My observation was that the school groups that used them were more focused when they went on hikes. The students consistently had more concrete answers about what they saw on their hikes if they had used the scavenger hunts. We will continue to offer these to anyone that would like to take one on a hike.

After our success last year with the 'kid' banding at the Kid's Cart, we developed a more lasting wrist band for the 170+ youngsters that were banded this year. The leather strip with numbered beads is a great keepsake for kids that visit the Ridge. A student in one of my classes raised his hand to show his band from the weekend, and the other students wished they had one. We thank volunteer, Susan Bauer, for contributing to and helping with the Kid's Cart and kid's banding. It is a pleasure to work such an enthusiastic volunteer.

One exciting day this season involved programming for a large group of 3rd, 4th and 6th graders from South Ridge Elementary School. The younger students rotated through three 'program activities' that included the grade school primer, a hike with a scavenger hunt, and time at the kid's cart making bird masks and getting banded. Sixth grade students had 1.5 hour educational hiking programs with Margie. This was the first time that we had so many students at the overlook at one time and it went well! The students went home happy, teachers gave us good feedback, and I know what I would do next year to smooth out the wrinkles!

Overall, we had great fall season and we look forward to sharing our love of birds and nature you're your group in 2014! Please contact me at [gjohnjack@hawkridge.org](mailto:gjohnjack@hawkridge.org) or 218-428-8722 to schedule your program.



American Kestrel

Photo by Cory Ritter

## EDUCATION BEYOND THE FALL SEASON

Hawk Ridge continues to offer outreach programs throughout the winter, spring, and summer. Raptors in the Classroom school programs are currently being scheduled. Hawk Ridge also offers a variety of outreach programs that can be customized for your group. Hawk Ridge is enjoying the monthly programs with 4th and 5th graders from St. Michael's and had a great songbird banding day with Lakewood Elementary School last spring. Special environmental education programs, like these, can be arranged with your class or group today! Please contact Education Director, Gail Johnjack, to schedule your program at [gjohnjack@hawkridge.org](mailto:gjohnjack@hawkridge.org) or (218) 428-8722.

## NEW SUMMER BIRD CAMP!

This summer Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory is partnering up with Hartley Nature Center to offer an exciting birding day camp for 14-17 year olds! Students will have the opportunity to visit some great birding spots in the area to learn identification tools and field research techniques, such as point counts, banding, nest searching. A variety of professionals will join us for different portions throughout the weekend to share their passion for birds, while incorporating fun activities. The day camp will be held the weekend of June 13-15th in Duluth, MN. The cost is \$200 and limited to 10 students. All birding skill levels are welcome! Please go to [hartleynature.org](http://hartleynature.org) for registration details. If you have questions or would like to find out about scholarship opportunities, please contact Hawk Ridge Education Director, Gail Johnjack, [gjohnjack@hawkridge.org](mailto:gjohnjack@hawkridge.org) or (218) 428-8722.

# FALL 2013 PASSERINE REPORT

by DAVID ALEXANDER

Where are all the birds? That was our question starting out the season in mid-August. A few volunteers banded over the summer as a prelude to a possible breeding season project in 2014. Compared to summer 2012, there were fewer birds singing and we saw less on net checks. So, when banding began we expected to see a dramatic drop in number of birds banded. We banded 407 birds which was 327 less than in 2012. As the season progressed, we noticed continued lower than 2012 numbers of most species. We did open the nets for a few days in mid-October when the juncos were migrating in full force and banded 124 at the main station in a three day period. We will never know exactly why the numbers of birds were lower this year, but it was probably a combination of a cold spring and terrible weather during peak spring migration.

Thanks to a generous donation from Myron and Holly Peterson, we were able to fund banding education on the weekends at the main overlook. Judging from the great feedback from the public and staff we hope to continue the weekend programs in 2014. We didn't have any grant funding this year for the main passerine station, so we went ahead and ran with a fantastic group of volunteers. Many of those in the 2012 training came back, and we added new volunteers for this season. We started an online scheduling system which helped us get most weekends and several weekdays staffed. We ran 42 days this year compared to 47 days in 2012.

One major advantage of lower bird numbers this year was that we had time to teach and maximize our learning on each bird. Our busiest day was 105 birds banded on 9/7. Species highlights for the season included: 61 Veery, 66 Swanson's Thrush, 206 Nashville Warbler, 123 American Redstart, 143 White-throated Sparrow, and 124 Slate-colored Juncos. We had an unexpected treat on September 21st with 99 birds banded; we had 3 species of vireo, 13 species of warblers including stunning male black-throated blue and golden-winged warblers. Total passerines banded were 1540 for the main station and 222 for the overlook.

As mentioned above, none of it would be possible without our volunteers. Thanks especially to the banders in charge including Annmarie Geniusz and Margie Menzies. We look forward to 2014, and hope our volunteer core will return for another season. Thanks to Steven Bockhold, Amber Burnett, Grace Glick, Georgia Neff, Karen Stubenvoll, Robbie Tietge, Abbie Valine, Jan and David Conley, and others we may have missed.



