Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch

Newsletter

Newsletter No. 1, August 1990

A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

This is the first issue of the Newsletter of a fledgling organization, the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch. As we all know, our association is not a new-born but rather an extension of a long-standing, informal group of Beamer Conservation Area hawk counters. I use the word 'longstanding' in both senses - many hawkwatchers know with precision what it means after eight hours of sky-scanning from the parking lot.

The informal group, supported by the Hamilton Naturalist's Club, Buffalo Ornithological Society and the Toronto Field Naturalists, has since 1981 published *The Grimsby Hawkwatcher*, a summary of the spring flight over Beamer.

One of the things we have done is to revise the newsletter, which will now appear twice a year. In addition to the summary for spring 1990, the first issue in our new format contains articles which we hope will be of interest to you. (Non-members of the Hawkwatch will still get the summary, through the HNC or BOS, but at a later date.) Look for the next news-letter early in 1991, before the spring flight gets underway.

The Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch wants your input. The Executive is made up of members with the same interest as you - we enjoy watching hawks. Right now we are making plans for the next newsletter, the first annual meeting, and a special day or weekend during the season at Beamer. Let us know what you think, what you would like our group to do or not do. In the meantime, keep an eye on the sky and good hawking.

Bruce Duncan

WALTER KLABUNDE

HONORARY PRESIDENT
NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH

For Walter Klabunde, Good Friday 1990 was a surprise. It was one of his usual hawkwatching days - as every Monday, Wednesday and Friday have been for the last few years, and every weekday before that since 1980.

To say the least, Walter is a *dedicated* counter at Beamer. It was that dedication that brought about the surprise. This fledgling association had decided that one of its first acts should be to honour Walter for all of the thousands of hours he has spent as official counter at the Beamer parking lot; he would become Honorary President of the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch.

The secret was well kept until 12 noon on April 13. Quite suddenly, about 100 people abandoned Walter and marched across to the far side of the parking lot. There they were joined by Hamilton's Town Crier, Don Malena. In full costume, with bell ringing and the 100 in tow, Don strode back to Walter. Unrolling a scroll, he announced in the loudest of voices to all and sundry that Walter Klabunde was now officially our Honorary President.

At the mention of his name, Walter, who had been trying to ignore all this and count hawks, jumped up from his lawn chair, grinning from ear to ear. The grin didn't leave his face all afternoon! After being presented with a framed certificate and a cake decorated with a Bald Eagle, Walter posed for pictures, answered questions from the press, and, like many of us, missed the Golden Eagle which passed overhead during the ceremony.



Bruce Duncan presents Walter Klabunde with his certificate

WALTER - thank you for your perseverance and able assistance through the years, and congratulations on a well deserved honour.

Migrating Can Be Hard Work! An Observation of the Raptor Migration During Adverse Conditions

by George Naylor

On Saturday morning, March 11, 1990, Kevin McLaughlin, Bill Smith and I were driving along the QEW toward Grimsby, heading toward Beamer to check out the spring raptor migration. The sky was cloudy and there was a strong southwest wind. Our plan was to first drive up Fifty Road to the top of the escarpment and check the Saltfleet Marsh area for migrating waterfowl, before proceeding to Beamer.

As we approached the Fifty Road cutoff we observed a number of raptors flying westward over the plain below the escarpment. It was apparent that a substantial migration was occurring, and a significant number of birds were staying below the escarpment. Kevin, Bill and I decided to stop at Coker Lane and count raptors for a while. Coker Lane is a couple of miles west of Beamer, just below the escarpment.

The effect of the strong southwest wind on the hawks was obvious. All the migrating birds were affected to a degree. The Red Tails and Turkey Vultures seemed to handle the adverse wind the best. Despite being buffetted by the force of the wind, they were able to rise above the top of the escarpment occasionally, and still maintain a westward heading. The accipiters stayed mainly below the top of the escarpment and, by virtue of dogged determination, were able to migrate through.

The most dramatic examples of the effect of the winds, however, were provided by the Red Shouldered Hawks. The Red Shoulders stayed below the escarpment as well, but had to do a lot more flapping and almost no gliding, in a strenuous effort to move westward. If a Red Shoulder rose above the top of the escarpment it would be buffetted violently. During our observation, a couple of adult Red Shoulders landed in a large tree near us and appeared to catch their breath for a few minutes, before migrating through. A telescope scan along the wooded escarpment slope revealed numerous birds, mostly Red Shoulders, similarly resting.

We counted birds from 11:20 A.M. until 2:00 P.M., and then headed to Beamer to compare results. Rob Dobos, who was the official counter that day, had estimated the southwest wind as an almost continuous Code Six (39-49km/h). In terms of numbers, our counts were comparable, but Rob agreed that we were probably seeing different birds. A graphic example of this fact was provided by a migrating Red Tail we observed from below the escarpment in the 12:00 to 1:00 P.M. time period, which migrated through carrying a branch of a tree that was almost as large as the bird itself. Subsequent questioning of the observers at Beamer revealed that no one there had seen the bird in question.

At the inaugural meeting of the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Association, it was suggested that a count from the point should be compared with the count from the parking lot at Beamer. I think that our observation adds weight to this suggestion.

Summary of the Observation at Coker Lane:

	1120-1200	1200-1300	1300-1400
Red Tail	52	89	68
Red Shoulder	92	62	25
Turkey Vulture	12	13	8
Cooper's	2	1	5
Sharp Shinned		3	1
N. Harrier		1	
Am. Kestrel		1	
(?) Falcon		1	

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH EXECUTIVE - 1990

HONORARY PRESIDENT - Walter Klabunde

PRESIDENT - Bruce Duncan

VICE-PRESIDENT - Mary Ellen Foley

SECRETARY - John Olmsted

TREASURER - Vern Miles

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STATISTICS - Jim Dowall

RESEARCH - Brian Ratcliffe

EDUCATION/PUBLIC RELATIONS - Don Malena

TOWER/PLATFORM - Bruce Mackenzie

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The Secretary, Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch, 32 Miles Court, Hamilton, ON Canada L8P 4G6

HAMILTON - A GREAT FALL HAWKWATCHING SITE

by Bruce Duncan

We are very fortunate to live in a part of Canada where it is possible to see both spring and fall concentrations of migrant raptors.

Beamer is situated on the south shore of Lake Ontario, and close enough to it to permit observation in the spring of the thousands of raptors which refuse to try to cross as wide a body of water as the lake. In fall, the lake acts as a barrier to migrant hawks going the other way, i.e. southbound. Of course, it is the north shoreline that they are following in this season, so Beamer is not the place to be.

Hamilton certainly *is*. Almost ideally situated at the western end of Lake Ontario, the city sees most of the migrating fall hawks which have followed the lake from its eastern end, or which have been forced to veer west when they meet it somewhere between Cornwall amd Hamilton on their southbound journeys.

The best winds for viewing raptors at Hamilton are from the north, following the passage of a cold front, anytime from early September to late November. There are even a few Kestrels, Sharpies, Ospreys and Broad-Wings during the last week of August when the wind is northwest.

Depending on wind, time of day and species on the move, you can see the birds from several locations. The grassy area at the High Level Bridge on York Boulevard, which spans the channel joining the bay and Cootes Paradise, is one location with a great view to the east.

Woodland Cemetery's eastern end has an open field which is also ideal. This cemetary is south of Plains Road and can be reached from Spring Garden Road, which runs behind the Royal Botanical Gardens Headquarters building. The view to the east parallels a high cliff that drops down to the water of Burlngton Bay (also called Hamilton Harbour).

The top of the escarpment is sometimes the best spot, for similar reasons to Beamer's situation. Clappison's Corner's, where Highways 5 and 6 meet just at the edge, is a fine spot. So is Rock Chapel, owned by the Royal Botanical Gardens, which can be reached by taking Highway 5 about 2km west from Clappison's Corners to Rock Chapel Road, which runs south from the highway.

All the migrants we see in the spring at Beamer can be seen in the fall at Hamilton, but usually in larger numbers since the summer's hatch is making its way south. Not only that, but usually more falcons can be found, particularly at the water's edge by Woodland Cemetery or the High Level Bridge.

These are all fine sites, close to home, and are worth visiting.

RED TAILS IN GRIMSBY

by George A. Meyers

When asked to write an article about a raptor of my choice, my initial reaction was disbelief. After Clark, and especially after Dunne, anything I might say would be redundant, at best. At worst, I might be accused of plagiarism.

The way to tackle the project, I decided, was to wing it, from memory, without referring to any texts. If there are any errors, of ommission or commission, I apologize in advance.

The hardest task was to pick the species, because I admire them all. I finally chose the Red Tail.

I first started watching raptors in 1954, when I noticed that there was a spring migration overhead. Field guides were almost non-existent then, and reference books were poor. Initially there were Reed and Taverner. Later I found Peterson. Unfortunately, most raptors were not overhead, flat out. Rough Legs were not always light morph immatures. In those days, too, we didn't have the mobility to travel to prime lookouts, even if someone had known where they were. Fortunately for me, my family moved to north-east Grimsby in 1956.

I was in heaven. On a good day, at dawn, accipiters would be streaming west along the lakeshore; later, through the trees at our house, and still later, southward at the escarpment. A hike of a mile or two would get us to a vantage point on the escarpment where by now the vultures and buteos would be westbound.

Because the texts were inadequate, we had to learn by field observation and take a holistic approach. It has been a long process. In the last 36 years we have seen a fair number of raptors (Dare I say 10,000 per year?) and finally feel comfortable about calling them.

Along with Kestrels, Red Tails are the ubiquitous raptor in Niagara, present year round. There are at least six active Red Tail nests within the Grimsby town limits. One is even visible, at least until leafout, while driving on the QEW. In winter, Red Tails are regular over the downtown core and at the Casablanca interchange, and there are more above the escarpment.

The only other regularly occurring buzzards are Red Shoulders in February, March and April, peaking in the third week of March; Broad Wings from mid-April to mid-May, peaking in the last week of April; and Rough Legs from late December through March. My extreme dates for Rough Legs are late September (once) to mid-May (several).

In other words, most Red Tails can be called by date.

Perched Red Tails of the resident *borealis* race, at any distance in any plumage, show a white chest from the front or a light 'V' (caused by light scapulars) on the back, coupled with a light head. Some of the migrants, most of which are also *borealis*, show more plumage variation. Most *borealis* Red Tails show a dark belly, caused by heavy streaking; this can vary, however, from non-existent to almost solid black, like an immature Rough Leg.

Red Tails are robust, powerful buzzards, capable of hovering and kiting, in addition to soaring, gliding, stooping and active flying. Normally they are not flat-winged, but have a subtle dihedral; an exception to this may occur when a bird is gliding. Their wings appear muscular, caused by bulging secondaries,

especially in adults. By contrast, Red Shoulders' wings have straighter lines, front and back, similar to an adult Bald Eagle - like a plank.

When gliding overhead, Red Shoulders look like they are reaching forward; gliding head-on, they have bowed or cupped wings. Red Tails, gliding head-on, have flat wings. Red Shoulders look like flying cigars with wings in the middle, or like mid-wing monoplanes, if you are old enough to know what that means.

The flap of a Red Shoulder seems to travel down its limp-wristed rubbery wings; by comparison, Red Tails look stiff-winged. If Red Shoulders look 'light-weight', Red Tails look tough. Buffetted by strong winds, other buzzards must do a lot of frantic flapping. Red Tails - when they have to - right themselves with one tap of a wing.

Broad Wings have pointy wings, tapering symmetrically to the tip. In a glide, a Broad Wing's front wing line is parallel to the back wing line, which is straight, as far as the wrist, where it abruptly curves back to the tip, resulting in a paring knife profile. Broad Wings also look white- or light-winged, with a trailing dark border.

Rough Legs, relative to the Red Tail, have a narrow, bent-at-the-wrist wing. They look Gull-, Osprey- or Harrier-like. In winter, do not automatically call a hovering buzzard a Rough Leg; Red Tails can hover too.

At most distances an adult Red Tail, seen dorsally, shows a dark brown mantle and a brick red tail. Be aware that Ospreys and Red Shoulders (especially immatures), seen ventrally and backlit, show a reddish tail.

The best field mark of a flying Red Tail, in any plumage, is the dark patagium. This is very light or absent only on a very few Krider-like individuals; otherwise it is observable on 99.9% of Red Tails. Head-on, the patagium and carpal patch make a Red Tail look like it has a light on the mid-point of each wing. (It looks like a twin engine airplane.) By contrast, a head-on Broad Wing looks like it has a headlamp, a Red Shoulder has bowed wings, and a Rough Leg has a strong dihedral.

