

Fall Bird Migration Count Monthly Summary Reports 2019

2019 Fall Bird Migration Count Staff: John Richardson (Fall Count Director), Gary Palmer, Krista Botting, Nick Pusateri (Trainee), Melisa Rodriguez (Trainee)

August 2019 Migration Count Summary

The fall hawk watch began on August 15th, and after a slow start migration kicked into gear by the end of the month. August concluded with a total of 742 raptors representing 14 species. This total includes one remarkable individual -- a BLACK VULTURE! Just the second time this species has been seen at Hawk Ridge, this sighting from August 18th is the eighth record of this more southerly species being sighted in the state of Minnesota.



BALD EAGLE were the most common raptor migrant tallied for the month, comprising just over one-third of the total number of migrants at a total of 270. SHARP-SHINNED HAWK, at a total of 182 birds were next-most common, followed by 160 BROAD-WINGED HAWK. These three species were the only to see triple-digit numbers of migrating individuals among raptors, though RED-TAILED HAWK (33), AMERICAN KESTREL (27), and NORTHERN HARRIER (25) have shown well for the month. One SWAINSON'S HAWK on August 28th was another early



highlight.

Among other taxa, the biggest surprise has been the incredible number of CLIFF SWALLOW seen migrating past the overlook. A total of 5,172 were counted for the month of August, with 80% of this total seen across two days on the 28th and 29th. COMMON NIGHTHAWK migration is a known Duluth specialty, and on August 30th a total of 6,423 were seen from the watch. Finally, the last two days of the month saw the first small push of migrating warblers, with triple-digit numbers of migrants both mornings.

Live count updates can be found at [Dunkadoo](https://Dunkadoo.com), and daily summaries at HawkCount.org

Everyone's excited for another great season of some of North America's best migration action here at Hawk Ridge!

Gary Palmer
2019 Fall Counter

September 2019 Migration Count Summary

September is always a fickle month by the lake. Beautiful balmy days of great migration punctuated by stubborn stretches of fog, wind and rain. Such is the weather when the seasons change.



Nevertheless, despite running into a third week of terrible weather, the last week finally produce what we had hoped for, and of course it all started the day after the HRBO festival!

Numerous big days of songbird and hawk migration wowed good crowds and delighted counters as we started to make the monthly numbers look respectable.

The many days of clear skies makes

counting a considerable challenge. With new counters this year not familiar with the volume and the challenges that go with the territory at HRBO one can only admire all of their nerve, calmness and professional teamwork exhibited. Great job!

The elephant in the room this month reared it's ugly head on the 19th. Perfect conditions suggested we should be due a big Broad-winged Hawk day.

By noon, the counters were all looking at each other all thinking the same thing. We were going to get skunked. Hawk-watches to the east had been blessed with consecutive days of 35,000-40,000 individuals. However, that afternoon did not disappoint. Although it was no recorded a decent showing of 5,000 was warmly welcomed. One must remember, it seems the 'broadies' we see likely come from the west up in the Canadian provinces, so we had not missed them. By the ended of the month we are just under 23,000.



5 days of 1,000+ Sharp-shinned Hawks have pushed their numbers skyward of 12,000 so far. Also, a steady trickle of Bald Eagles has us standing at almost 3,000 with 2 months of the season left. Will it be another record-breaking year?

The 19th was also a special day for falcons, 257 in fact, 206 Kestrels, 26 Merlin and a whopping 25 Peregrines. Dragonflies were migrating in vast numbers which likely attributed to the good showing that day of falcons.

On the songbird front, the 24th stands out as an incredible number of warblers flew just after dawn, with over 11,000 per hour estimated streaming along shoreline. Total of 13,470 counted that day.



Blue Jays stand currently at 23,000, over 700 Sandhill Cranes is noteworthy and over 500 American White Pelicans so far. 9 Red-headed Woodpeckers in September is also a note of interest. These are a very scarce birds in the northland.

As we head into October 140 species have been recorded and just under 150,000 individual birds. October is the month for the large birds as the vast majority of neo-tropic migrants are well on their way to warmer climes. Make sure to come and visit and enjoy the amazing migration in the coming days!!

Sincerely,
John Richardson and Fall Migration Count team

Our HRBO members and social media follows come from all corners of the world and to honor that diversity we wanted to do this month's review in Spanish, as it is Hispanic Heritage Month after all!