A crew of great banding helpers! Left to Right: Rachel Harris, Miranda Durbin, Kati Kristenson, David Alexander, Katie Swanson, Karen Stubenvoll, and Step Wilson

Photo by Frank Nicoletti

## HAWK WEEKEND FESTIVAL 2014!

Make plans now for the annual Hawk Weekend Festival, September 19-21, 2014! Our evening events will be held at the Spirit Mountain Grand Avenue Chalet. We will kick off the festival at our Friday night dinner event with our annual member meeting, awards, and a great presentation from Laura Erickson. Laura has been sharing her love of birds for decades, as an author, trip leader, public speaker, and as the creator and producer of the long-running radio show "For the Birds". She recently completed her own "Big Year" of birding identifying 593 species!

Our Saturday evening dinner event will feature an exciting raffle and auction, and an engaging presentation on owls from expert Dr. James R. Duncan, Director of the Wildlife Branch with Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship. Jim has been conducting research on owls for over 25 years and has a passion for it. He is the author of *Owls of the World: Their Lives, Behavior and Survival* and *The Complete Book of North American Owls*. The full registration includes meals both nights, field trips on Saturday & Sunday, and admission to an "Advanced Hawkwatching" workshop at Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve. An optional day trip to the Sax-Zim Bog will be on Friday.

Registration for the festival will open in June on our website at [www.hawkridge.org](http://www.hawkridge.org). Please note hotel rooms tend to fill up quickly during the fall season, so we suggest you make your travel plans early to attend.

# FALL 2013 RAPTOR BANDING REPORT

by FRANK NICOLETTI, BANDING DIRECTOR

For the third year in a row, I managed the Hawk Ridge banding operation. Banding has occurred since 1972 at this location. I was able to maintain the same effort, as in 2011 and 2012, with the running of three hawk banding stations: Hawk Ridge, Moose Valley and Paine Farm. Each station was operated by a trained and licensed bander and help from volunteers. We couldn't achieve what we do without volunteers.

The 2013 season proved to be the least productive season of the past three. This is likely in part due to weather conditions during the fall, but weather conditions this past spring and summer also likely had an effect on migrants returning and breeding success. Some species appear to be in population decline and or a downward trend in their cycle. The number of raptors captured and banded between the three stations totaled 3,224; this includes 61 foreign recoveries and 25 returns. Among the 3,224 raptors, there were 1,192 owls. The owls were all banded at the "main" station at Hawk Ridge. The main station was in operation from 15 August-30 November. Moose Valley ran from 2 September to 18 November, while Paine

Farm ran from 2 September to 4 November. A total of 214 days were logged. The overall average number of hawks banded per day was 9.5, which is below 2012 and 2011, 11 and 13 respectfully.

The official hawk count was the lowest on record since the count implemented changes in count protocol starting in 1991. We banded approximately 600 less hawks than in 2012 and 1,300 less than 2011. Six species were well below average and those species constitute the bulk of birds banded at Hawk Ridge, these include Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Northern Goshawk, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel and Merlin. However, even if these numbers seem low, these numbers represent some of, if not, the highest numbers of raptors banded in the country. This data is important to monitor raptor populations, thus your continued support to maintain is needed and much appreciated.

In September, a total of 1,236 hawks were banded. This represents 61% of the season total, while October's total of 636 represents 31%. Both August and November totals were 85 and 60 hawks banded, respectfully. During the season, when we had favorable weather conditions, the raptor movement was lackluster at best. Flights of hawks never materialized or flights were high and non-responsive. We did however have some highlights, including: banding four Bald Eagles, 3 adult Peregrine Falcons in one day, and an adult female and male Rough-legged Hawk on the same day.

As with the hawk banding, the owl migration was down in numbers. However, this can be attributed primarily to poor production of hatch-year Northern Saw-whet Owls, which reflects their cycle of every 3-5 years. This is a sharp contrast to last fall's migration when a record number of 2,033 owls were banded. Interestingly, this phenomenon was observed at other banding sites across in the country in both 2012 and 2013. The number of nights covered was 37 with an average of 32 owls banded per night. The owl protocol was the same as last two season with two caller units, one each for

## 2013 FALL BANDING TOTALS

|                        |      |
|------------------------|------|
| Bald Eagle:            | 4    |
| Northern Harrier:      | 24   |
| Sharp-shinned Hawk:    | 1601 |
| Cooper's Hawk:         | 41   |
| Northern Goshawk:      | 89   |
| Broad-winged Hawk:     | 14   |
| Red-tailed Hawk:       | 125  |
| Rough-legged Hawk:     | 33   |
| American Kestrel:      | 36   |
| Merlin:                | 56   |
| Peregrine Falcon:      | 9    |
| Northern Saw-whet Owl: | 1066 |
| Long-eared Owl:        | 120  |

Northern Saw-whet and Long-eared Owl, which ran simultaneously during the night. The saw-whet caller was placed in the west net lanes while the long-eared caller was placed in the east net (pines grove) lanes.

This season's 4 **Bald Eagles** banded tied the record set in 2011. There were two hatch-years, a third year and an adult. **Northern Harriers**, at 24 banded, were lower than 2011 or 2012, which saw totals of 64 and 56, respectfully. This low total is likely a response of their cycle. The **Sharp-shinned Hawk** total was 1,601, which is down from 2,054 and 2,642, in 2011 and 2012 respectfully. It's unknown, but there could be a decline in this species, as been observed in the eastern population, and or likely a result of poor breeding success. We had 2 returns: one from 2012 and 2010. **Cooper's Hawks** were banded in fair numbers, 41, which is what we banded in 2012. After last season, goshawk numbers seem to be on the rise and there was hope of seeing some sort of an irruption with more adults on the way. This season however, we captured only 89 **Northern Goshawks**. The age/sex breakdown was as follows: hatch-year male 52 or 59%, hatch-year female 14 or 16%, second-year male 10, second-year female 4, third male 1, after-second-year male 4 and 4 female. It's likely we may never see another goshawk irruption as in the past. We had two returns; one from 2012 and one banded as an after-second on 19 November, 2005, making it at least 10 years old!!