From our Niagara perspective, and adult *borealis* Red Tail looks like the quintessential buzzard. All other buzzards can be identified by how much they vary from that theme.

Immature Red Tails have a different silhouette, with longer and narrower - not as bulgy - wings and tails. They look more like a Red Shoulder. However, Red Shoulders always look like a buteo evolving into or trying to be an accipiter; immature Red Tails never do. The lighter inner primaries, creating a square or trapezoidal 'Peterson window', provide a very good field mark on an immature Red Tail. It is probably overkill, talking to the converted, to state that all Red Shoulders exhibit a light (white or tan) subterminal wing crescent, but never a window.

Immature Red Tails have the mark, but dark markings on immatures are less intense than on adults, making them look overexposed or giving the impression of a 'grey' bird.

Over the years at the Beamer hawkwatch I have seen a few *kriderii*- and *calurus*-like Red Tails. On May 8, 1983 I saw a valid *kriderii* adult at the Grimsby dump. Others have seen *harlani*-like Redtails, but I have not. I have seen *fuertesi* in Texas and *umbrinus* in Florida.

I would like to describe three bizarre individuals, with extreme plumage, seen over Grimsby, because they were very beautiful. I think that they were *borealis*. Clark, Dunne and Godfrey all describe dark *calurus*, but I have never seen a description of a dark *borealis*.

Bird 1 - April 13, 1974

Venter:

Head and Body - very dark rufous, appearing black
Wing coverts - black
Primaries and Secondaries - white with no barring but with black terminals
Tail - white, no banding

Dorsum:

Head and Mantle - black
Tail - bright rufous, with conspicuous 2" black terminal band; white terminal band absent

Bird 2 - March 31, 1986

Venter:

Head and Body - black (actual)
Primaries and Secondaries - white with light grey banding, black terminals
Tail - white, no banding

Dorsum:

Mantle - brown, like a typical *borealis*
Tail - bright orange, with a narrow black subterminal band; white teminal band present

When initially seen at a distance, both of these birds seemed to be Turkey Vultures at first, then like dark Rough Legs. All descriptions I have seen of dark *calurus*, however, mention primary, secondary and especially retrix banding.

Bird 3 - April 8, 1989

Venter:

Pure white, except for a small black dot at each wrist (carpum) and black subterminal dots on second and fourth primaries; patagial mark absent.

Dorsum:

Pure white; central retrices pale brick basally, white terminally; outer two retrices, both sides, white; no tail banding.

Initial reaction to this bird ranged from Snowy Owl to Gyrfalcon. The dark eye stood out on the white head, giving a bug-eyed look reminiscent of a Tufted Titmouse. It looked like an Australian Goshawk. Oddly enough, that same day produced and adult female Goshawk which looked like a Siberian *albidum*, but that can be another article.

1990 HAWKWATCH RESULTS SUMMARY

MNTH	HRS	TV	OS	BB	GE	NH	SS	CH	NG	RS	BW	RT	SW	RL	AK	ML	PF	UA	UB	UE	UF	UR	TOTAL
MAR	220	544	0	6	2	48	279	99	11	1237	0	2345	0	64	100	2	3	15	79	1	3	226	5065
APR	235	857	34	9	8	131	5699	204	13	201	4334	991	0	61	99	5	3	19	89	1	3	131	12761
MAY	120	62	6	0	0	15	1027	8	0	2	100	130	0	2	8	2	0	3	8	0	0	4	1377
TTLS	575	1463	40	15	10	194	7005	311	24	1440	4434	3467	0	1270	207	9	6	37	176	2	6	361	19203

HIGHLIGHTS

1. This year, for the first time, in order to standardize hawkwatch data for study purposes, only hawks seen from the parking lot were recorded on the official sheets. Despite the loss of numbers this entailed, 19,203 hawks were recorded, only 71 short of the all-time high of 19,274 seen in 1975.

2. There were more raptors seen in April of this year than in the whole 1989 season.

3. An all time high of 7005 Sharp Shinned Hawks were seen this year; this is more than double most year's totals and exceeds by thousands the previous high of 4880 in 1982.

4. The largest number (311) ever of Cooper's Hawks was tallied.

5. The 1440 Red Shouldered Hawks seen were the most ever recorded in a season; by the end of March the old record for a single season had already been broken.

6. After their all-time low number of last year, Red Tailed Hawks rebounded to a little above average with 3467 individuals counted.

7. Rough Legged Hawks were at their highest since 1983.

8. American Kestrels numbered 207, the highest ever recorded.

9. The second highest number of Merlins (9) was recorded.

10. The total of 6 Peregrine Falcons this year was double the previous all-time high.

(Encourage friends to join the Hawkwatch - give them a copy of this form)

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NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

(Please Print)

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____ Postal Code: _____

Telephone Number: ( ) _____

Membership fee: 1 year - $15

Send this form with your cheque or money order (no cash please) to:

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch
c/o John Stevens
1365 Bayview Ave., Unit 3
Toronto, ON
Canada M4G 3A5

BEAMER HAWKWATCH 90

DATE	HRS	WINDS	TV	OS	BE	NH	SS	CH	NG	RS	BW	RT	SW	RL	GE	AK	ML	PF	UA	UB	UE	UF	UR	UV	TOTAL
MARCH																									
1	8	SW						1				5		1		1									8
2	7	SW					1					4		1											6
3	7	NW-N										46				1			1						48
4	7	SSW								1		24													25
5	7	NE						1		1		101		1	1	1							3		109
6	7	NE					1			1		10													12
7	7	NE										32		1		1									34
8	7	NE					1		1	1		18		1											22
9	-	-								— RAIN —															0
10	6	SSW																							0
11	4	NE										1							1						2
12	9	VAR				4	3	2	1	1		10		8		5				1					35
13	9	SSW	16		1	5	11	2		31		120		3		6	1	1		20		2	1		220
14	9	SSW-S	3			12	43	5		235		401		7		44			2	5					760
15	8	SSW	14		2	5	108	20	1	390		544		7		19			2	33	1				1146
16	9	VAR				1	11			70		10		1						1					94
17	8	SW	51				26	16		283		365		5		4			1	4			4		759
18	10	sw	1					2		18		55		1						1					78
19	4	N								— SNOW —															0
20	9	VAR	2				2	2		4		34		2		1									47
21	8	SW	160			5	13	6	2	94		210		11	1	3							177		682
22	8	SSW	32			3	18	1		12		20				5	1		1	2		1	3		99
23	7	WNW	15			1	4	1				13											1		35
24	9	ne	2		1	3	2	10		29		100		6		1			1	6			3		164
25	8	WSW	44		1	2	9	4		2		33		2		2				3					102
26	8	WNW-NW	16			1	2	2		2		32													55
27	7	VAR	2					7	1	7		21		1		1			1	1					42
28	8	VAR	177		1	4	15	12	4	41		86		5		2		2					33		382
29	8	NNE-NE	9			2	9	5	1	14		48				3			5	2			1		99
30	7	S								— RAIN —															0
31	-	-								— RAIN —															0
TOTAL	220		544	0	6	48	279	99	11	1237	0	2345	0	64	2	100	2	3	15	79	1	3	226	0	5065

BEAMER HAWKWATCH 90

DATE	HRS	WINDS	TY	OS	BE	NH	SS	CH	NG	RS	BW	RT	SW	RL	GE	AK	ML	PF	UA	UB	UE	UF	UR	UV	TOTAL
APRIL																									
1	3	-										1													1
2	3.5	NE						— RAIN & FOG —																	0
3	9	VAR	15			2	12	1	1	15		31							1						78
4	-	-						— SNOW, RAIN & FOG —																	0
5	9	VAR	58			4	8			6		41			1	3				1					122
6	8	W	141	1		3	22	6		3		100		1		5							4		288
7	9	VAR	77			4	23	25				54				2			3				2		190
8	9	SW	127			7	41	17		6		171		3		5			2	14			4		397
9	8	SSW	32	1		6	72	7	2	3		18				7									148
10	4	W		1			2																		3
11	7	NW	19			3	24	1		3		34		1		2									87
12	7	NW-W	4			1	17	3		1		21								3					50
13	8	SSW	35	2		5	191	12	2	11		50		2		6				1			5		322
14	7	S-SSE					51					1													52
15	9	SW	31	4		8	476	31		5		45		1		9			2	2					614
16	9	SW	113	3	6	19	344	15		15	9	158		2		5		2					22		713
17	8	NW	7				16	1			2			1		1									28
18	8.5	NW-SW	11		1	3	166	3	1	1	2	42		1		3							5		239
19	10	S	31			4	474	8	3	1	18	37		2	1	3			3	30					615
20	7	SSW	14	1		5	89	3	1	6	21	2				1									143
21	10	NE	4				22	4	1	1	7	8				2		1							50
22	10	SW-S	30	2		5	360	6		1	20	16		44		6	1			1		1	1		454
23	9	VAR	3	2		9	528	8	1	3	527	16			3	1							7		1108
24	9	NNW	16	4		5	350	6		14	1673	25		2		3	1		3	28			17		2147
25	7.5	W	26	2		3	43	2			928	10				5							16		1035
26	9	S	22			2	253				214	12				7			3	3					516
27	8.5	SW	23	4		9	491	11	1	4	325	35		1	1	3							31		939
28	11	N-NNE	16	4	2	22	1381	26		3	559	50			2	15	3		2	6	1	1	11		2113
29	10	N-NE		3		1	165	2			14	4				5						1	5		200
30	7.5	VAR	2			1	77	4			9	15											1		109
31																									
TOTAL	234.5		857	34	9	131	5698	204	13	102	4328	1005	0	61	8	99	5	3	19	89	1	3	131	0	12761

BEAMER HAWKWATCH 90

DATE MAY	HRS	WINDS	TV	OS	BE	NH	SS	CH	NG	RS	BW	RT	SW	RL	GE	AK	ML	PF	UA	UB	UE	UF	UR	UV	TOTAL
1	8	NW	5				9				4	2				1									21
2	7	NE-NW	2				12	1			3	11													29
3	7	VAR				2	45				3	10				1			3	1			2		67
4	6	NE	1				13				1	4													19
5	8	VAR	3				2	1				14								3					23
6	9	VAR	8				13	1			2	8				1									33
7	8	VAR	1	1		3	47				6	5					1						1		65
8	9	VAR	12			1	264				30	3								4					314
9	8	SW	4	1		2	271	4			23	13		1		2									321
10	6	S-SW	1			1	52	1			3	2				1									61
11	7	W					1					1													2
12	8	S	1	4		3	227			2	3	8		1		1	1								251
13	-	-							— RAIN —																
14	7	SSW	23			3	68				21	46				1							1		163
15	8	S					3																		3
16	-	-							— RAIN —																-
17	-	-							— RAIN —																
18	8	W-WSW	1									2													3
19																									
20																									
21																									
22																									
23																									
24																									
25	6	W-NNW									1	1													2
26																									
27																									
28																									
29																									
30																									
31																									
TOTAL	120		62	6	0	15	1027	8	0	2	100	130	0	2	0	8	2	0	3	8	0	0	4	0	1377



THE GRIMSBY HAWKWATCHER

Mary Ellen Foley

The 1980s came to an end for hawkwatchers at Grimsby with a few bangs and a few whimpers!

The total number of birds in 1989 (12,208) was lower than the year before, and even below average. As usual in a year when weather conditions favour migration on a broad front rather than through the restrictive Grimsby "funnel", low numbers of broadwinged hawks and sharp-shinned hawks were largely responsible for the smaller total numbers. But red-tailed hawk numbers were also sharply down: at 2615, they were at their lowest total since official counting began.

Inevitably, this provokes speculation: are redtail numbers down because there are fewer birds? Or because the higher incidence of westerly and southwesterly winds last year caused them to spread out and bypass Beamer Point? Did the mild winter of 1988-89 allow many of them to winter farther north? Did large numbers of them winter in sectors of North America well to the southeast or southwest of Grimsby, returning north by a different route? Data from other hawkwatches, American Birds and our own results in this and future years may eventually answer our questions.

Other birds did well, reflecting a steady climb in numbers in recent years: the 17 bald eagles were the most ever seen in a season. Red- shoulders, at 1102, were also at their highest number. And although it hardly reflects a trend, there were some sighs of relief when 7 golden eagles (1 above average) were seen last year; only 2 were sighted in 1988.

The best day was, surprisingly, May 4, with 1425 birds. The best day for some, however,was the next day, May 5, when for a second year in a row, a Swainson's hawk was seen flying over the parking lot. So much for going to Point Pelee!