We are fortunate to have Melisa Rodriguez with us this year, as one of our count trainees. Melisa hails from St. Paul, MN and is an amazing part of our team. Each trainee takes on a special project and Melisa chose to work on helping translate some of our electronic information via web/social media into Spanish. What an awesome idea!! So, the September bird migration count report is posted in Spanish below:

Repaso de Septiembre:

Queríamos hacer algo diferente este mes.

Nuestros miembros de HRBO y seguidores en las redes sociales vienen de todas partes del mundo y para honrar esa diversidad queríamos hacer el repaso de este mes en español. También nos da la oportunidad de celebrar Hispanic Heritage Month, que es un mes en los estados unidos para reconocer las contribuciones de los hispanos y latinos.

Somos muy afortunados de tener a Melisa Rodriguez con nosotros este año como contadora de las aves migratorias. Melisa viene de St. Paul, MN y es una gran adición a nuestro grupo.



Cada interno se encarga de un proyecto cada otoño y Melisa decidió traducir nuestro sitio web en español. ¡Qué idea tan increíble!

Septiembre siempre es un mes inconstante junto al lago. Hay días hermosos con una gran migración mezclado con días de niebla, viento y lluvia que no permite buena visibilidad. Así es el clima cuando las estaciones cambian.

embargo, a pesar de encontrarnos con tres semanas de clima terrible, finalmente la última semana produjo lo que esperábamos. por supuesto todo comenzo el día despues festival de HRBO!

Tuvimos numerosos días de gran migración pájaros y rapaces que cautivaron a las multitudes y los contadores encantados cuando comenzamos a mirar que los números mensuales parecen respetables.

Con muchos días de cielos claros, el contar aves fue un desafío considerable. Con nuevos contadores este año, que no están familiarizados con el volumen de aves y los desafíos que conlleva el territorio en HRBO, uno solo puede admirar a todos con sus nervios, tranquilidad y profesionalismo como un equipo. ¡Buen trabajo!

El dicho en inglés de “el elefante en la habitación” estaba en nuestros mentes cuando ya era el 19 de septiembre y todavía no se habían visto grandes cantidades de aguilillas ala-anchas. Con condiciones perfectas indicará que fuera un gran día.



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¡Al mediodía, los contadores se miraban y pensaban lo mismo, una derrota! Especialmente cuando otros lugares, vigilando rapaces habían sido bendecidos con días consecutivos de 35,000-40,000 individuos de aguilillas ala-anchas. Sin embargo, esa tarde no decepcionó. Aunque no fue un récord, una muestra de 5,000 fue bienvenida.

Hay que recordar que parece que las aguilillas ala-anchas que vimos provienen de las provincias oeste de Canadá, por lo que no hemos perdido. Al final del mes, contamos un poco menos de 23,000.



Hasta el momento, tuvimos 5 días con más de 1,000 gavilanes pecho-rufos y con un total de 12,000. Además, hay un constante migración de águilas calvas con casi 3,000 y todavía nos falta dos meses para la temporada. ¿Será otro año récord?

El 19 también fue un día especial para los halcones, de hecho 257: 206 cernícalos, 26 esmerejones y un gran de 25 peregrinos. Las libélulas también estaban migrando en grandes cantidades que probablemente atribuyó a la

buena presentación de halcones este día.

Para pájaros, el 24 se destaca porque tuvimos una increíble cantidad de chipes que volaron después del amanecer a la orilla del lago Superior. Con más de 11,000 por hora estimadas y un total de 13,470 contados ese día.



Hasta ahora, hemos tenido 23,000 azulejos o chara cara blancas, más de 700 grullas grises que es notable, y más de 500 pelícanos blancos americanos. Los carpinteros cabezas rojas son un pajaros de interés porque son raros en el norte y vimos 9.

Ya que avanzamos para octubre, hemos registrado 140 especies y un poco menos de 150,000 aves individuales.

Como estamos entrando en Octubre es el mes para las aves rapaces grandes, ya que la mayoría de los migrantes neotrópicos están en camino para climas más calientes. ¡Asegúrate de visitarnos y disfrutar de la increíble migración en los próximos días!

October 2019 Migration Count Summary



October was another spectacular month of migration at Hawk Ridge! An impressive total of 15,084 raptors were counted for the month. Sharp-shinned Hawks showed up in good numbers for October, including a surprisingly high count of 1,354 on the 13th. They slowed down to single digits per day by the end of the month, but Sharpies totaled 6,006, making them October's most common raptor at the Ridge.