It was great to reconnect with former Education Director, Debbie (Waters) Petersen, with Cooper's Hawk in hand.

Photo by Nova Mackentley

## FALL 2013 RAPTOR BANDING REPORT CONT'D



Banding Volunteer, Caitlin Johnson, displaying Red-tailed Hawk

Photo by Frank Nicoletti

**Broad-winged Hawks** were well represented with a combined 14 banded, 9 at the main station, which is about the average. Unlike past seasons, no adults were captured. For the third season in a row, **Red-tailed Hawk** numbers, 125, were down from 2012 and 2011 when 155 and 290 were banded, respectfully. An hatch-year dark morph was captured at Moose Valley on the 23 October. Like other species, poor spring and summer weather conditions may had an effect on breeding. A total of 33 **Rough-legged Hawks** were captured this season. Of the 33, 31 were light morph, 2 dark and one intermediate. Two were already banded birds that were captured along the north shore earlier in the fall. Certainly a highlight was banding an adult male and female light morph on 11 November.

The falcon numbers were quite varied. **American Kestrel** with 36 banded seemed lower than expected considering the numbers counted. This is below the average of 50 since 2011. This species seems to be in decline and or weather conditions had an effect on breeding succes. **Merlin** numbers were low as well with 56 captured as compared to the average of 79 since 2011. **Peregrine Falcon** numbers were good with 9 banded. We did not capture any previously banded birds this year from the north shore population and all seem to be of the tundrius race. Certainly a highlight of the season was the capturing and banding

of three adult peregrines in a single day.

**Northern Saw-whet Owl** numbers, as previously mentioned, were lower then the past two seasons but corrolating with their cycle. This season we captured 70 encounters (already banded): 50 foreign recoveries and 20 returns. Of the 20 returns, 17 were from 2012, 3 from 2011. As expected, many of the returns from 2012 were banded as hatch-year. **Long-eared Owls** were recorded in good numbers with 120 banded. Peak night was 26 October when 33 were banded. Interesting was on the 26 October, a long-eared had taken a Brown Creeper for prey and even more interesting was that it was at 3:30 in the morning. **Barred Owls** banded were 6, including a bird banded 5 November, 2010 at the Moose Valley station.

We had a number of interesting recoveries this fall. Among the hawks there were 6 Sharp-shinned Hawks that were already banded, 4 coming from Thunder Cape Bird Observatory which is nearly 180 miles northeast of Hawk Ridge: two from 2012 and and one from 2010. One banded at Thunder Cape on 26 September, was recaptured at Hawk Ridge on 1 October, 2013, six days after being banded. The two other Sharp-shinned Hawks recoveries; one from Frank Taylor's banding station (10 miles north of Hawk Ridge) and one from Wisconsin Point in 2011. The remaining five recoveries were banded this season



Bill Clark, author of Peterson Guide to Hawks, Photo by Frank Nicoletti returned last fall to teach another Advanced Raptor ID workshop. It was a great weekend!

from stations just north of Hawk Ridge and include two each of Northern Goshawks and Rough-legged Hawks, and one Merlin.

Among the 50 Northern Saw-whet Owl recoveries, which is by far the most numerous species recaptured, which we have received data on include: Thunder Cape, Ontario came in with 8 records: 6 from 2012, one from 2011. One banded on 8 October 2013 was recaptured at Hawk Ridge on the 24 October. Other recoveries from other banding sites in states included 9 in Wisconsin: three from 2012, four from 2011 and one each from 2008 and 2009; Minnesota had seven from 2012: two from 2011 and one from 2009; one from Indiana from 2012; and one from Michigan from 2009. Other records are still pending from the U.S.G.S. Bird Banding Lab.

As mentioned earlier, volunteers make a huge impact in assisting with the banding operation. Some of the volunteers are local and also help at the overlook in different capacities. Many are interested in working as a bander during the fall season, but positions are limited. Thus, I at least like to offer them to visit the banding station for a for a day or longer to see how the operation works and have an opportunity to get some initial experience. Many took me up on this, including 4 students from Purdue University, who were able so see and learn a lot. They were here when the first Bald Eagle of the season was captured. Also folks, such

## FALL 2013 RAPTOR BANDING REPORT CONT'D

such as Lauren Haag from New Jersey and Rachel Harris and Erin Lehnert from Michigan, who were here for extended visits. Others came as well and shadowed one of the banders to get a little taste of the banding experience with passerines, hawks and owls. I hope to continue to offer learning experiences to those who want to extend their knowledge and pursue careers in this field.