Faithful observers were:
Roy Baker, Gordon Bellerby, Diane Bennett, Bouwe Bergsma, John Black, Drew Campbell, Barry Cherriere, Michael Clark, Jim Coey, Dave Copeland, Bob Curry, Jim Dowall, Bruce Duncan, Chris Escott, Dave Euler, Verne Evans, Mary Ellen Foley, Denys Gardiner, Martin Geleynse, Walter Klabunde, Kevin McLaughlin, George Meyers, George Naylor, John Olmsted, Morgan Peat, Jeff Poklen, Brian Ratcliff, Gerry Shemilt, Bob Shillabeer, Joey Slinger, Paul Summerskill, Peter Thoem, Peter Whelan.

BEAMER HAWKWATCH

DATE	HRS	WINDS	TV	OS	BE	NH	SS	CH	NG	RS	BW	RT	SW	RL	GE	AK	ML	PF	UA	UB	UE	UF	UR	UV	TOTAL
MARCH																									
1	7	WSW-W										1													1
2	4	SSW-SW										4													4
3							——RAIN——																		
4							——RAIN——																		
5							——RAIN——																		
6	7	ENE			1							6													7
7	6	ENE																							
8	7	ESE-NE					1					28													29
9	5	E										10		1											11
10	7	E-NE					1	1		2		71		3											78
11	6.75	NE-N				2	1	1				18													22
12	7.5	NE										44													44
13	7	VAR			2		3	1		7		67		1						12			3		96
14	7	SSW-E			2	1	4	2	1	44		263		11		1				19					348
15	5	SW				2			1	2		17			1	2									25
16	5	SW-WSW						1		9		45								7					62
17	8	NE	1									40													41
18	2.75	N										2													2
19	7.25	W-NW				1		2		1		9				1			2				2		18
20	6	S-SE					1	1		9		16													27
21	6.25	NW										36							1						37
22	8	W-SW	1		1	1	2	2		25		30							1	18			3		84
23	7	E-NE	1			2	19	6	2	192		135				4			5	10					376
24	7	E-NE						2				1													3
25	7.75	SW	7		1	9	25	7		40		77		1		8			2	33			1		211
26	10	E-NE	17			11	38	23		315		277		10		9			9	6			6		721
27	9	S-SW	65		2	14	76	9		50		72				15				3					306
28	7	SW	18			6	20	5		25		50				10			1	4					139
29	7	NNE	110				6	3	1	74		62				1									257
30							——RAIN——																		
31	5	N-NW								1		1													2
TOTAL	179.25		220	0	9	49	197	66	5	796	0	1382	0	27	1	51	0	0	21	112	0	0	15	0	2951

TV -Turkey Vulture
OS -Osprey
BE -Bald Eagle
NH -Northern Harrier
SS -Sharp-shinned Hawk
CH -Cooper's Hawk
NG -Northern Goshawk
RS -Red-shouldered Hawk
BW -Broad-winged Hawk
RT -Red-tailed Hawk
SW -Swainson's Hawk
RL -Rough-legged Hawk
GE -Golden Eagle
AK -American Kestrel
ML -Merlin
PF -Peregrine Falcon
UA -Unidentified Accipiter
UB -Unidentified Buteo
UE -Unidentified Eagle
UF -Unidentified Falcon
UR -Unidentified Raptor
UV -Unidentified Vulture

BEAMER HAWKWATCH

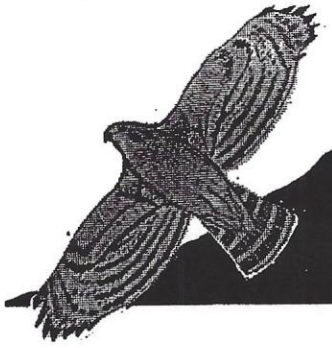
DATE	HRS	WINDS	TV	OS	BE	NH	SS	CH	NG	RS	BW	RT	SW	RL	GE	AK	ML	PF	UA	UB	UE	UF	UR	UV	TOTAL
APRIL																									
1	8.75	NW-NNW	121		1	3	7	6	2	5		80							1	17			1		244
2	9	SW-SSW	30	2		5	38	7		8		20				5				1					116
3	7	E-ENE																							
4	7	SW	41	1		2	19			6		17													86
5	8.25	SW	612	3	2	3	57	6	1	33		102		1		9							1		830
6	7.25	W	5				46			30		5													86
7	7.25	W	17			2	30	3		62		122			1	1				8			5		251
8	10	NNW-N	87	3	1	16	211	23	3	114		339		3		15			27	89			29		960
9	9	VAR	4	1		2	7	4		4		8		1		1				1					33
10	7	WSW	2																						2
11	9.25	SW	9			4	25	1				15			1	2									57
12	7.25	SSW	21		1	2	129	2		9		32				2							1		199
13	7	W	14	1		1	32	1		2		7							2	1			2		63
14	8.25	SSW	25		1	11	392	7		13	1	62		2	1	2	1			55					573
15	10	S-SW	3	2		1	87	1		1	3	8							3	2					111
16	10	SW	14	2		26	266	13		9	5	72			1	15	1		3	24	1				452
17	7.5	SSW	10	1		8	107					2				2									130
18	7.75	NW	2	1			15	1	1		1	17							4	2					43
19	7.5	SW	28	2		6	132	2			10	17				1			1	7					207
20	7	WSW-NW	25	1		2	221	3		5	123	35				5			5	17			1		443
21	7.5	NW-W	13			2	31				17	19		1		4		1		1		1	14		104
22	8.5	NNE	5	1		2	60	1			50	18				1									138
23	9	N-NE	1	1		1	24	2	1	1	10	13		2	1										57
24	7.5	NW-W	12	2		5	56				41	7				2				1					126
25	7.5	NE	3				34			1	347	9								5			4		403
26	7.5	N	5		1		44	3			322	46		1		1				3			2		428
27	7	N				1	18			1	5														25
28	7.5	NE			1	3	86	5			216	36		3			1			16			1		368
29	6.5	ENE-NE	1				11				1	7				1									21
30	11.25	SW	1	2		5	67			1	46	9		3				1	1	2		1	4		143
31																									
TOTAL	241.8		1111	26	8	113	2252	91	8	305	1198	1124	0	17	5	69	3	2	47	252	1	2	65	0	5699

BEAMER HAWKWATCH

DATE	HRS	WINDS	TV	OS	BE	NH	SS	CH	NG	RS	BW	RT	SW	RL	GE	AK	ML	PF	UA	UB	UE	UF	UR	UV	TOTAL
MAY																									
1	7.25	NE		4			42				280	2													328
2							——RAIN——																		
3	7	W-WSW	2			1	34	1			11			1		1							1		52
4	7.25	W	41			3	540	12			748	71			1	2			1	71			2		1492
5	7.25	SSE-S	14			1	160	6	1		21	2	1			1				1					208
6	7	NW-N	4	1			19	1		1	6	12											1		45
7	2	W					——NO BIRDS——																		
8	7.25	WNW-W					7				1	1													9
9	9	W-NE	7	5		7	269	2			26	14				7	1								338
10	7.5	WNW-NNE																							
11	5.25						——NO BIRDS——																		
12							——RAIN——																		
13	2	?	3			1	44	1			9	2				1									61
14	2	?					——NO BIRDS——																		
15	7.5	WNW-NNE	4				12				4	5													25
16																									
17																									
18																									
19																									
20																									
21																									
22																									
23																									
24																									
25																									
26																									
27																									
28																									
29																									
30																									
31																									
TOTAL	78.25		75	10	0	13	1127	23	1	1	1106	109	1	1	1	12	1	0	1	72	0	0	4	0	2558

BEAMER HAWKWATCH TOTALS

MONTH	HRS	TV	OS	BE	NH	SS	CH	NG	RS	BW	RT	SW	RL	GE	AK	ML	PF	UA	UB	UE	UF	UR	UV	TOTAL
MARCH	179.25	220	0	9	49	197	66	5	796	0	1382	0	27	1	51	0	0	21	112	0	0	15	0	2951
APRIL	241.75	1111	26	8	113	2252	91	8	305	1198	1124	0	17	5	69	3	2	47	252	1	2	65	0	6699
MAY	78.25	75	10	0	13	1127	23	1	1	1106	109	1	1	1	12	1	0	1	72	0	0	4	0	2558
TOTAL	499.25	1406	36	17	175	3576	180	14	1102	2304	2615	1	45	7	132	4	2	69	436	1	2	84	0	12208
AVR 80'S	581	994	31	9	137	3992	176	33	796	4534	3053	0.2	66	6	112	4	2	-	-	-	-	682	-	14 622



Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Newsletter

Newsletter No. 2, February 1991

A Note From the President

HAWKWATCHERS WANTED - PLEASE HELP

Are strange things happening to you? Hands curling, as though around binoculars? Eyes elevating and looking east? Neck and foot muscles flexing as if to relieve a day's worth of standing at Beamer? Are strange code words - "Shin", "TV", "Tail", "RT", "Hempine" and others - popping up involuntarily in the middle of normal conversations? Do you have the feeling that spouses and others are regarding you strangely?

Relax, everything is normal. Traditionally, early February is when Hawkwatchers start experiencing the first signs of *Raptor-migrationitis*. It is a normal response to the fact that the hawks will start moving around the end of the month.

If the above describes you, there's something you can do about it. Signing up now for one or more days at Beamer will help relieve the symptoms. We have 92 days to cover, and lots of volunteer counters are needed. If you are new at hawkwatching, sign up as an assistant counter and work with someone who has had more experience.

Please check your calendars as soon as possible and then get in touch with Mary Ellen Foley. Write to her at 32 Maplewood Dr., St. Catharines, ON L2M 3P1, or give her a call at (416) 937-7671. If you can, please try to find some time in May. We know this is prime passerine season, but the hawks are still moving too.

Below you will find information on the activities planned for this season. I'm looking forward to seeing all of you again, and soon!

Bruce Duncan

1991 UPCOMING EVENTS

Friday, March 1

Official opening of the 1991 Spring Hawkwatch at Beamer Conservation Area.

Friday, March 29 (Good Friday) [Rain Date: March 30]

The Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch's first open house at Beamer. We'll be open to the public and will feature Hawk I.D. for beginners, a show with live birds from the the University of Guelph's Wild Bird Clinic, and displays. Contact Bruce Duncan at (519) 622-4709 if you can help.

Saturday, April 6

NPH's first annual banquet. There are a limited number of tickets, so book early. Cost will be around $10 (a firm price will be known by the start of the Hawkwatch). Contact any Executive member for tickets. Location will be Stoney Ridge Winery's Puddicombe Farm near Winona. Jeff Dodge, Editor of *Hawk Migration Studies*, our special guest, will give a slide presentation on the Spring Hawk Flight at Braddock Bay, New York. There will be bucket raffles and a fine dinner to boot!

HAWK MIGRATION ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA RESEARCH AWARD

Applications for the annual HMANA Research Award are now being accepted. The award was established to encourage research on raptor migration. Innovative projects relevant to HMANA's interests, e.g. migration ecology and behavior, population monitoring, and conservation, will be favored.

Applicants should submit a short proposal, no longer than five pages, including the following information: location of the study site; background of the applicant and/or organizations involved; research objectives, methods and relevance to HMANA's interests; and a budget detailing how the funds will be used.

Annual awards total $2000 and up to three proposals may be funded each year. Proposals must be received before 15 June 1991. Send applications to: Laurie Goodrich, HMANA Research Award, Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, R.D. 2, Kempton, PA USA 19529.

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH MIGRATION CALENDAR
FOR BEAMER CONSERVATION AREA

NOTES:

1) Species initials and Right (->) or Left (<-) arrow:

This combination indicates the start or end of the normal (at Beamer) migration period for that species. The same in **bold** type indicates the start or end of a noticeable peak period for that species. The box in which this combination is located indicates the day and month on which the period is likely to start.

2) A number, followed by species initials, followed by a slash (/) and a two-digit number:

This combination indicates the largest number (the first number) ever seen in one day of that species; the two-digit number following the / indicates the year in which this occurred. The box in which this combination is located indicates the day and month on which the event occurred. Example: 390 RS /90 in the March 15 box indicates that the highest number of Sharp-shinned Hawks recorded in one day was 390, seen on March 15, 1990.

