

2019 Raptor Banding Report

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The fall 2019 season marks the 48th year of raptor banding at Hawk Ridge. This is my ninth 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. Currently, the Hawk Ridge station maintains full time operation while Paine Farm and Moose Valley are run on a part-time basis. A big thanks goes out to David Alexander, Allie Pesano and Miranda Durbin for filling in some days in September and October. This season we had two 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.

This season of 3329 raptors banded was an increase over last year's total 2,452, however still below our average 3758 raptors banded since 2011. We banded 16 species of raptors, 10 hawks and 6 owls. This total includes 55 foreign recoveries, birds banded at a different banding site and recaptured at Hawk Ridge, and 13 returns, birds previously banded at Hawk Ridge and recaptured at Hawk Ridge from previous season's. We are still waiting for information on recoveries (birds banded at Hawk Ridge and recaptured at a different banding site). Among the 3329 total raptors, there were 2063 diurnal (hawks) and 1196 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 29. Moose Valley ran from August 22 to November 5, while Paine Farm ran from September 5 to October 28. We logged a total of 152 days, which is well below our

overall average of 205 station days since 2011. The average number of raptors banded per day was 16.2. A total of 2063 hawks were banded during the fall, with monthly total as follows: 138 in August, 1428 in September, 392 in October, and 96 in November.

Of the 2063 hawks banded, 7 were foreign recoveries and 2 were returns. Of the two returns were one Sharp-shinned Hawk from 2018 and Cooper's Hawk banded as a second-year on in 2018. We are still waiting for information on the other records

Owl numbers recovered from last fall record low of 782 and seem to be on the upswing of their cycle. We 55 foreign recoveries and 13 returns. Since 2011 we have followed a protocol using two caller units: one each for Northern Saw-whet Owl (NSWO) and Long-eared Owl (LEOW). In 2016, we started using a Boreal Owl (BOOW) caller. In 2018, we started using the 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 BOO/EASO caller was placed in the east net (pine grove) lanes.

We had the 68 NSOW recoveries (55 foreign and 13 returns) Of the 13 returns banded and recaptured at Hawk Ridge were 2 from 2017, 5 from 2016 and 1 from 2014. The EASO banded in 2017 was recaptured at Hawk Ridge this fall which is the first documented record of a return of of this rare owl in St. Louis County.

Some of the noteworthy NSOW foreign recoveries from previous years came from 5 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, Finland. Two NSWO were recovered at Whitefish Point this spring. 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. We are

parparing to publish our banding recoveries as well as other findings from the banding project next Spring.

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. Hannah Toutonghi and Abbie Valine 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, Gary Palmer, Krista Botting and Breanna Wagner communicating from the hawkwatch..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 excecutive director who helps in 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. Also a big thanks to Ralph Larsen who built new lure bird cages for the stations. Finally, I would especially like to thank my wife Kate for all she does and for her support and Kaylee, our yellow lab for sharing so much love to the trainee and vistors who visited the banding station.