Nova Mackentley, Chris Neri, and myself staffed the banding stations during the day

and Annmarie Geniusz was the owl bander. David Alexander managed the passerine (songbird) station with other volunteers. I would also like to thank the numerous volunteers and others that helped in many ways, including: Karen Stubenvoll, Tara Haynes, Todd Burnside, Jessamy Schwartz, Stephen Bockhold, Karl Bardon, Cory Ritter, Jane Hosking, Allen Best, Andrew Longtin, Gary Leeper, David Carman, Katie Swanson, Amber Burnette, Miranda Durbin, Kati Kristenson, Caitlin Johnson, Rachel Harris, Lauren Haag, Joni Johnson, and

Bruce Munson; the education staff and volunteers; the Stewardship Committee, including Bob Owens, Tim Bates and Judy Gibbs. Also, I would especially like to thank my wife Kate for all she does and for her support. Others that helped in different ways included Dick and Adeline Green, Peder Svingen, Ben and Josh Yokel, and Mary Normandia. I would especially like to thank all those who supported the banding operation through their membership and donations.

## NON-RAPTOR SUMMARY REPORT 2013

by KARL BARDON, COUNT DIRECTOR

For the seventh year in a row, the counters at Hawk Ridge kept a tally of all non-raptors seen during the official raptor count at the main overlook. Also, for the fourth year in a row, the count at the Hawk Ridge main overlook was augmented by a morning count of non-raptors at the Lester River apartment near the shore of Lake Superior, one mile from Hawk Ridge. These morning counts began on 27 July 2013 and ended on 12 November 2013, while the Hawk Ridge count was the standardized period 15 August-30 November 2013. This fall's effort yielded a composite total of 283,484 non-raptors, which includes 176,466 counted from the Lester River shore site, and 107,018 counted from the Hawk Ridge main overlook. This is the second highest season count to date, and includes some amazing counts of birds.

The abundance of birds this season was overwhelming at times, and we were witness to multiple mass migration events with days when the dawn sky was teeming with uncountable birds. Passage of a cold front on 11 September, after a long period of above normal temperatures, brought a very diverse flight of neotropical migrants including an estimate of 500-1000+ Swainson's Thrushes calling before dawn, over 2,000 warblers of 15 species, and a state high count of 107 Rose-breasted Grosbeaks. There were birds everywhere! Additional mass events included 10,642 birds on 20 September including 4,270

warblers, another 17,548 birds on 29 September including 11,674 warblers (the largest warbler flight I have witnessed!), and an additional 15,904 birds on 2 October including 3,056 warblers and 3585 American Goldfinches. Peak non-raptor migration is often very compressed in late September and early October, showcased by this season's total of 63,896 birds during the 6-day period 29 September-4 October, including over 17,000 warblers. Indeed, the total warbler count of 33,591 this season was the most I have seen, rivaling the historical warbler counts from the Lakewood pumping station 25 years ago.

The highlight of the season was an amazing flight of 30,874 Common Nighthawks on 21 August. Although this flight lasted all day, with over 8,000 seen during the morning hours, it was not until the last two hours before sunset when the flight became truly impressive, with over 20,000 estimated during that time. This massive stream of nighthawks was over a mile wide, extending from up over Hawk Ridge all the way down to the shore, with the entire Lakeside neighborhood covered in a continuous stream of migrating nighthawks.

Additional highlights and high counts for the season include a single Ross's Goose joining a flock of 35 American White Pelicans on 21 September, a single flock of 156 American White Pelicans on 3 September (largest flock I have seen in Duluth), a single



HRBO Count Director, Karl Bardon, with Northern Goshawk. The smile says it all! Photo by Frank Nicoletti

flock of 56 Red-necked Phalaropes landing on Lake Superior on 20 August (very large number for Duluth), an Upland Sandpiper seen at both the apartment and Hawk Ridge on 5 September (rare for Duluth), a Eurasian Collared-Dove landing in a spruce at the Lester River apartment on 2 October (only the second record for Duluth), a count of 5627 Blue Jays on 16 September (second highest count), a state high count of 34 Gray-cheeked Thrushes flying over in the pre-dawn darkness on 7 September, a record season total of 1170 Eastern Bluebirds including a state high count of 262 on 18 October, two male Mountain Bluebirds briefly landing in a spruce tree on 26 October, a record season total of

## NON-RAPTOR SUMMARY REPORT 2013 CONT'D

41,608 Cedar Waxwings including 6322 on 20 August and 6109 on 21 August (only one previous higher count), and a season total of 18,688 Rusty Blackbirds including 5246 on 13 October (third highest state count).

In contrast, some species were remarkably absent. For example, only 20 Cackling Geese were seen, even though the previous average for this species is 849! Bonaparte's Gull was missed for the first time, even though the previous average is 57, and only 2 Black-backed Woodpeckers were seen, the same as last year (even though the average prior to 2012 is 54). The

absence of many of the northern finches was even more shocking. For example, there were zero Common Redpolls or White-winged Crossbills all season, even though the previous averages for the two species (prior to 2013) are 11,113 and 1542 respectively. Furthermore, we tallied season counts of only 36 Pine Grosbeaks despite an average of 854 during previous years (2007-2012), only 18 Red Crossbills despite an average of 902 during previous years, and only 66 Pine Siskins despite an average of 5324 previously. American Goldfinches tried there hardest to make up for the slack in their northern brethren, putting on a record season of 12,239,

including a state high count of 38585 on 2 October. Nevertheless, excluding goldfinches, the total number of northern finches this season was only 2207, even though the previous average is 22,435 (and the best season is 48,707 in 2011).

