

2023 Fall Raptor Banding Report
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The fall 2023 season marks the 52nd fall season of the raptor banding and count at Hawk Ridge. 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 and summer and wintering range of birds across North and Central America.

This season we had both Hawk Ridge and Moose Valley running full time, while Paine Farm ran when we had extra volunteers. Hawk Ridge was operated by primarily by Abbie Valine, while Moose Valley was operated by Kara Beer. A big thanks goes out to David Alexander who was there whenever needed. This season we had two banding apprentices, Liv Fortuna and Doris Rodriguez. We also had trainees rotating through each department which included: Megan Hanson, Marie Chappell and Sarah Needles. Kevin Garcia Lopez was this season's owl bander (fall owl banding report included in prior article).

This season total of 2701 raptors captured is below our season's average of 3620 since 2011. We banded 15 species of raptors, 11 hawks and 4 owls. This total includes 34 previously banded birds. Among the 2701 total raptors, there were 1482 diurnal (hawks) and 1219 nocturnal raptors (owls). The Hawk Ridge station for hawk banding was in operation daily from August 15 to November 30. Moose Valley ran from August 29 to November 2, while Paine Farm ran from September 6 to October 27. We logged a total of 173 days, which is well above our average of 201 station days since 2011. A total of 1482 hawks were banded during the fall, with monthly total as follows: 12 in August, 889 in September, 559 in October, 20 in November.

Owl numbers are starting to build up however the past two years weather were non productive for migration. A total of 1219 was a nice total compared to 956 and 954, 2021 and 2020 respectively and is closer to our average of 1345. However, weather again certainly played a role along with poor breeding success 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) and 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 a fair number of NSOW recoveries (28 foreign and 5 returns. NSWO remain our main source of recoveries. Of the 5 returns, 2 from 2020, 1 from 2021, 2 from 2022.

Some of the noteworthy NSOW foreign recoveries from previous years came from 6 Wisconsin banding sites which includes Linwood Station, Falls Creek, Steven's Point, Amherst, Plover, Clam Lake and Babcock, 2 stations in southern half of Minnesota-Quarry Hill Natute center and Marine on the St Croix. We also had other interesting recoveries, which included 3 from Whitefish Point, Michigan, one from March 23, 2021 and two from their summer banding, 2020 and 2021. It's always exciting when we get a nestling recovery. We captured an owl banded as a nestling from Stoney Mountain, Manitoba by Jim Duncan who a long time owl researcher. We also had some from North Shore banding sites; French River, Wolf Ridge and Tofte and Siver Islet, Thunder Bay Bird Observatory. Our resident Eastern Screech Owl for the past 5 year unfortunately did not make an appearance. We are still waiting on the remainder of the reports from the Bird Banding Lab.

I would also like to thank the numerous volunteers and HRBO staff who helped in many ways, including Jess Cosentino and Sean McLaughlin for alerting the station of

approching raptors. Others who helped in various ways were Grace Glick, Ralph Larsen, Margie Menzies, Sarah Wood, Sara DePew. Thanks to Janelle Long, our Executive Director who helps with so many ways often not seen by many. Finally, I would especially like to thank my wife Kate for all she does and for her support.