Not far behind the Sharpies were Red-tailed Hawks, which started the month relatively slowly but quickly built in numbers. Red-tails peaked at a total of 902 on the 23rd on their way to an October total of 5,565. Bald Eagle was the other raptor totaling in the thousands for the month, with 2,080 seen, including a peak of 172 on the 17th. With a full month to go, Bald Eagles have already surpassed 5,000, and are just shy of their average over the last ten years of 5,069.



Broad-winged Hawks were the story of September, but October brought just 22 of them, including two relatively late individuals spotted on the 23rd. Also tapering off early in the month were Osprey, with just eight seen, the final bird on the 10th. This brought their total to 201 for the season, well below the 10-year average of 269. Peregrine Falcons were near daily throughout the first half of the month, reaching a season total of 155, considerably higher than the 10-year average of 121.

Right on schedule, some late-season specialties have picked up considerably throughout the latter part of the month, and promise to continue their upward swing into November. Northern Goshawks have begun to put on a fantastic show, including a thrilling total of 28 on the 23rd. Golden Eagles also arrived en masse, with an October 28th peak of 18 contributing to a solid total of 100 for the month. Rough-legged Hawks have



increased more gradually, peaking at 14 on the 20th and reaching a total of 78 for the month.



As far as non-raptors, October saw some good movement of robins and blackbirds. On October 13, 3,277 Rusty Blackbirds and close to 800 Yellow-rumped Warblers were counted along with many other migrating passerines. A late Philadelphia Vireo was a nice surprise. October 14 was another amazing morning for robins and blackbirds with 4,237 American Robins, 3,165 Rusty Blackbirds, and 2,202 Common Grackles counted. The first Northern Shrike was also

counted.

October 16, 17, 20, & 24 also had a good push of passerines, including 6,689 Rusty Blackbirds on the 16th and 12,530 American Robins on the 24th. All of the passerine daily checklists can also be found on ebird for Hawk Ridge Nature

Reserve: <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L268365>

The fall count continues through November 30, so be sure to continue following along online or if you'd like to brave the cold - we welcome you to stop by the hawkwatch and say hi!

-Gary Palmer and Hawk Ridge Count Team



November 2019 Migration Count Summary



November wrapped up our last month of migration at Hawk Ridge! A total of 2,268 raptors were counted for the month, the most for the last five years. By far the most numerous of the raptors were Bald Eagles, with a total of 1,160 counted in November. This number is not unusual, though it did help set a new Fall record for Bald Eagles. That previous record was set two years ago at 6,099 in 2017. The new record this Fall is 6,177!

The second highest numbers were the Red-tailed Hawks. Many Red-tails came through within the first two weeks of November, but a few still trickled through right to the end of the season. We saw 840 this month and 6,734 for the season. The only other raptor to reach triple digits for the month was Golden Eagles, just managing to see 101 in November. This is almost half of all the Golden Eagles seen at Hawk Ridge for the whole season! The season total for Goldens is 203 individuals.



The rest of the more common November raptors made steady if not spectacular appearances. Rough-legged Hawks came in third with 79 birds in November, a very low number for the month where usually over two or three hundred are seen. In fact, the total Rough-legged count is just 158, the lowest season since 1989!

One of the amazing things about November is the chance to see fantastic looks at Northern Goshawks. This is the month when many adults begin coming through and many times, the view of these birds coming straight through the treetops is like nothing else. We ended up with a November total of 62 Goshawks leading to a season total of 239.



Finishing off the raptors came a few late Sharp-shinned Hawks, with 17 birds in November and 9 Northern Harriers. These late stragglers rounded out the November raptor species diversity a little, giving a small change of pace from eagles and Red-tails.

Most non-raptor numbers decline at the end of the season. However, the American Robin made its way to the claim the highest number spot with 43,903 counted by the end of November. While "unidentified warbler" came in right behind Robins,



Blue Jays were the second highest of the birds we were able to identify at 24,371 for the season. One bird that also became a regular in November was the Northern Shrike. This hunting passerine made 11 appearances at the Ridge totaling 23 for the season. All of the passerine daily checklists can also be found on e-bird for Hawk Ridge Nature



Reserve: <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L268365>



It was a cold and snowy end to the season, but we are very grateful to all the volunteers and regular watchers who made the last few months enjoyable. We are looking forward to the Spring 2020 count, and seeing many of you next Fall for another great season at Hawk Ridge!

- Krista Botting and Hawk Ridge Count Team