This was a great season with overwhelming numbers of birds. These counts are only possible through the help of many people, especially Cory Ritter, who manned the Ridge every day at sunrise - his help and amiability cannot be overstated: thank you Cory! I would also like to thank Andrew Longtin, Dave Carman, Russ Edmonds, Jan Green, and Jane Hosking.

## FALL 2013 RAPTOR SUMMARY

by KARL BARDON, COUNT DIRECTOR

For the 42nd consecutive season, Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory conducted an official raptor count from the main overlook at Hawk Ridge. During the standardized season from 15 August-30 November 2012, a total of 43,133 raptors were seen during 821.3 hours of observation. This is the tenth season of below average numbers, since the big year in 2003, when over 200,000 raptors were seen. Furthermore, this is one of the lowest totals since 1991, when full-time standardized coverage began. No doubt the heavy snow cover during late spring had an effect on over-winter survival and breeding success of many early season raptors. This is the seventh season that I have counted, and for most of these years the results have been similar, with mostly the same species showing above average counts and the same species showing below average counts, and remarkable uniformity in numbers from year to year. It appears some rather dramatic changes are occurring in the data.

Bald Eagles, Golden Eagles, and Peregrine Falcons have all been steadily increasing since the early 1990s. In the last 20-25 years, Bald Eagles have increased from an average of only 100 during the period 1972-1990 to an average of over 3,000 during the period 1991-2013! Some of this



Peregrine Falcon

Photo by Amber Burnette

increase is due to expanded coverage in the last 20 years, especially full-time coverage in November, but nevertheless, this is an amazing increase. Similarly, during the same periods, Golden Eagles have increased from an average of only 10 to 136, and Peregrine Falcons have increased from an average of only 15 to 72. I doubt observers 25 years ago could have fathomed that the season count for these species in 2013 would be 4466 Bald Eagles, 176 Golden Eagles, and 154 Peregrine Falcons. Daily peak counts of these species are now higher than seasonal counts were prior to 1990.

Most other raptor species have been showing average to mostly below average counts recently, with the decline in Broad-wings and Red-tails most puzzling. I seriously doubt either of these species has actually declined in overall numbers, especially Red-tails (which seem to thrive in our human-altered landscape), so why haven't we seen any large flights of these two butes in recent years? This season's count of 14,983 Broad-wings was the lowest since 2001, and the count of 6,164 Red-tails was about 2,000 below average for the seventh straight year. Although I am



Broad-winged Hawk

Photo by Cory Ritter

sure there are many factors involved, I have no doubt that the effects of global climate change on our weather systems have also affected migration.

With the end of the 2013 season, it has become quite clear that Northern Goshawks will not show any irruption during this cycle, and as a result, we may have just witnessed the destruction of one of nature's most grand phenomena. Roughly every ten years, probably for thousands of years, adult Northern Goshawks have invaded by thousands into areas south of their typical range due to cyclic shortages in Snowshoe Hares and Ruffed Grouse, two of their preferred prey species. Data from Hawk Ridge shows how these irruptions, occurring in 1972 (4963), 1982 (3535), 1992 (2040), and 2001 (1107), have become less and less pronounced, with essentially no irruption in 2012 (269). More than likely this is a result of the extensive fragmentation of our landscape, with prey cycles now probably occurring only on local levels. One of my greatest dreams is to stand witness to an event such as the 1299 Northern Goshawks that flew over Hawk Ridge on 15 October 1982; sadly, this may never happen again.

Although less well documented, other raptor species appear to have shown pronounced cycles which also no longer seem to occur,

including Northern Harriers (perhaps every five years), Rough-legged Hawks (every four years), Red-tailed Hawks (perhaps roughly every ten years), and perhaps even Golden Eagles (every ten years). The recent data shows a clear flattening out of data for most species, without the sharp yearly increases and decreases shown in the past, and it seems quite likely that additional cycles have been disrupted by the human-altered landscape.

Some of the highlights of the season include a record late Swainson's Hawk seen on 6 November, a great flight of 155 Rough-legs on 2 November 2013 (third highest count for the Ridge), five dark-morph Broad-wings were spotted, single Mississippi Kites were seen on 27 August and 4 September (this is the fourth year in a row this casual species has been seen at Hawk Ridge!), and a record daily high count of 33 Peregrine Falcons on 29 September 2013.

Despite the below average count, this was still my best season yet at Hawk Ridge- honest! This is due largely to

**IT HAS BECOME QUITE CLEAR THAT NORTHERN GOSHAWKS WILL NOT SHOW ANY IRRUPTION DURING THIS CYCLE, AND AS A RESULT, WE MAY HAVE JUST WITNESSED THE DESTRUCTION OF ONE OF NATURE'S MOST GRAND PHENOMENA.**

all the wonderful people involved with Hawk Ridge, especially all those die-hard counters willing to endure the heat and the cold while scanning the skies with me, especially Cory Ritter, Andrew Longtin, Dave Carman, and Joe Beck. My thanks also to Stephen Bockhold, Russ and Ann Edmonds, Annmarie Geniusz, Jan Green, Jane Hosking, Jan and Larry Kraemer, Frank Nicoletti, and Tori Steely. Even if we don't see a lot of birds together, at least we can have a good time.