TV - Turkey Vulture
OS - Osprey
BE - Bald Eagle
GE - Golden Eagle
NH - Northern Harrier
SS - Sharp-shinned Hawk
CH - Cooper's Hawk
NG - Northern Goshawk
RS - Red-shouldered Hawk
BW - Broad-winged Hawk
RT - Red-tailed Hawk
SW - Swainson's Hawk
RL - Rough-legged Hawk
AK - American Kestrel
ML - Merlin
PF - Peregrine Falcon
GF - Gyrfalcon

The following information is based on 15 years of data from the Beamer Hawkwatch:

Largest number of raptors in one season: 19,724 in 1985

MARCH

1 RT-> RL->** CH-> NG->** BE-> GE->	2 NH-> RS->** AK-> TV->	3	4	5	6	7
8 **RL->**	9 **RT->**	10 **AK->**	11	12	13	14 **RS-> NG->** 44 AK /90
15 **CH-> SS->** 390 RS /90	16	17	18 **BE->** 7 GE /86	19	20 **TV->**	21
22	23	24 11 NG /84	25	26 7 GE /88 748 TV /88	27 NH-> OS->	28 2 PF /90
29	30	31				

Largest number of raptors in month: 5670 in March 1988
Largest number of raptors in one day in month: 2080 on March 26, 1988

APRIL

1	2	3 **<-RS**	4	5 ME-> PF->

35 CH /88 | 6 | 7 |
| 8

706 RT /87 | 9 | 10
<-RT SS->
BW-> | 11 | 12
OS-> | 13 | 14

9 OS /86 |
| 15
<-TV | 16
<-BE

2 PF /90
26 NH /89 | 17

3 ME /88 | 18

1556 SS /76 | 19
BW-> | 20

1 GF /77 | 21

6007 BW /85 |
| 22

9 OS /88
1 SW /88
44 RL /90 | 23 | 24 | 25
<-NG | 26 | 27 | 28
<-AK

3 ME /90 |
| 29

4 GE /83 | 30
<-CH <-RL | | | | | |

Largest number of raptors in month: 15,012 in April 1984
Largest number of raptors in one day in month: 7007 on April 21, 1985

MAY

1	2	3	4	5

1 SW /89 | 6
<-NH <-BW
<-BE <-PF | 7 |
8	9	10 **<-OS**	11 **<-SS**	12	13	14
15 <-RL <-ME	16	17	18 <-NG	19	20	21
22	23	24 <-OS <-GE	25 <-RS	26	27	28
29	30	31 Hawkwatch ends				

Largest number of raptors in month: 2695 in May 1980
Largest number of raptors in one day in month: 1492 on May 4, 1989

EAGLES AT BEAMER 1975-1990

by Jim Dowall

In sixteen years of spring raptor observation, 1990 was the best year ever for eagles at Beamer Conservation Area. A total of 25 eagles were sighted; the ratio between Bald and Golden - 60% vs. 40% - was almost identical to the ratio for the entire 1975-90 history of the Hawkwatch, which is 59.6% vs. 40.4%. Annual results are shown in Table 1.

It is encouraging to note that, according to our results, eagle numbers have increased in recent years. They certainly were scarce during the early years of the Beamer Hawkwatch.

Table 1: ANNUAL OCCURRENCE

	BE	GE	UE*	TOTAL
1975	1	0	0	1
1976	2	2	0	4
1977	2	1	0	3
1978	1	3	0	4
1979	4	4	0	8
1980	8	3	0	11
1981	1	4	0	5
1982	8	4	0	12
1983	7	8	0	15
1984	5	6	0	11
1985	10	12	3	25
1986	14	7	3	24
1987	7	6	0	13
1988	16	3	2	21
1989	17	7	1	25
1990	15	10	2	27

* UE - unidentified eagle

The 1990 results are only for the conservation area itself. They do not include other eagles migrating through the general area which could not be seen from the conservation area - under certain weather conditions some eagles migrate over the Grimsby plain to the north, and it is likely that some migrate well south of the Beamer hawkwatch site. Semi-monthly numbers are given in Table 2.

Table 2: 1990 SEMI-MONTHLY OCCURRENCE

	BE	GE	TOTAL
Feb. 24 to end	1	1	2
March 1 to 15	11	2	13
March 16 to 31	43	19	62
April 1 to 15	29	23	52
April 15 to 30	26	25	51
May 1 to 15	5	7	12
May 15 to 31	0	1	1
	115	78	193*

* Dates for 5 other identified eagles not known

Most eagles migrated during the latter half of March and the first half of April. Up to the end of March, Bald Eagles far outnumber Golden (55BE vs. 22GE). From April 1 to the end of the season, the gap narrows considerably (60BE vs. 56 GE).

In the spring of 1990 eagles were seen on 14 separate days, with their distribution during watch hours as shown in Table 3. (All times are Eastern Standard Time.) The hour between noon and 1PM proved to be best, with 40% of the identified eagles seen in this period.

Table 3: 1990 HOURLY OCCURRENCE

E.S.T.	BE	GE	Total
8-9	0	3	3
9-10	0	0	0
10-11	2	1	3
11-12	1	1	2
noon-1	7	3	10
1-2*	1	0	1
2-3	3	0	3
3-4	1	1	2
4-5	0	1	1

* Two additional unidentified eagles were seen during this period

The age breakdown for identified eagles in 1990 was:

Table 4: 1990 AGE ANALYSIS

	BE	GE
Adult	7	5
Third Year	4	-
Second Year	2	-
Immature	-	3
Not Recorded	2	2

SIGNIFICANT OBSERVATIONS

Probably the most thrilling observation of eagles during the 1990 season occurred on April 23. Walter Klabunde made the following comment on the back of his summary sheet for the day, "All three Golden Eagles that passed over at 8:42AM were adults. The first preceeded the other two by about 150 yards, and circled two or three times as though waiting for the other two, which came over in formation, almost wing tip to wing tip with no other motion except smooth gliding. They were about 100 yards up and just slightly north of the lookout as they went by to the west."

It should be noted that Golden Eagles have been seen

travelling together on other occasions. When one sees an adult Golden Eagle, it may pay to look for another a minute or two later. It would appear that in springtime some Golden Eagles migrate as bonded pairs.

Over the years, most of the excellent 'Eagle Days' at Beamer were days when large numbers of other raptors were migrating as well. Of identified eagles, 125 of 193 (65.3%) passed over on days of 200+ raptors. Of course, some eagles migrated on days when almost no other raptors were moving.

In future years it will be very interesting to monitor changes in the numbers and age differences of both eagle species. Let's look forward to many more exciting 'Eagle Days' at Beamer.

Table 5: NOTEWORTHY 'EAGLE DAYS'

DATE	BE	TOTAL GRAPTORS	TOTAL SPECIES
17 April 1976	2	1222	12
30 March 1978	0	2 479	7
2 April 1980	0	2 69	8
20 March 1982	2	0 165	10
6 March 1983	2	0 87	5
29 April 1983	2	4 1849	13
1 April 1984	3	0 811	10
26 April 1984	0	2 3683	12
4 April 1985	2	3 657	13
18 March 1986	7	0 1079	11
12 April 1986	1	2 116	10
26 March 1988	7	1 2080	12
16 April 1990	6	0 713	12
23 April 1990	0	3 1108	11
28 April 1990	2	2 2113	12

TOWER? WHAT TOWER?

One of the principal reasons for organizing this group was to obtain opinions on the possibility of an observation tower at Beamer, and then to speak about it to the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) with the voice of consensus.

The many opinions on this issue voiced at the inaugural meeting of the Hawkwatch certainly indicated that reaching consensus will be difficult, but not impossible. A committee chaired by Bruce Mackenzie has been formed to work out all of the questions and act as our contact with the Conservation Authority.

Although the Authority indicated last year that a tower was one of the items being examined by their Foundation, there has not as yet been a commitment to it. It appears there will be no tower for 1991. Bruce has contacted the NPCA regularly and will continue to do so.

We'll keep you informed.

EDITOR'S CORNER

First, apologies to Treasurer Verne Evans for getting his name wrong in the last newsletter. The only explanation is that old favorite, 'Gremlins'. Verne was understanding, however - he used his real name when he signed the cheque reimbursing yours truly for the printing cost.

If you have any suggestions for articles, etc. in future issues, please drop me a line at P.O. Box 7230, Ancaster, ON L9G 3N6.

The next issue will be out as soon after the hawkwatch as possible. Please be sure to renew your dues at the appropriate time so you will get your copy. Get a friend to join too.

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH EXECUTIVE - 1990-91

HONORARY PRESIDENT - Walter Klabunde

PRESIDENT - Bruce Duncan

VICE-PRESIDENT - Mary Ellen Foley

SECRETARY - John Olmsted

TREASURER - Verne Evans

MEMBERSHIP - John Stevens

EDITOR - Mike Street

STATISTICS - Rob Dobos

RESEARCH - Brian Ratcliffe

EDUCATION/PUBLIC RELATIONS - Don Malena

TOWER/PLATFORM - Bruce Mackenzie

Correspondence should be addressed to:

The Secretary, Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch, 32 Miles Court, Hamilton, ON Canada L8P 4G6

HAWKS AND THE WEATHER: 1990 SPRING MIGRATION

by Bob Curry

To many of us a major component of the rites of spring is the northward movement of diurnal raptors, in this area best observed as the birds move west along the Niagara Peninsula past Beamer Point. Even when there are setbacks in the vernal progression, the sight of hawks moving is reaffirmation that the bleak, dark days of winter are over and that another short summer awaits. Are the hawks inspired by southerly flows of warm air as much as the watchers, or do they push through regardless of the weather? This brief analysis investigates that question for the 1990 spring flight.

This is not a resume of rarity highlights, nor a summary of the big flight days. Rather, it is an attempt to relate raptor movements to weather conditions. Weather data used are the wind direction summaries from the monthly summaries in the Hawkwatch Newsletter (No.1, August 1990), and Monthly Meteorological Summaries from the Royal Botanical Gardens. A much more detailed and interesting correlation can and should be done using statistical techniques and more Beamer data that is collected but is not provided on these forms.

For analysis purposes all days in which steady precipitation or heavy overcast reduced movement and coverage to zero or nearly no birds were eliminated. This left 67 days. Of these, there were 33 in which over 100 migrating raptors were counted, a symbolic number which indicates to seasoned observers a reasonably good day.

I summarized the prevailing wind directions, to one of the eight cardinal points, for the 33 'good' days. On six days the winds at Beamer were summarized as variable; since I had no information on the number of hours the wind blew from a specific direction, I used the RBG data which indicate prevailing wind direction for each day. The RBG site is approximately 28 air kilometres WNW of Beamer and there is no question that wind and temperature conditions vary, sometimes significantly, between the two locations. On 20 of the 58 days for which specific wind direction is given for Beamer the wind direction was different at RBG. It seems reasonable to assume that some of the difference is attributable to counter error at Beamer as the RBG measures would be precise. Nevertheless, conclusions of this paper must be tempered by the distance and physiographic discrepancies, and make it all the more imperative that hourly wind direction and strength, temperature readings and other information be collected at Beamer and for future analyses.

I had felt that the best days at Beamer came on SE winds on the day prior to a warm front passage. The data for 1990, however, do not support this impression. Of the 33 'good' days, 21 or 64% experienced SW winds. This would indicate the movement of birds in the warm air mass after the passage of a front. And, in fact, readers will recall the major incursion of warm air into the north-eastern part of the continent accompanied by record high temperatures for the period 13-17 March, during which 2979 birds came through. A similar air mass and high pressure zone dominated southern Ontario from 23 to 30 April marked by record temperatures such as 30.9°C at the RBG on 26 April. The three biggest days of spring 1990 occurred in this second period on winds which, paradoxically, were not out of the SW. These were: 24 April - light N (2147 birds): 25 April - NW (1035); and, 28 April - light NE (2113). How may these seemingly unfavourable winds be rationalized? In fact, this was a large stable, modified tropical air mass with fair skies and, as the centre drifted slowly from W to E over southern Ontario resulted in light and variable winds. Such conditions were ideal for the major movement of Broad-winged Hawks into Ontario.

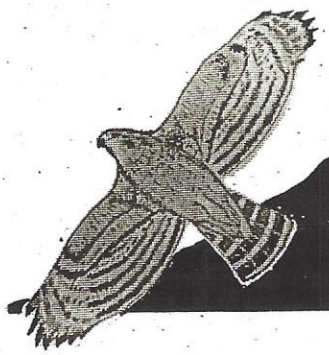
Using the combination of SW winds or higher than average temperatures and light winds (under 10 kph) from other quadrants, then on 26 of the 33 'good' days (79%) the Hamilton - Niagara area, at least, was in a warm tropical or modified tropical air mass. Clearly, the birds were moving in the fair conditions providing uplift and either with favourable winds or winds so light as not to be an impediment. As a further check on the importance of such conditions there were no ideal days with high temperatures, fair skies and SW or light winds on which fewer than 100 hawks were recorded. My unsubstantiated memory suggests that this has not always been the case in the past, so it is something for observers to note in 1991.

