

2018 Raptor Banding Report

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The fall 2018 season marks the 47th year of raptor banding at Hawk Ridge. This is my eighth season managing the banding operation. Hawk Ridge is one of the longest running banding operations in the world, and its continuing efforts to collect data is of utmost importance, especially with the changing climate and shifting of species and weather patterns. We along with other professional organizations and individuals continue to work toward understanding the migration of birds across North and Central America.



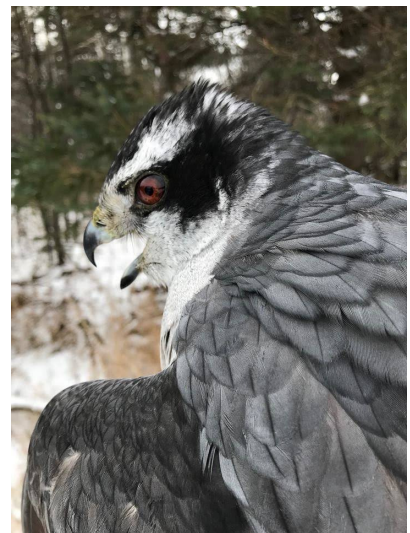
From 2011 to 2014 we had the Hawk Ridge, Moose Valley, and Paine Farm banding stations running full time. The Hawk Ridge station maintains full time operation while Paine Farm and Moose Valley are run on a part-time basis. Allie Pesano, a 2016 Hawk Ridge trainee, returned as a Raptor Bander and Kate Maley, a 2017 Hawk Ridge trainee, returned as the Owl Bander. A big thanks goes out to banding volunteers, David Alexander and Miranda Durbin, for their time filling in days in September and October. We had about the same number of days covered for the past three years with 176 this season. However, this is down from an average of 235 days from 2011 to 2014. This season we had three banding trainees, which made the banding operation run more smoothly and provided a great opportunity for the trainees to learn all aspects of banding. We also continue to rely on our great core of volunteers.

The 2018 season was the lowest with a total of 2452 raptors banded behind 3224 in 2013. We banded 16 species of raptors, 11 hawks and 5 owls. This total includes 24 foreign recoveries, birds banded at a



different banding site and recaptured at Hawk Ridge, and 11 returns, birds previously banded at Hawk Ridge and recaptured at Hawk Ridge from previous seasons. We are still waiting for information on recoveries (birds banded at Hawk Ridge and recaptured at a different banding site). Among the 2452 total raptors, there were 1670 diurnal (hawks) and 782 nocturnal raptors (owls). The owls were only banded at the main station at Hawk Ridge this season. The Hawk Ridge station for hawk banding was in operation daily from August 15 to November 30. Moose Valley ran from August 22 to November 1, while Paine Farm ran from September 5 to October 28. We logged a total of 176 days, which is well below our overall average of 205 station days since 2011, due to rain days. The average number of raptors banded per day was 9.5, lowest ever.

Although we had a low number of raptors banded this fall, we certainly had some highlights. These included 5 Bald Eagles, some nice older adult Northern Goshawks, many neat looking Red-tailed Hawks, including a leucistic, adult dark morph, plus several hatch-darks and a Harlan's, an adult dark Rough-legged Hawk, 4 adult Peregrine Falcons. We even added a new species to the raptor banding list, a hatch year gray morph Eastern Screech Owl which is our 26th species on the list, 16 hawks and 10 owls species.



The migration this fall from a banding perspective was what seem to be a trend with lack of cold fronts in September and early October. We had most days with a south or east wind during the period when we band the bulk of the migrants. We also experienced more rain than I had seen here since I started working in 1991. All these weather factors

resulted in low counts and banding efforts. We had good stretch of weather from the

15-23 October, which we banded the majority of the season's Northern Goshawks and Red-tailed Hawks. Overall, the migration in November was poor, except a few days in the first half, which was decent especially for Red-tailed Hawks.



A total of 1670 hawks were banded during the fall, with monthly total as follows: 20 in August, 1160 in September, 438 in October, and 42 in November. Of the 1670 hawks banded, 7 were foreign recoveries and 2 were returns. Two Peregrine Falcons captured were from the North Shore of Lake Superior; one banded as

a nestling in 2017 and another from 2018. We had a Sharp-shinned Hawk from station up the shore. We had a Sharp-shinned Hawk return from last fall, but most exciting was a return of a male Northern Goshawk banded at Hawk Ridge on October 13, 2002 as a hatch-year and recaptured on November 19, 2018. He was 16.5 years old!! This is the second oldest goshawk on the USGS Bird Banding Lab website (the oldest record was 17.5 from Michigan). We are still waiting for information on the other records



Owl numbers were also the lowest this fall with 782, including 17 foreign recoveries and 9 returns. This total is below the average of 1510 and even beyond expected range consider where are in cycle.

However, weather again certainly played a major role topped by a poor breeding season especially for Northern Saw-whet Owls. Since 2011 we have followed a protocol using two caller units: one each for Northern Saw-whet (NSWO) and Long-eared owl

(LEOW). In 2016, we started using a Boreal Owl (BOOW) caller, but starting this

season in that location we ran an Eastern Screech Owl (EASO) call for about half the season, then the second half BOOW. We will continue this combination to see if we can detect movement of EASO. All callers run simultaneously during the night. As in previous years, the NSWO caller was placed in the west net lanes. The LEOW caller was placed in the station field while the BOOW caller was placed in the east net (pine grove) lanes.

We had the 25 NSOW recoveries (17 foreign and 8 returns), which was down as would be expected from the low numbers captured. However NSWO remain our main source of recoveries. Of the 13 returns banded and recaptured at Hawk Ridge were 2 from 2017, 5 from 2016 and 1 from 2014.

Some of the noteworthy NSOW foreign recoveries from previous years came from 4 Wisconsin banding sites which includes Linwood Station, Falls Creek, Steven's Point and Cedar Grove. We also had some from North Shore banding sites; French River and Tofte. We had a return LEOW originally banded as an After hatch year on October 29, 2014 and recaptured on October 31, 2018. This LEOW was at least 5 years old.

Many people make the banding stations run smoothly and efficiently. Allie Pesano, David Alexander and Miranda Durbin helped me staff the banding stations. Kate Maley worked the night shift at Hawk Ridge banding owls. Matthew Hanneman, Arthur Sanchez and Zane Den Ouden were this season's trainees.



I would also like to thank the numerous volunteers and HRBO staff who helped in many ways, including John Richardson, Stephen Nelson and Hannah Toutonghi communicating from the hawkwatch and others who helped in the stations, including Bruce Munson, Valerie Slocum, Grace Glick, Abbie Valine. Thanks to the

education staff and volunteers for teaching and inspiring students and other visitors about birds and the research conducted at Hawk Ridge. Thanks to Janelle Long, our Executive Director who helps with so many ways often not seen by many. Thanks also to Bob Owens and the Hawk Ridge Stewardship Committee for helping with maintenance of the Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve and banding site. Finally, I would especially like to thank my wife Kate for all she does and for her support.