Beautiful Bald Eagle

Photo by Chris Neri

# STEWARDSHIP NOTES

by BOB OWENS, STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIR

SNOW, SNOW AND MORE SNOW. That is not all bad for the Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve, which is hilly and slopes in almost all directions. We have snow coverings of two to three feet over most of the acreage in the reserve, which keeps frost from going down too deep and the ground absorbs more moisture as the snow melts in the spring. Deer seemed to avoid the area earlier, but now we have packed trails, bushwhacked snowshoe trails, and some hard pack snow that wildlife walk on top of for browsing and nourishment. Also noticeable are trees budding earlier, even though temps have been below zero, partly due to warm soil and sunny days. This could make for fun birding in early spring with possibly a broader variety of birds coming for food on their stopover at Hawk Ridge and after a harsh winter. Hopefully, the longer days and warmer weather ahead will encourage each of you to visit the Ridge to experience the birds, the quiet solitude and beauty of winter, and signs of early spring in the woods.

We have been busy with a variety of projects related to the land, trails, and

facilities at Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve. Some examples of these projects are the site improvements at the banding station. The field was enlarged last August and then seeded to accelerate vegetation growth this spring. We plan to mow the area once or twice during the dry season to prevent brush and unwanted cover to return to the cleared area. Banding Director, Frank Nicoletti, has already recognized the positive impact this change has had on the banding operation. We have also been working on improving both trails and roadway signage for improved safety, education, and direction. We plan to add signage this spring along the inner hiking trails with directions and distance information at significant points and trail junctions.

As part of the HRBO Strategic Plan, the Stewardship Committee has been reviewing and revising the stewardship goals and objectives with the strategic intent to manage and preserve Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve's natural, recreational and educational resources consistent with the HRBO's mission, vision and values. We invite others to join our Stewardship

Committee especially people who use the reserve, such as bikers, dog walkers, joggers, birders, photographers, and anyone who feels the need to help beautify Duluth and enjoys the outdoor recreational benefits while living here.

We thank you for your support of HRBO, as you are helping us maintain a sustainable green space for future generations. We wouldn't be able to do this without your contribution. Your input, your clippers and gloves, your shovel and hoeing, all make a difference. Just think Mayor Snively (1910-1912) would be pleased to know we have managed, improved, and provided public activities at Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve, despite it not being used as the original Skyline Road he intended. We are doing much more than he ever imagined.

Please go to our website at [www.hawkridge.org](http://www.hawkridge.org) or call (218) 428-6209 for more information and to join other supporters for the camaraderie and satisfaction of making a contribution to maintain one of our beautiful green spaces in Duluth.



Regular visitors and HRBO Eagle Members, Holly and Myron Peterson (back left and right), standing proud with Bander Chris Neri and Bald Eagle

Photo by Nova Mackentley

# VOLUNTEER REPORT

by KATIE SWANSON, VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

The fall season of 2013 ended up being a great success. We had a good number of visitors and also an amazing crew of returning and new volunteers to greet them and help with whatever was needed. The weather had its ups and downs, with amazing warm weather on the weekdays, but a lot of rainy cool weather on the weekends. Our volunteers were there rain or shine to keep the fall season rolling.

As it was my first season as the Volunteer Coordinator, I naturally had some concern about having enough volunteers and getting them to come and help when we needed them. However, in the end our volunteers really did pull through and helped this season be another successful one! We had volunteers working at the main overlook, at the count, banding raptors and passerines, helping out with the Hawk Weekend festival, leading banding station tours, processing adopts and many other projects behind the scenes.

This year we had a total of 92 active volunteers that committed a total of 2,835 hours! And, as hard as we try, I am sure not every hour has even been counted. We have many volunteers that help us out in so many ways, it's difficult to keep track of every hour. Some volunteers have time to commit only 12 hours in a season and some are putting in around the 200-hour level! Either way, every hour counts and we appreciate it just as much.

I want to say THANK YOU again to all our amazing volunteers who have helped us through the year. We will continue to ask for volunteer help throughout this year and into the fall season. So, if you are already a volunteer, stay tuned to your email! If you are interested in volunteering, please contact: Katie Swanson, Volunteer Coordinator at [kswanson@hawkridge.org](mailto:kswanson@hawkridge.org).



Adult male and female Northern Goshawks held by Banding Volunteer, Miranda Durbin Photo by Frank Nicoletti

## CALL FOR OWL VOLUNTEERS!

We need your help with the Western Great Lakes Owl Monitoring Project. This is the 10th year of collaborative effort between Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Non-Game, Natural Resources Research Institute, and WI DNR to monitor owl populations. We are looking for volunteers to venture out into the far reaches of Minnesota to survey for breeding owls this spring. Volunteers become certified through our online program to learn the calls and then are assigned a pre-established 9-mile route in their area. They spend one evening in early April driving their route, stopping at one-mile intervals and listening passively for calling owls for five minutes at each stop. They record observations such as GPS coordinates, weather/snow conditions, wind speed/direction, cloud cover and owls heard, for each stop onto data sheets.

Without dedicated volunteers, we would NEVER be able to capture this important data on such an elusive group of birds during the spring breeding season! The data recorded is being entered and analyzed for better conservation practices. You can find previous annual reports on our owl monitoring website: <http://www.hawkridge.org/research/springowl.html>.