Hawkwatchers are not only interested in the total numbers of birds but particularly look forward to seeing some of the glamour species. What does this weather/flight condition analysis tell us about the likelihood of seeing them? I picked out a few examples from these data. In fact, only two of the 10 Golden Eagles came through on 'non-good flight days' as defined by warm temperatures and/or southwesterly winds. Similarly, and more surprisingly, all but one of the 15 Bald Eagles were on 'good flight days'. Such information could discourage the diehard watchers who hang on in poor weather and poor flights because 'eagles fly through anything'. Five of the six Peregrines flew by on SW winds and all the big Red-shoulderd days were on SW winds. Even most of the two larger accipiters which seem less dependent on lift and favourable winds passed on the good days.

Certainly the years of data of a more precise nature need to be examined in a more rigorous way, but this simple analysis of one year's results suggests that the origins, characteristics of temperature and wind strength of the air mass are most important to the migration of hawks past Beamer Point. In this regard it would be fascinating to select days with fair conditions and southerly winds but in which the air mass as defined by these characteristics was not of southern origin. But that is a topic for further investigation.

GOOD WEATHER

Comprehensive weather forecasts are available on the American PBS network [Channels 17 (Buffalo) & 54 (Erie)] at 7:45AM, Monday-Friday. Environment Canada provides an excellent local forecast tape 24 hours a day from the Hamilton Airport Weather Office at Mount Hope - call (416) 679-3361.



Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Newsletter

Newsletter No. 3, August 1991

FIRST ANNUAL MEETING HELD AT STONEY RIDGE WINERY

April 6, 1991 was a good day. There were low sharp-shins, mostly adults, at Beamer, as well as an afternoon Osprey. At 5:00PM there were hungry and thirsty hawkwatchers, all adults, and a late afternoon wine tour to start off the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch's first annual meeting. We had a great time.

Jim Warren, co-owner of Stoney Ridge Winery, took us through his 20,000 gallon-a-year operation, and then treated us to tastes of six of white wines - some dry, some sweet, all good. By the end of number six the atmosphere was decidedly convivial. After a visit to the store downstairs, we returned to the meeting room for a chicken supper which had been organized by the MacKenzies. Many thanks to Bruce and Laurie for all their hard work.

Our meal was finished on schedule, and we moved on to a 23-slide hawk quiz. Since there were a number of western and southern birds, as well as hawks in the hand (not to mention the wine), the light-hearted responses sometimes got the better of accuracy.

A brief business meeting followed. The Treasurer's report was moved by Mary Ellen Hebb, seconded by Walter Klabunde, and carried. Don Malena's slate of directors for 1991 was voted in without noticeable opposition as well. You will find information on both elsewhere in this newsletter.

At last we were ready for the highlight of the evening. Jeff Dodge, Director of Braddock Bay Raptor Research and Editor of Hawk Migration Studies, was on hand to give a very stimulating slide presentation on the spring hawk flight at Rochester, New York. A lot is going on at Braddock Bay. The official count is one part, but four banding stations for hawks and owls also operate, as does a strong public information and education program. The numbers of birds seen, and possible same day correlation between flights at Braddock's Bay and Beamer Conservation Area figured heavily in the question-and-answer period which followed.

Jeff's talk, and travelling after a long day at his hawkwatch, were much appreciated by the audience.

Last on the agenda was a bucket raffle organized by John Stevens. With 16 prizes ranging from Blue Jay baseball tickets to a print of a Great Grey Owl, lots of ticket buying went on and NPH made about $120. Thanks to John and donors of the prizes for making the bucket raffle an event. (I'd like to have Bruce Harschnitz's luck - four winners!!!)

Next year's dinner meeting will probably be back at Stoney Ridge Winery in April, and may have a talk by Don Fowler of the Hawk Cliff banding team. Don't miss it.

TOWER QUESTIONNAIRE

Enclosed with this issue of our newsletter is a questionnaire asking for your opinions on the subject of a tower at Beamer Conservation Area.

Will your opinion count? The answer is yes. If we do not get a majority of people in favour of having a tower, that will settle it, at least for now. On the other hand, if members favour a tower, then we need to know where people feel it would best be located.

If we try to get a tower, we may need to be able to show the authorities that our members are behind the project. For that reason, you are asked to include your name. Please answer and mail the questionnaire today.

THE FIRST OPEN HOUSE AT BEAMER

by Bruce Duncan

About 400 people visited Beamer Memorial Conservation Area on Good Friday, March 29, 1991, for NPH's first-ever Open House. It was chilly, but the hawks cooperated and no-one went home disappointed. Winds were northwest and pretty brisk at 20 km/h for most of the day, and we saw the sun only for brief and irregular periods. From 9AM until 4:30PM the temperature went from 0°C to 3°C and back down again.

In that time, however, almost 700 hawks and vultures passed overhead. There were 450 TVs, 200 RTs, a sprinkling of Cooper's, Sharp-shins, Harriers, Rough-legs, Red-shoulders and Kestrels, one Goshawk and three Bald Eagles. The birds came over from tree-top height up, with many in bunches, affording great views for the many first-time visitors.

The Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, through Shelly Dunn's good work, provided us with picnic tables for displays and handouts, and had Shelly on hand to control traffic and stock washrooms - not glamorous jobs, but essential.

Mary Ellen Hebb, Bruce Mackenzie, Don Malena, Mike Street and John Stevens helped point out migrants to the crowds, and mentioned some good identification features. The all-new NPH brochure showing the timing of the spring migration was on hand for people, as was an identification sheet. We handed out at least 250 of each!

One of the highlights of the day came when the first Bald Eagle glided close-by although fairly high over the 100-150 sets of eyes below, then banked to let the sun shine on its white tail and rump. There was a unanimous "Ohhh!" of admiration. I think that lone bird may have created a lot of new hawkwatchers.

At 1:30PM Bruce and Daina Hunter of the University of Guelph's Wild Bird Clinic arrived with three birds. Two, a Turkey Vulture named Socratres and a female American Kestrel, were crippled; the third was a young light-phase Rough-legged Hawk they were preparing for release after successful wing surgery. Daina described the work of the clinic and explained the problems of the birds she had with her, while 150 people listened and enjoyed the chance to see these birds up close.

All five of the Guelph visitors stayed on to answer questions from the crowds. Next year we'll invite them back with their non-releasable Bald Eagle.

Just at the end of the Hunter's presentation the day's flight picked up steam, with sorties of 22 and 32 vultures and as many as 8 Red-tails. We talked to newspaper, radio and TV reporters, and gave the coffee truck good coverage as well. In addition, visitors dropped just over $100.00 into our donation box, enough to cover the Wild Bird Clinic's expenses, with a little left over for the NPH treasury.

All-in-all, it was a very successful day with hawks in the air, hawks in the hand, and plenty of good company. Special thanks for all their help to the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, Shelly Dunn, the Wild Bird Clinic and the NPH members who assisted during the day.

Good Friday 1992 falls on April 17. We'll see you at Beamer with Broad-wings, Sharp-shins, Ospreys and weather just a little warmer.

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH EXECUTIVE - 1991-1992

HONORARY PRESIDENT - Walter Klabunde

PRESIDENT - Bruce Duncan

VICE-PRESIDENT - Mary Ellen Hebb

SECRETARY - Don Malena

TREASURER - Gordon Bellerby

MEMBERSHIP - John Stevens

EDITOR - Mike Street

STATISTICS - Rob Dobos

RESEARCH - Brian Ratcliffe

EDUCATION/PUBLIC RELATIONS - Don Malena

TOWER/PLATFORM - Bruce Mackenzie

Correspondence should be addressed to:

The Secretary, Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch, 74 Lockton Cr., Hamilton, ON Canada L8V 4R1

AN OBSERVATION ON BALD EAGLE AND TURKEY VULTURE FLIGHT

by Bruce Duncan

Recently I wrote an article on the status and identification of eagles and vultures in Ontario [1]. In it I repeated a nice little tidbit of ID from *Hawks in Flight* by Dunne, Sibley and Sutton, to the effect that Turkey Vultures have a habit of giving an occasional sort-of 'half-flap' with the outer half of their wings only, i.e. the outer wing droops, then is brought up with a jerk.

I had seen this many times and found it an excellent Turkey Vulture feature, helpful in identifying a very distant bird. Dunne, Sibley and Sutton had given us a useful tip, I emphasized, that separated TVs from all other species.

Not so, I have since discovered. During the Open House day at Beamer this year (March 29, 1991) we saw an excellent flight of 300 or more Turkey Vultures, many of whom gave their little 'half-flaps', but there were also three Bald Eagles, all of whom also gave 'half-flaps'.

Two of these eagles were full adults and one was younger - I couldn't pick out enough pattern to age it - and all three drooped the outer half of their wings then brought them back to level, very much like a Turkey Vulture. The speed at which the eagles raised their wings was slower than the vultures' flicks, but the essential style was the same. I had never noticed this behaviour before; the 20^{+} km/h NW winds may have influenced the flight style, which was all gliding and soaring, with only the occasional 'half-flap'.

Watch for this little bit of flight style. The speed at which it is done may still be a help in separating the two species at great distances, but beware of using it to indicate only Turkey Vultures.

1. Identification and Status of Bald Eagles, Golden Eagles, Turkey Vultures and Black Vultures in Ontario. *Ontario Birds*, 1990. 8(2):61-69

FALL HAWKWATCHING LOCATIONS

Now that you have the spring migration numbers it is time to turn your attention to the fall flights. There are many good locations in our area from which to catch raptors heading south for the winter. Three of the best are: HAWK CLIFF - go south from St. Thomas to Regional Road 45. Follow 45 to Regional Road 22. Take 22 south to the lake on the gravel road at the end of 22. LONG POINT - check with the LPBO on Old Cut Blvd. for good locations. HIGH LEVEL BRIDGE (Hamilton) - follow York Blvd. from Dundurn Castle towards the Royal Botanical Gardens. The bridge is roughly halfway. Park either at the castle or the RBG.

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

(Please Print)

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____ Postal Code: _____

Telephone Number: ( ) _____

Membership fee: 1 year - $15
Send this form with your cheque or money order (no cash please) to:

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch
c/o John Stevens
1365 Bayview Ave., Unit 3
Toronto, ON
Canada M4G 3A5

MISSIPPI KITE: ONTARIO STATUS AND IDENTIFICATION

by Kevin McLaughlin

The respectible increase in recent years of the number of Peregrine Falcons has allowed birders throughout Ontario to enjoy seeing this magnificent species more readily during spring and fall migration. In the month of May, however, some fortunate observers have had the pleasure of seeing a surprisingly similar but far more exotic species.

The Ontario Bird Records Committe (OBRC) has accepted eleven records of Missippi Kite in Southern Ontario. The first was at Bradley's Marsh, Kent County, in 1964. Interestingly, six of the eleven birds were found at Point Pelee, and six were identified as adults, the rest being year-old birds.

Of even more interest is that all of the sightings have occurred over a thirteen day period, May 16 to May 28. The occurrence dates tell us two important things. The first is that these birds can be termed in the purest sense as 'spring overshoots', since they occur over a short time span in late May and are not reported afterwards; the birds must come into the province, realize they are too far north, and simply reverse their flight path. The second important revelation is quite simply that May is the time to look for Missipppi Kite.

This species is a medium sized bird of prey, resembling a small Peregrine Falcon in size, general proportions and shape. Adults are light gray with a pale head. The gray body is long and slight, lacking the chesty proportions of a Peregrine. The long tail is black above and below, square-ended with a distinctive flaring at the tip.

The wings are long, slender and pointed, reaching beyond the tail tip on a perched bird. The wing shape is somewhat unusual, with the body to wrist being slender, and the wrist to tip somewhat broad, which is unlike the uniformly tapered look of a Peregrine. An important feature, which can be seen in good viewing conditions, is that the outermost primary is decidedly shorter than the next one. The wings are dark gray above, with slate-coloured primaries. The secondaries take the form of large white patches on the trailing inner edge of the wing. This feature is much more obvious than is shown in most field guides. The underwings are a uniform gray.

The first-summer birds that have reached Ontario differ from the adults in several ways. First, they lack the large white secondary patches on the upper side of the wings. Second, while the underparts are similar to the adult, the underwing coverts still retain some of the juvenile streaking. Third, the tail is not solid black, having distinct black and white barring, with the white bands much narrower than the black.

