

2023 HAWK RIDGE HIGHLIGHTS

RESEARCH & PROGRAMS

BIRD MIGRATION COUNT RESEARCH

We continue to invest in long-term monitoring and study of the astounding bird migration each fall and spring. Both our fall count and banding research has been in operation for over 50 years! The passionate and dedicated count staff tallied over 63,700 raptors (hawks, falcons, eagles) of 18 different species, as well as 255,000+ other migrating birds of 175+ species collectively during our spring and fall migration. Highlights included Red-shouldered Hawk, Swainson's Hawk, Mississippi Kite (fall) Short-eared Owls (fall), record season counts for Peregrine Falcons (spring), Golden Eagles (fall) & Blue Jays (fall). Above 10-yr average numbers were counted both this spring and fall for Turkey Vulture, Northern Harrier, Osprey, American Kestrel, Merlin, & Peregrine Falcon.



Golden Eagle – new fall season record high total at Hawk Ridge in 2023!

BIRD BANDING RESEARCH

We continue to invest in bird banding research to further bird conservation efforts. Over 2700 raptors (including 1169 owls) were banded by the excellent fall raptor banding crew in fall 2023! A few highlights included banding a Swainson's Hawk & Bald Eagle! Good numbers of falcons (American Kestrel, Merlin, and Peregrine) and Long-eared Owls (121!) were banded this fall. Hawk Ridge continues to run the largest raptor banding station in the country. Dedicated volunteers continued passerine banding at Hawk Ridge with the summer MAPS research project and fall banding. Over 2200 passerines were banded this fall! Highlights included Connecticut Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler and record numbers of Gray Catbirds, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, & Swainson's Thrushes.



121 Long-eared Owls banded in 2023!



Banding Apprentices, Liv & Doris with banded Northern Harriers

TRAINING PROGRAM & STUDENT RESEARCH

We continue to invest in training and research opportunities for the future of bird conservation. Three trainees, two bird banding apprentices, and one intern received exceptional professional field experience within our count, banding, and education programs. We collaborated with college students on graduate research projects and other outdoor education classes from University of MN Duluth, College of St. Scholastica, & more.



Live bird demo with Sharp-shinned Hawk by Intern, Cam

EDUCATION & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND OUTREACH

We continue to invest in providing education opportunities for all ages and abilities. The Hawk Ridge Education team taught over 290 programs in 2023, reaching nearly 5700 participants of all ages! This includes school/private groups, public programs, virtual programs, and outreach events. Additionally, thousands of visitors at Hawk Ridge shared in the magic of migration with us and learned through our live bird education demos (150+ reaching 4400 people), migration interpretation, and kid's cart activities. Our volunteer program continues to engage people in our community with much appreciated time and talent – over 1200 hours were recorded in fall 2023 at Hawk Ridge. Thank you to all staff and volunteers for sharing your knowledge and enthusiasm!



Naturalist, Sarah, releasing dark morph Red-tailed Hawk



Dr. Goodrich hawk-watching at Hawk Ridge

HAWK WEEKEND FESTIVAL

We continue to invest in connecting visitors to the amazing migration! Visitors and supporters enjoyed our annual Hawk Weekend festival in September. Over 125 attendees attended our kick-off & member appreciation celebration at the Great Lakes Aquarium, enjoyed field trips/workshops, and the fantastic fall bird migration at Hawk Ridge. Dr. Laurie Goodrich gave a wonderful presentation on Broad-winged Hawk research and was presented with the Hawk Ridge Lifetime Achievement award for her accomplishments in raptor conservation and research. Dr. Ken Gilbertson was presented with a 10-year Board of Directors service appreciation award. It was a wonderful weekend and we hope you can join us Sept. 20-22, 2024!

Counter, Sean, at Hawk Ridge sunrise morning flight

STEWARDSHIP OF HAWK RIDGE NATURE RESERVE

We continue to invest in our beautiful site - Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve. Volunteers helped lead important site stewardship management projects at Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve, including site/trail maintenance and invasive species control. We are working with the City of Duluth on funding for The Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve Facilities Plan. This project includes educational and safety improvements, such as a new accessible trail, permanent restroom, additional education program spaces, observation deck, and more!