In 2013, we filled 80% of the 160 routes. We hope to fill 100% in 2014 with your help! If you're interested in participating in this survey, please contact our volunteer coordinators for more information:

### Minnesota

Julie O'Connor  
218-348-2291  
[joconnor@hawkridge.org](mailto:joconnor@hawkridge.org)

### Wisconsin

Ryan Brady  
715-685-2933  
[Ryan.Brady@Wisconsin.gov](mailto:Ryan.Brady@Wisconsin.gov)



Snowy Owl

Photo by MichaelFurtman.com

# VOLUNTEER VOICES

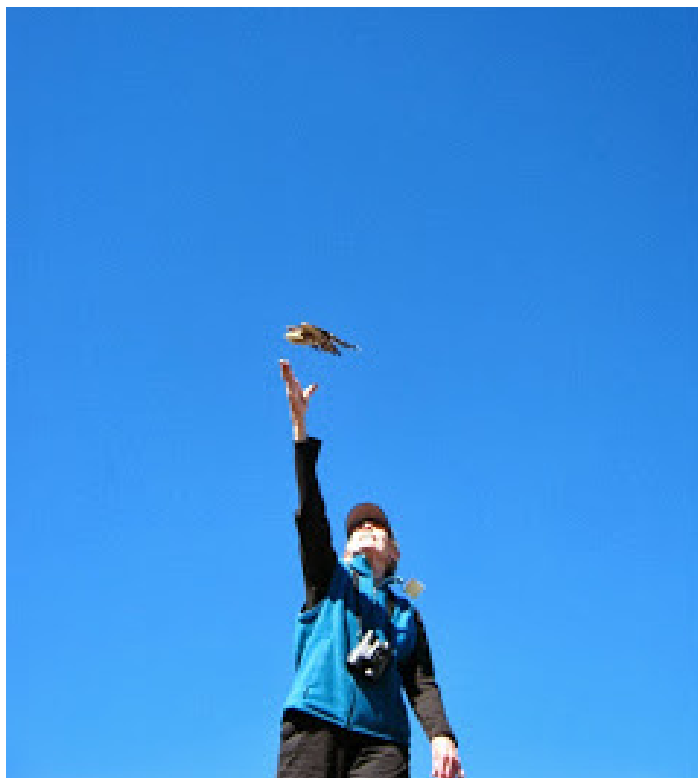
by MARY SLATTERY

I love Hawk Ridge! When I moved to Duluth, I had read in the Duluth News Tribune that 700 Eagles were seen at the Ridge. After finding out where Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve was, my dog and I went there in January. We were the only ones there and there weren't any eagles that we could see. I complained to Judy Gibbs, who suggested I volunteer there in the fall. She said I would learn so much, meet great people and have fun. She was right and I have had the most wonderful experiences there. Not only did I see eagles, but I fell in love with all raptors. The great staff makes it fun to learn about raptors because they love them so. We greet people from all over the USA (and other countries) and really have fun with volunteers of all ages. I am looking forward to getting back there this fall.



HRBO Volunteer, Mary Slattery, with a Sharp-shinned Hawk

Photo by Katie Swanson



Thank you Mary and all the volunteers for all you do for Hawk Ridge!

Photo by Katie Swanson

## OPERATION OVERLOOK

As many of you know, we refer to the beautiful outdoor site that we operate from as the “main overlook” at Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve. The “overlook” is our Visitor Center with thousands of people stopping by every fall. Not only do we conduct the fall count and deliver education programs, but we also run a gift shop from our trailer, offer free binocular rentals, conduct live bird demonstrations, deliver tours and hikes, provide kid's learning activities, and more. With a big transition in staff in 2011 & 2012, we realized that managing all the other activities that happen at the overlook during the fall truly needed the attention of a seasonal Operations Director. Here's a brief summary of the season from our new Operations Director, Jessica Chatterton.

*My first fall season as Operations Director of Hawk Ridge was a challenging, busy, whirlwind, but overall I feel the season went very well. Merchandise sales were good this year with the most popular items being Hawk Ridge long-sleeved shirts with our 2013 Boreal Owl design and women's "Keep Calm and Soar On" t-shirts. Our hooded sweatshirts were also in high demand and sold out very quickly. We were proud to present the new Hawk Ridge logo on our lens cloth bags that arrived just in time for Hawk Weekend. Owl Evening Programs were off to a slow start with bad weather cancellations during the first half of October, but the second half made up for it with three owl species in appearance at the last two programs. Banding Station Tours were also made available to the public and were a big hit. One group was even lucky enough to watch an adult Bald Eagle get banded during their tour! I really appreciate everyone's patience as I learned the ins and outs of my new position over the last season. I am looking forward to another great migration season in 2014.*

We hope you can visit this fall season, as we continue to make further improvements, so every visit you have to Hawk Ridge a special one. Thank you for your feedback!

# SNORE OUTDOORS FOR HAWK RIDGE BIRD OBSERVATORY

by RUDY HUMMEL

Hello everyone, my name is Rudy Hummel. I have a personal goal to sleep outside for a year to help make sure people and animals can have the homes they need.

When I started sleeping outside last June, it was because I like challenging myself. I love camping with my family and Boy Scout Troop (including winter camping), so it seemed natural that I'd want to spend a whole year out there. I knew I could do it.

I started in a tree platform in the backyard. Temperatures dropped, as did snow, and I built myself a quinzhee (snow cave) to sleep in.

In December, an idea struck me. Would people pledge money for each night I slept outside? Like pledging for miles run, or laps swum?