Any resemblance to a Peregrine ends with the Missippi Kite's flying pattern. Kites employ a leisurely flight of sailing and gliding, interspersed with stiff flapping, the wing beating seemingly being done only to stay aloft. This is quite unlike the powerful direct-line flight of the Peregrine.

Perhaps this note will serve as an incentive to birders to be alert for the appearance of this handsome species next May, maybe even to the point of spending more time at Beamer Conservation Area than they normally would during that month.

References:

Hawks in Flight; Dunne, Sibley and Sutton. Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1988.

Ontario Birds; Volumes 1-8, 1983-1990. Ontario Bird Records Committee Annual Reports.

TREASURER'S REPORT

MARCH 14, 1990 - FEBRUARY 28,1991

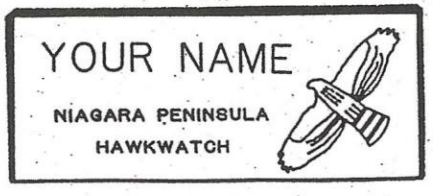
Receipts:		
Memberships		$525.00
Disbursements:		
W. Klabunde Presentation		$ 54.76
Newsletter (Aug. 1990)	107.28	
Printing and Stationery	30.65	
Bank Charges		30.00
		$222.69
Excess of Receipts over disbursements and bank balance as of Feb. 28, 1991		$302.31

Verne Evans, Treasurer

HAWKWATCH NAMETAGS AVAILABLE

Members can obtain a Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch nametag simply by sending a cheque for $4.00 (made out to 'Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch') to:

Mike Street
P.O. Box 7230
Ancaster, ON L9G 3N6



Summary of 1991 Beamer Hawkwatch

By Rob Dobos

Another spring migration has passed; and with it the 1991 hawkwatch at Beamer Conservation Area above Grimsby, the seventeenth year for this count. What appeared on the surface to be a somewhat uneventful year was actually a very interesting one, with numerous highlights, including record high counts for three species.

A total of 14951 hawks were tallied between March 1 and May 15. This total was almost identical to the 11 year average (from 1980-90) of 14971. A total of 29 observers contributed 548.3 hours of observation time. Unfortunately, this was below the 11 year mean of 577.5 hours, and was the second lowest since 1980. All of the observations were from the parking lot at Beamer Conservation Area.

New record high counts were made in 1991 for Osprey (46), Northern Harrier (219), and Rough-legged Hawk (145). A new one day record count for Harriers (28) occurred on April 14. The second highest one day count for Rough-legged Hawk on April 12 was only two birds shy of the record of 24.

The 17 Bald Eagles counted this year tied the record from 1989. The eight Golden Eagles reported were above the 11 year average of six. Additionally, one Golden Eagle was observed from the lookout at Beamer Point on April 25, but was not seen by the counters at the parking lot. Two unidentified eagles were also tallied during the season. The Turkey Vulture count of 1785 was the second highest on record.

Amongst falcons, the five Peregrines counted were one below last year's record. Two Peregrines occurred on the early date of March 26 and two were also seen on April 4. The 11 Merlins were also one bird shy of the record from 1987. The American Kestrel total of 180 was well above the 11 year average of 118.

Sharp-shinned Hawk numbers, at 3767, were well below the 11 year average of 4258, and were almost half of last year's record high count. The Northern Goshawk total of 20 birds was also well below the 1980-90 mean of 32. Apparently the peak of the ten year cycle for Goshawks is still two years away. The Cooper's Hawk tally (220) was the third highest ever, although it was down considerably from last year's record (311).

As for buteos, the Red-tailed Hawk total was slightly above the average of 2968. The Red-shouldered Hawk count of 761 was below the 11 year mean of 845, and was almost half of 1990's record high 1440 birds. The 2063 Broad-winged Hawks counted were the second lowest number since 1978. This year's largest flight day was April 25, when 45 percent of the year's total (944) was counted. However, a total of 1957 unidentified buteos (which, incidentally, made up the majority of this year's record high number of unidentified raptors - 2681) were also reported on that day. Presumably most of these UBs were actually Broad-wings flying at a great altitude and beyond definite recognition by the counter.

Many thanks to all of this year's volunteer hawk counters, including: Roy Baker, Gordon Bellerby, Bouwe Bergsma, Mike Cadman, Gerry Chapple, Michael Clark, Dave Copeland, James Coey, Robert Curry, Rob Dobos, Bruce Duncan, Chris Escott, George Fairfield, Denys Gardiner, Martin Geleynse, Mary Ellen Hebb, Michael King, Walter Klabunde, Wolfgang Luft, Bruce Mackenzie, Don Malena, Kevin McLaughlin, George Meyers, John Olmsted, Roslynne Price, Brian Ratcliff, Kayo Roy, Alf Senior, John Stevens, Mike Street, Paul Summerskill and Brian Wylie. (Our apologies if anyone's name has been omitted.)

1991 TOTALS

Turkey Vulture	1785	Red-tailed Hawk	3023
Osprey	46	Rough-legged Hawk	145
Bald Eagle	17	American Kestrel	180
Golden Eagle	8	Merlin	11
Northern Harrier	219	Peregrine Falcon	5
Sharp-shinned Hawk	3767	Unidentified Accipiter	105
Cooper's Hawk	220	Unidentified Buteo	2457
Northern Goshawk	20	Unidentified Eagle	2
Red-shouldered Hawk	761	Unidentified Falcon	10
Broad-winged Hawk	2063	Unidentified Raptor	107

Total Raptors: 14951
Hours Counted: 548.3

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Counts – March 1991

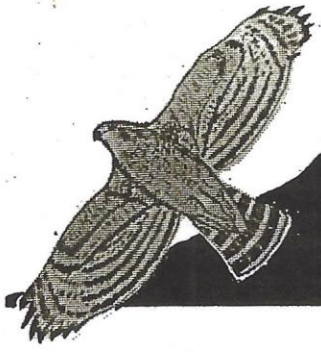
Date –>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Totals
Turkey Vulture																1			2	2		1	11	2	1	20	4		414	182	120	760
Osprey																																0
Bald Eagle														1		1	1						3						3		3	12
Northern Harrier		1				1	1		3			2				3	2			1	1		2			9	5	2	2	4	7	46
Sharp–shinned Hawk								2			2				3		4		1	4	3		24		1	37	9	1	1	2	126	220
Cooper's Hawk									1	1			3			4	2		1	2	2		6		1	28	1	2	11	17	19	101
Northern Goshawk																				1			1			1						3
Red–shouldered Hawk			1		2						1		2	1	1	9	72		10	60	36	2	93	4	25	220	22	11	17	45	35	669
Broad–winged Hawk																																0
Swainson's Hawk																																0
Red–tailed Hawk	10	11	9		9	2	14	144	106	71	36	86	117	24	15	80	64		36	167	82	3	61	5	47	236	6	16	211	168	136	1972
Rough–legged Hawk	1							1	2	2	2		1	1	1	2	3			4						8		1	6	2	3	40
Golden Eagle																							3									3
American Kestrel	1									2						2			6	2	1		26	1	2	9	3	4	3	7		69
Merlin																					1					1		1				3
Peregrine Falcon																										2						2
Gyrfalcon																																0
Unid. Accipiter								1	1							1	3		2	1						3				3	18	33
Unid. Buteo									3	6		1	3			33	60		6		2					108	1		13	37	76	349
Unid. Eagle																							1									1
Unid. Falcon																																0
Unid. Raptor									13							1										6	1		1	3		25
Total Raptors	12	12	10	0	11	3	15	148	129	82	41	89	126	27	20	137	211	0	64	244	128	6	231	12	77	688	52	38	682	470	543	4308
Hours Counted	7.5	6	6	0	8	2.5	8	7	5	8	8	6.5	7	6	7.3	9	8	0	7	7.5	7.5	7.5	8.75	8	7.5	8.2	9	8.5	8.5	9	9	215.8
Wind Direction	SSW	W	NW	Rain	SW	W	NW	Var	Var	Var	NW	WNW	NE	NE	NW	S	Var	Rain	Var	Var	NE	NE	SW	WSW	Var	Var	S	SW	WNW	NE	Var	

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Counts – April 1991

Date –>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		Totals
Turkey Vulture	1		154	78	123	16	125	16	33		47	39		22	4	9	22	42	31		1		24	4	62		10	4	1	38		906
Osprey				2	1	1	2	1	2		2	3						8	5				2		2		2	2				35
Bald Eagle	1		2						1																		1					5
Northern Harrier	1	4	6	13		3	13	5	2		1	9		28	1	5	2	4	11		2		16	1	7	2	5		3	4		148
Sharp-shinned Hawk	6	3	12	59	27	61	238	220	533	3	14	113		118	41	22	47	96	233		1		173	72	121	115	217	63	189	83		2880
Cooper's Hawk	1	1	7	15		4		4	7		11	12		4				12	6				3		7	1	1	2	4			102
Northern Goshawk			4	1							5	2		2				2					1									17
Red-shouldered Hawk	4	1	11	4		2		1	1	5	2	27		8			12		2				5		2				1			88
Broad-winged Hawk											1	7		8		2	158	200	139				159	27	944	7	14	1	104	18		1789
Swainson's Hawk																																0
Red-tailed Hawk	3	8	113	80	2	9	35	17	12	6	88	171		80	1	20	12	51	55		1		37	2	22	3	3	16	15	9		871
Rough-legged Hawk			7	6		1	1					22		18		7	1	10	6				9		1		1			3		93
Golden Eagle				1	1														2						1							5
American Kestrel			1	7		3	23	8	4			6		19	1	4	1	5	5				2	1	4	2		1	2			99
Merlin			1									1				1					2		1				2					8
Peregrine Falcon				2							1																					3
Gyrfalcon																																0
Unid. Accipiter	1		9	8		1	3				3	9		6		1		15					2			1	1	1		1		62
Unid. Buteo				7			6		1		11	4		11		3	5	79					5	2	1957		2		1	1		2095
Unid. Eagle																							1									1
Unid. Falcon			1	2				1			3															1	1					9
Unid. Raptor			5				2	2	1	1	1			3		2	2	50	1				1			1	2	1				75
Total Raptors	18	17	333	285	154	101	448	275	597	15	190	425	0	327	48	76	262	574	496	0	7	0	441	109	3130	133	262	91	320	157		9291
Hours Counted	7.75	7	8	9	7	8	10.3	8	8	7.25	8.5	8.3	0	7.2	7	9	7.2	8.67	7.6	0	7	0	11	7.5	9.75	8.75	10.3	9	7.1	9		223.2
Wind Direction	Var	NW	Var	Var	SW	SW	WSW	SW	W	SW	N	NE	--	Var	Var	W	NW	NNE	ENE	Fog	NE	Rain	SW	SW	Var	N	ENE	NE	Var	SW		

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Counts – May 1991

Date –>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Totals
Turkey Vulture	3	5	4		3	8	7	13	14	10	30		21		1																	119
Osprey		1	1		3	1	1	1		1			2																			11
Bald Eagle																																0
Northern Harrier	2			5	7	3	1	2	2	1	1		1																			25
Sharp–shinned Hawk	37	9	38	100	131	18	41	37	105	47	44	10	44		6																	667
Cooper's Hawk	1	2		3		2	1				5		1		2																	17
Northern Goshawk																																0
Red–shouldered Hawk	1			2								1																				4
Broad–winged Hawk	1		11	179	24	13	2	8	2	20	6	4	4																			274
Swainson's Hawk																																0
Red–tailed Hawk	13	3	6	52	22	10	8	7	1	23	12	5	18																			180
Rough–legged Hawk	1			4	4	1	1	1																								12
Golden Eagle																																0
American Kestrel		2		2	3	3	1								1																	12
Merlin																																0
Peregrine Falcon																																0
Gyrfalcon																																0
Unid. Accipiter				5	1			2			2																					10
Unid. Buteo				7				1			5																					13
Unid. Eagle																																0
Unid. Falcon							1																									1
Unid. Raptor				3			1			1	2																					7
Total Raptors	59	22	60	362	198	59	65	72	124	103	107	20	91	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1352
Hours Counted	7.5	8.5	8	9	9	7.3	8.75	7.2	9	7	8.33	5.25	7.2	0	7.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	109.5
Wind Direction	SSW	VAR	VAR	NE	NE	SW	S	NW	NE	NNE	S	VAR	VAR	--	N	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	



Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Newsletter

Newsletter No. 4, February 1992

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH ANNUAL BANQUET

SATURDAY, MARCH 28, 1992

Did you enjoy last year's banquet and slide show? Well, this year will be just as good or better. The location is once again Stoney Ridge Winery's Puddicombe Farm and the speaker is Don Fowler, Coordinator of the Hawk Cliff Raptor Banding Station near St. Thomas. After fifteen years of banding Don has plenty of hawk stories, and lots of excellent slides to boot.