I thought about what's important to me, like the outdoors. I also thought about how many people have to sleep outside all the time, without sleeping bags or warm clothing. At first glance, these don't seem very well connected, but to me they are. Caring for people is important, and so is caring for the environment that sustains us. Treating nature well is treating each other well, both now, and for generations yet to come. It's our habitat, too. We all live on this planet together.

I chose Habitat for Humanity because it sets a wonderful example of caring for people. It's an organization that builds houses for people who are homeless. (Donations made through this website are tallied under Snore Outdoors.)

I chose Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory because it connects people to nature and helps them understand why we need to care for it. It's a local Duluth nonprofit organization that I was introduced to when my mom volunteered there. She now works as the Education Director, and together we helped raise money for Hawk Ridge at the 2012 Birdathon. It's a great organization that focuses on migratory bird research and environmental education.

And that's how Snore Outdoors for a Better World was born. You can help, too. Support SnoreOutdoors by going to [SnoreOutdoors.com](http://SnoreOutdoors.com) where you can learn more, read my blog, and make a donation to Hawk Ridge and/or Habitat for Humanity. We all live on this planet together!



My tree platform under construction

Photo courtesy of Rudy Hummel



Getting out of bed in the morning (pre-quinzhee)

Photo courtesy of Rudy Hummel

*Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory truly thanks Rudy Hummel for his charitable action. This inspiring 17-year old high school student has already helped raise over \$400 in donations for Hawk Ridge. We felt such an inspirational act from a member of our youth community should benefit other students and young adults aspiring to work in the field of bird conservation. Donations from "Snore Outdoors" will be used directly for the Hawk Ridge Traineeship Program. We plan to have an Education Trainee and Banding Trainee this fall season. It is our hope to have traineeships in a variety of areas in the future, such as the spring/fall count, marketing, fundraising, and non-profit management. We look forward to providing this hands-on experience and making an impact on our next generation for the good of birds.*



## MEMBERSHIP CONTRIBUTION

### PLEASE

☐ BEGIN

☐ RENEW

### MY HAWK RIDGE MEMBERSHIP

\$15 Student (Vulture)

\$30 Individual (Osprey)

\$50 Family (Hawk)

\$100 Sustaining (Owl)

\$250 Soaring (Harrier)

\$500 Supporting (Falcon)

\$1000 Steward (Eagle)

Additional Donation:

### HELP FUND EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Fall Public Education Programs at Hawk Ridge \$

Hawk Ridge Volunteer Program \$

"Peregrine Watch" outreach at Lake Place Park \$

"Raptors in the Classroom" school outreach \$

"Experience Hawk Ridge" school lesson at

Hawk Ridge \$

### HELP FUND RESEARCH PROGRAMS

Fall Count \$

Raptor Banding \$

Songbird Banding \$

Spring Count \$

☐ I want to volunteer, please contact me

☐ Check here if you'd like to be added to our e-mail list\* for Hawk Ridge information and updates

\*We do not rent, sell, or trade mailing lists

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## HELP US MEET OUR FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory depends on the generous contributions made by its members and friends. You'll receive special member discounts and behind-the-scenes tours as well as knowing these funds go to support education and research. Your membership contribution is tax deductible! Please make checks payable to Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory.

SEND FORM & PAYMENT TO:

### HAWK RIDGE BIRD OBSERVATORY

P.O. Box 3006  
Duluth, MN 55803-3006

## A GIFT ANYONE CAN AFFORD

*You can support the work of Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory, and create a legacy for the future, by remembering us in your estate plan.*

Did you know there are ways to support Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory (HRBO) that do not affect your lifestyle or financial security? A bequest in your will or estate plan will help ensure that HRBO will continue its raptor research, education programs, and other bird conservation efforts for years to come. You can also designate HRBO to be the

beneficiary of a life insurance policy or an IRA. It's simple to do. Talk to an estate planning specialist or to our Executive Director, Janelle Long, for more information. (218) 428-6209 or [jloug@hawkridge.org](mailto:jloug@hawkridge.org)



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*Miller Hill Subaru*

*Naturally Avian (Erik Bruhnke)*

*@michaelfurtman.com (Michael Furtman)*

## 28<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL ST LOUIS COUNTY BIRDATHON!

Mark your calendar now for Saturday May 17<sup>th</sup> to join us for the 28<sup>th</sup> Annual St. Louis County Birdathon! This is an exciting 24-hour competition to raise money for the educational and research programs of Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory. The extreme birders will take on this challenge throughout the night and day, but don't be put off by an extreme schedule! You can bird for an hour or less just by watching a feeder to compete in the "Big Sit" category. In the "Eco" or "Green" non-motorized category, you can ride your bike, canoe, or walk through as many of the local birding hotspots as you wish. There are fantastic prizes, such as t-shirts, hats, prints, and more! The grand compilation brunch will be held at Hartley Nature Center on Sunday May 18<sup>th</sup>, in which prizes and the traveling owl trophy will be awarded. We are accepting pledges now, so even if you can't make the event, we truly appreciate your consideration of a pledge. If you have questions or need help forming or joining a team, please contact us at [birdathon@hawkridge.org](mailto:birdathon@hawkridge.org). Registration details are found on our website at [www.hawkridge.org](http://www.hawkridge.org).



*Black-throated Blue Warbler*

Photo by MichaelFurtman.com