There will be a wine tasting before supper as well as a slide quiz for the fun of it and a bucket raffle. This will be an enjoyable evening so get your tickets now. There are only 38 available, priced at $15 for members and $20 for non-members. Ask anyone on the Executive for them. Their names and phone numbers are in this newsletter.

SECOND ANNUAL OPEN HOUSE FRIDAY, APRIL 17, 1992

(RAIN DATE: SATURDAY, APRIL 18, 1992)

The hawks will be open to the public on April 17 when NPH holds its second Open House. Let's hope for the right weather and a good flight - just like last year, except possibly with a few more heat units.

Throughout the day, members of the Hawkwatch will help beginners to see and identify hawks passing over Beamer. (Volunteers are wanted for this.) Bruce and Daina Hunter of the Wild Bird Clinic at the University of Guelph will be back to show visitors some hawks in the hand and the very welcome coffee truck will once again be parked in the traffic circle.

Be sure to invite your family and friends; it'll be a good day for them and the hawks, we hope.

AUNTIE M.E. WANTS YOU - PLEASE HELP

Hawkwatchers are asked to please help Mary Ellen from desending into bankruptcy by calling her at (416) 937-7671, evenings from 7PM-10PM, to schedule hawkwatching day(s) for 1992. We need your help, especially on weekdays.

Early May is a tough time. We understand the inclination to head for the woods and look for warblers and such, but our work needs attention too. If enough people offer to help, it should be easy to fill in all the dates.

If you are interested in becoming a counter, be sure to let Mary Ellen know. Many of our observers are glad to share the work and help newcomers.

UNUSUAL BIRDS TO BE NOTED

The Hamilton Bird Records Commmittee would like to ask hawkwatchers to help with their work by noting unusual birds seen at Beamer on the back of Hawkwatch report forms.

In the past few years the H.B.R.C. has heard that a Sandhill Crane, a Wild Turkey, and at least one Greater White-fronted Goose have been seen from the parking lot, but they do not have the written reports necessary to make the sightings official. Early sightings or unusual numbers of regular species should also be reported. Any help members can give will be appreciated.

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH MIGRATION CALENDAR FOR BEAMER CONSERVATION AREA

NOTES:

1) Species initials and Right (->) or Left (<-) arrow:

This combination indicates the start or end of the normal (at Beamer) migration period for that species. The same in **bold** type indicates the start or end of a noticeable peak period for that species. The box in which this combination is located indicates the day and month on which the period is likely to start.

2) A number, followed by species initials, followed by a slash (/) and a two-digit number:

This combination indicates the largest number (the first number) ever seen in one day of that species; the two-digit number following the / indicates the year in which this occurred. The box in which this combination is located indicates the day and month on which the event occurred. Example: 390 RS /90 in the March 15 box indicates that the highest number of Sharp-shinned Hawks recorded in one day was 390, seen on March 15, 1990.

TV - Turkey Vulture
OS - Osprey
BE - Bald Eagle
GE - Golden Eagle
NH - Northern Harrier
SS - Sharp-shinned Hawk
CH - Cooper's Hawk
NG - Northern Goshawk
RS - Red-shouldered Hawk
BW - Broad-winged Hawk
RT - Red-tailed Hawk
SW - Swainson's Hawk
RL - Rough-legged Hawk
AK - American Kestrel
ML - Merlin
PF - Peregrine Falcon
GF - Gyrfalcon

The following information, based on 16 years of data from the Beamer Hawkwatch, has been updated to show significant 1991 events:

Largest number of raptors in one season: 19,724 in 1985

MARCH

1 RT-> RL->** CH-> NG->** BE-> GE->	2 NH-> RS->** AK-> TV->	3	4	5	6	7
8 **RL->**	9 **RT->**	10 **AK->**	11	12	13	14 **RS-> NG->** 44 AK /90
15 **CH-> SS->** 390 RS /90	16	17	18 **BE->** 7 GE /86	19	20 **TV->**	21
22	23	24 11 NG /84	25	26 2 PF /91 7 GE /88 748 TV /88	27 **NH-> OS->**	28 2 PF /90
29	30	31				

Largest # of raptors in month: 5670 in March 1988; Largest # of raptors in one day in month: 2080 on March 26, 1988

APRIL

1	2 <-RS	3 2 PF /91	4	5 ME-> PF-> 35 CH /88	6	7
8 706 RT /87	9	10 <-RT SS-> BW->	11	12 OS-> 22 RL /91	13	14 28 NH /91 9 OS /86
15 <-TV	16 <-BE 2 PF /90 26 NH /89	17 3 ME /88	18 1556 SS /76	19 BW->	20 1 GF /77	21 6007 BW /85
22 9 OS /88 1 SW /88	23	24 <-NG	25	26	27	28 <-AK 3 ME /90
29 4 GE /83	30 <-CH <-RL					

Largest # of raptors in month: 15,012 in April 1984; Largest # of raptors in one day in month: 7007 on April 21, 1985

MAY

1	2	3	4	5 1 SW /89	6 <-NH <-BW <-BE <-PF	7
8	9	10 <-OS	11 <-SS	12	13	14
15 <-RL <-ME	16	17	18 <-NG	19	20	21
22	23	24 <-OS <-GE	25 <-RS	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Largest # of raptors in month: 2695 in May 1980; Largest # of raptors in one day in month: 1492 on May 4, 1989

WILL THERE BE LOTS OF GOSHAWKS THIS SPRING?

by Bruce Duncan

There were 20 Northern Goshawks seen last spring at Beamer. That compares with other years as follows:

YEAR	NUMBER SEEN	HOURS OF OBSERVATION	GOSHAWKS PER HUNDRED HOURS
1975	12	na	---
1976	8	na	---
1977	11	na	---
1978	3	na	---
1979	2	na	---
1980	5	529	0.9
1981	8	562	1.4
1982	51	583	8.7
1983	73	565	12.9
1984	67	565	11.8
1985	25	609	4.1
1986	21	576	3.6
1987	31	682	4.5
1988	27	608	4.4
1989	14	499	2.8
1990	24	575	4.2
1991	20	548	3.7

Goshawks are seen in good numbers in migration in this part of the country on an approximate ten-year cycle. The table shows that the springs of 1982-84 were the last high point in the cycle. Ten years have passed since the start of that peak. Will 1992 bring us a lot of northward-bound Goshawks? I think so.

For spring hawk watchers, the previous fall provides clues about the return flight. Autumn 1991 produced a good flight of Northern Goshawks in southern Ontario, with counts as high as 28 in one day at Holiday Beach Migration Observatory near Windsor, and a catch of over 30 at the Hawk Cliff raptor banding station near St. Thomas. Those are high numbers compared to recent years.

Why does the count go so high every decade? The answer is straightforward: food. Goshawks living in the north have fewer food choices than those that breed in this part of the country. In winter, the key prey are Ruffed Grouse and Snowshoe Hares which, unfortunately for the Goshawk, have a population cycle of abundance and scarcity that repeats every ten years. At peaks Goshawks raise many young easily. Finding pickings easy when they leave their parents, those young stay in the north and we have years like 1975 -1981 when we see very few birds.

Once the prey population peaks, it quickly outpaces the carrying capacity of the land and suddenly collapses. There are many factors in addition to too little food that cause this dramatic decline in hare and grouse numbers, but two things stand out: the drop is sudden, and both species decline in the same year. There are many young Goshawks from the previous breeding season as well as plenty of adults, all of whom have had no trouble finding food. Suddenly, there are few prey and many predators. The Goshawks begin to search elsewhere and many move south. This has happened in the fall of 1991.

Since those birds will return to the northern range next spring, we will see more than the small numbers of recent years at Beamer. There should also be an "echo flight" next year. These are the ones who survive this year's low prey numbers in the north and come south again next fall. Because few will nest this year, the majority seen in 1993 will be adults.

Although there are no numbers available for hours of observation until 1980, the numbers of Goshawks noted in the table are lower from 1975 - 1981 compared to 1984 - 1991. These are both periods when most Goshawks are staying in the north because their prey populations are sufficient to keep them through the winters. The ones that appear at our migration lookouts are usually immatures, some of whom migrate in every year, no matter what the prey situation. The lower numbers of the seventies reflect, I think, fewer observers at Beamer and less familiarity with scarcer species. Now, we have more eyes watching the sky, and more experience behind those eyes. It makes a difference.

When I looked over the flight information during the last big springs for Goshawks, I found that most came through during late March and early April - although certainly not all. There were good days in the last half of some Aprils as well, perhaps composed mostly of immatures who do not feel the urgency adults do to return to the breeding grounds to nest. Good days for Goshawks were also good days for other species indicating there are no special weather conditions that bring this species. Some of the best days were:

Mar 24, 1984	11	Mar 24, 1999	11
Mar 25, 1984	7	Apr 02, 1983	9
Mar 26, 1984	5	Apr 02, 1982	6
Mar 30, 1983	6	Apr 16, 1983	5
Apr 01, 1984	5	Apr 17, 1983	8
April 02, 1983	9	Apr 25, 1982	8

Now is a good time to bone up on Goshawk ID features, and to look for a few wintering in the province. The spring will bring plenty to Beamer.

GOOD WEATHER

Comprehensive weather forecasts are available on the American PBS network [Channels 21 (Rochester) & 54 (Erie)] at 7:45AM, Monday-Friday. Environment Canada provides an excellent local forecast tape 24 hours a day (updated hourly between 6AM-9PM) from the Hamilton Airport Weather Office at Mount Hope - call (416) 679-3361. Two other sources are the Canadian Weather Network and the Weather Channel (USA).

IN MEMORIAM

Although we are a young organization, many of our members have known each other for a lot of years. Those who have friends in Buffalo will be saddened to hear of the deaths in 1991 of two members, Ward Klepfer and Kerr Parker, Jr. The Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Executive and members extend our sympathy to both families.

TWELVE YEARS AT BEAMER

by Walter Klabunde

Hawkwatching at Beamer over the past twelve years has produced several different types of highlights.

My first day was late in March of 1979. A fellow birdwatcher from Lewiston and I stood at the edge of the gorge and counted the hawks coming from the east and disappearing over the woods. Then, late in the afternoon, Turkey Vultures started to drift in over the plains. When we left that day, we had counted over 150 TVs. On returning to the parking lot we met George Meyers, who explained to us that the official lookout for counting hawks at Beamer was the parking lot, where we could see the hawks both coming and going.

The only other time I went to the point was on April 21, 1985. As leader of a Buffalo Ornithological Society field trip that day, with 30+ birders and the parking lot already filled with observers, we went to the point and spread out between the two lookouts to witness what turned out to be Beamer's biggest day so far. Everyone was amazed at the sight of Broadwings continuously drifting over Grimsby - as I remember it, there were 6007 BWs, and 1000 (exactly) miscellaneous hawks - including Beamer's first Swainson's Hawk. It was quite a day.

For the first three years I had an assistant, Jack Laughton, who came with me regularly, 5 days a week, right through the end of May. In those days we occasionally heard the drumming of Ruffed Grouse, which apparently is a sound of the past at Beamer. We also witnessed a Pileated Woodpecker flying by, heading east. After Jack's passing I saw two other special birds, a Sandhill Crane and, in two sucessive years, an Olive-sided Flycatcher which spent two or three days at the edge of the woods near the escarpment before continuing on its way north at the end of May.

My most spectacular hawkwatch incident occurred several years ago, in March. A Sharpie was approaching, just over the 'Hempine'. I had my binoculars trained on the bird as he was stooping at me - yes, ME!! I actually ducked as he came in, and of course he missed me. My only explanation for the incident was that I was wearing a fur-collared coat, which might have been mistaken for possible prey.

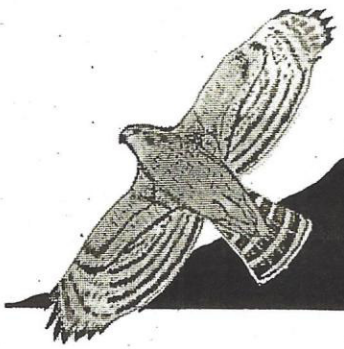
A specialty which we all enjoyed for five seasons was the Great Horned Owl, provided by Bob Shillabeer, which resided near the top of the 'Owl Tree'. Sadly, on the weekend of May 11-12, 1991, when no hawkwatchers were present, he 'flew' off, thanks to an unknown vandal. So we lost our most photographed friend.

In the last few years, as my visual acuity has dropped, I have been very thankful for my Beamer axiom, which says that the number of hawkwatchers is roughly proportional to the number of hawks - most of the time. Believe me, I am always grateful for all the assistance I receive, even when I don't get to see the hawks pointed out to me.

See you at Beamer.

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH EXECUTIVE: 1991-1992

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STATISTICS:	Rob Dobos 178 Cedarbrae Avenue, Waterloo, N2L 4S3 519-888-0553



Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch

Newsletter

Newsletter No. 5, August 1992

1992 ANNUAL MEETING AND BANQUET

Saturday, March 28, 1992 was the date of NPH's second banquet and get-together, and it proved to be just as much fun as the first. Most of the 43 people attending arrived between 5:00 and 6:00 pm and had a chance to buy tickets for the bucket raffle, organized by John Stevens. There were a number of excellent prizes donated by members and friends.

John Warren of Stoney Ridge Winery led us through taste testing of six wines from his cellars, five white and one red. They were fruity, not sweet, a touch acidic, perfumy, a touch French oaky, full, light and varied. Everyone found one, two, three, four, five or six that they liked. In fact, the table over which George Naylor generously poured found them all to their liking. Stoney Ridge really is an excellent winery.

The roast beef dinner was catered by Mackies of Grimsby - delicious. Thanks to Bruce and Laurie Mackenzie for organizing both the food and drink.

The annual meeting followed and is reported on separately in this newsletter.

Once things were cleared away, we moved on to a hawk quiz using Barry Cherriere's slides and allowed anyone and everyone to embarrass themselves by calling out answers. Even after all the wine, NPH members distinguished themselves (with a little help from the Hawk Cliff banders) as dependable hawk IDers. We do hope that a Harris's hawk never comes over the hempine, however, or we might get calls ranging from Golden Eagle to dark Red-tail.

Don Fowler then entertained us with a first-rate slide presentation on Hawk Cliff where there is a large fall migration and a group of active banders who have caught and released over 50,000 hawks since 1969. His pictures illustrated some typical and not so typical plumages and gave everyone a good idea of the operation on Lake Erie.

The evening was lots of fun. Walter Klabunde, NPH's honourary president, and his wife, Harriet, were there, as was a contingent of seven Hawk Cliff visitors. If you missed out, sorry. Next year should be as good; we'll hope to see you then.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT FOR 1991

by Bruce Duncan

At the banquet, I briefly reported on NPH's 1991 highlights. We have prepared a sightings board which is now in use at Beamer, and have lots of pamphlets which include a migration chart. These have been paid for by generous grants from MNR's CWIP fund, the Ontario Heritage Foundation and the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority. We thank all three organizations for making the hawk count that much better.

NPH now has over 50 members which means we're growing. Last year's Open House was a success. The Town of Grimsby declared the week of 1992's Open House "Hawkwatching Week in Grimsby".

Acceptance of Treasurer Gordon Bellerby's annual report was moved in his absence by Mike Street, seconded by Paul Summerskill and carried. Mary Ellen Hebb presented and moved acceptance of the Nominating Committee's report for the 1992 Executive. It seconded by John Stevens and carried. The names and addresses follow:

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH EXECUTIVE 1992

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BIRDS, BIRDERS OR STATISTICS?

by Mike Street

Members may have noted that there has not been much progress towards erecting a tower at Beamer CA. A good part of the reason is simply that there is not a consensus among the group. The following is an attempt to state some of the issues, pro and con.

Central to the discussion is the question, "Is the purpose of the Hawkwatch to let people get a good look at lots of raptors, to count as many as possible of the raptors going by Beamer, or to maintain the integrity of the statistics?" The answer will be 'Yes' to at least one of the three; occasionally someone will say "All of the above!"

Some people feel that the circle has been good enough for them for many years, so why change? Others want the better view a tower would provide. (A solution here would be to build a tower well away from the circle, perhaps near the quarry; those who didn't want to use it would not be inconvenienced.)

A second issue is the number of birds missed because of the trees, especially those on the north rim. There seems little doubt that most falcons are missed because they go by well out in the Grimsby plain or close to the lakeshore. On warm days with moderate to strong south winds, many birds soar over the plain, low enough or far enough out that they cannot be seen from the circle. The question here is whether or not NPH results are truly valid if these birds are not included.

The view which seems to generate the most heat is that changing the count location, from ground level at the circle to a tower, would skew the statistics gathered in the first 17 years of the Hawkwatch. On the other hand, many feel that things have already changed, or are continuously changing, and thus the statistics are skewed anyway. Chief among these points are missed sightings due to the growth of the trees over 17 years, the fact that most falcons are missed anyway, and the many changes among the people who actually do the counts. One argument on the statistics side is that even if there was a tower, birds out over the plain would be too far away to safely identify; the response is that birds out over the plain would be no further away than most of the birds regularly being identified beyond the farmhouse to the south.

The 'purity of the statistics' view seems to be based on a premise that statistics cannot be adjusted to account for significant changes. The opposing view points out that such adjustments are made all the time; examples given include adjustments due to changes in the ethnic makeup of populations, the demise of industries for whatever reason, or changes in public tastes due to new technologies.

A last example comes from other hawkwatches. The new tower at Holiday Beach near Windsor, and the switch to a single counter at Braddock Bay, NY certainly resulted in significant changes to the number of birds reported. Yet these new results were not thrown out; rather adjustments were made.

A final, meet-in-the-midddle view of the statistics question suggests that while Beamer results will indeed be skewed by a tower initially, over time they will regain their uniformity. If in the process more raptors are counted and the quality of data improved, so much the better.

The discussion has obscured a more important question, "Will the Niagara Escarpment Commission allow a tower to be built at Beamer? If so, where and how high?" If the answer is a flat "No, never," the above discussion is moot. It would seem that the proper next step for the NPH is, together with the Conservation Authority, to approach the Escarpment board and get an answer.

CAPE MAY THIS FALL?

ANYONE INTERESTED IN TRIP TO CAPE MAY FOR THE FALL MIGRATION IS ASKED TO CONTACT GORDON BELLERBY AT THE ADDRESS ABOVE.

COLOUR IN HAWK PLUMAGES

by Bruce Duncan

Thinking it might be useful to summarize hawk heterochrosis (i.e. colour variation in the plumage of these species), I consulted several books including the *Audubon Society Encyclopedia of North American Birds*, edited by John Terres; Bill Clark and Brian Wheeler's *Field Guide to the Hawks*, Ralph Palmer's *Handbook of North American Birds*, and an article by Ron Pittaway in Volume 9 of *Ontario Birds* entitled "Checklist of Recognizable Ontario Bird Forms'.

Most hawk watchers these days refer to 'colour morphs' rather than 'colour phases', and Bill Clark uses the phrase exclusively in his guide, pointing out that 'phase' implies a character that changes with time while 'morph' does not. Palmer uses 'phase' and notes that it designates a plumage when the differences are not bridged by a spectrum of intermediates. This usage can get complicated - consider the range of plumages in Rough-legged Hawks for example.

I like 'morph' and will use it here even when I quote Palmer. I'll also follow Clark's thinking (i.e. the colour does not change over time) but won't stick with Palmer's usage since there are intermediates in Gyrfalcons and Rough-legged Hawks. Almost everyone still refers to light and dark morphs of them and describes an intermediate as such or as a lightly marked or heavily marked bird or in some other manner to distinguish it from the two morphs.

Where the frequency of a colour form is extremely low - sort of a one in a million thing - most authors do not describe it as a colour morph. Instead they consider it an aberrant plumage and use one of the following terms (there are a few other terms but they do not apply to hawks):

Melanism - an excess of dark pigments (usually melanin) in the feathers
Total albinism - a complete absence of melanin from the eyes, skin and feathers
Incomplete albinism - melanin completely absent from one or two of the above areas but not all three.
Partial albinism - certain feathers only are involved, often in a symmetrical pattern.
Imperfect albinism - melanin is partially inhibited in eyes, skin or feathers, but not totally in any of these.
Erythrism - an excess of reddish-brown pigment in the feathers.

Terres notes that up to 1965, melanism had been found in 29 species while albinism was in 304 species. That is a substantial imbalance.

Ron Pittaway lists the following colour morphs for hawks in Ontario (he also points out that some of these forms have not yet been seen in the province):

Broad-winged Hawk: light morph, dark morph
Swainson's Hawk: light morph, dark morph, rufous morph
Red-tailed Hawk: light morph, eastern race (borealis); light morph, Krider's race (kriderii); light morph, western race (calurus); rufous morph, western race (calurus); dark morph, western race (calurus); dark morph, Harlan's race (harlani); light morph, Harlan's race (harlani).
Ferruginous Hawk: light morph; dark morph
Rough-legged Hawk: light morph, intermediates; dark morph
Gyrfalcon: white morph; intermediates; dark morph

I want to add some information on two very rare (one non-existent?) morphs or colour forms. Ron Pittaway makes no mention of dark morph Red-shouldered Hawk. I checked through several books and found that Palmer says that no colour morphs are known for the species. Bill Clark lists no morphs but mentions reports of albinism and partial albinism. He makes no mention of melanistic individuals, or even that there is a dark morph.

Palmer gives the following information for dark morph Broad-winged Hawks: *"Individual variation in the "normal" (morph) is considerable...Beyond this range of lighter to darker is a discontinuity separating the rather rare melanistic individuals. The focus of these in summer is in Alberta, but in various seasons records exist at least for Manitoba, California, Arizona, North Dakota, Wisconsin and Iowa and as far southeast as southern Florida."*

There are Ontario records of this morph but Palmer obviously had not seen the reports or none had appeared in the scientific literature. Clark describes the dark morph adult and immature, and notes that they are rare and usually seen in the west. Both authors comment that complete and partial albinism have been reported for the species.

I think that all dark coloured hawks should be examined with care. Only the Rough-leg is commonly seen at Beamer and all the rest are rarities. Dark birds are generally harder to ID than light since some of the markings are obscured by dark pigment. Not only is there the excitement of an unusual bird but there may be a chance of not only one of our regular species but also Swainson's, Ferruginous and even Common Black Hawk which has wandered as far out of its normal range as Minnesota.

SUMMARY OF 1992 NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH

By Rob Dobos

The 1992 Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch (NPH) at Beamer Memorial Conservation Area above Grimsby, Ontario, was certainly one of the best yet. Although hawkwatchers were not, for the most part, dazzled by huge numbers of the typically more abundant species, such as broad-wings and sharp-shins, record high counts were set or tied for six species, and two potentially new species were recorded this year.

A total of 14678 hawks were counted between March 1 and May 17. This is slightly lower than the 1980-92 average of 14891 birds. The total number of hours counted was also just below the 1980-92 average, but the statistic representing the numbers of hawks per hour of 27.1 is slightly above the average of 26.2.

Of great interest was the long awaited first ever Black Vulture seen at Beamer, which thrilled those present on April 4. Then, to top that, a very unexpected immature Ferruginous Hawk was identified by several experienced observers on April 13. Reports for both sightings have been forwarded to the Ontario Bird Records Committee, and if accepted, these provincial rarities will be added to the official NPH record.

The Turkey Vulture flight was the second best on record with a count of 1990 birds. This continues the trend of high numbers each year since 1988 (1988-92 mean = 1795, compared to 1980-87 mean = 791). A new record high count was set for Osprey with 64, shattering last year's previous high of 46. On April 12 a new one day high was also set for this species when 16 were counted, and April 20 also had a good count of 12 birds (the previous daily high was nine). The Bald Eagle total of 22 birds was similarly a record high. The continuing upward trend for the latter two species is quite encouraging, hopefully indicative of increasing breeding populations in Ontario.

The count of 209 Northern Harriers is the third highest, only ten birds below last year's record high. Also, a new record high one day total was set April 20 with 28 birds. The accipiter flight was not very remarkable. Sharp-shin numbers were well below the 1980-92 average of 4149. Cooper's Hawks were marginally above average, however a new high one day count of 36 birds was set on April 13. The anticipated peak to the Northern Goshawk cycle appears to be still another year away, as only 34 birds were counted. The last peak (73 birds) was in 1983.

The Red-shouldered Hawk flight was the second best on record with 1187 birds counted. It is interesting to note that about 45 % of the total flight went through in April. Most years, about 75 % of the Red-shouldered flight has come through in March (1984 was another exception). On April 12 an interesting bird believed to be a melanistic (dark) Red-shouldered Hawk was observed. The Broad-winged Hawk total was fairly meager at 2761, well below the 1980-92 average of 4173. The peak flight day was April 22 when 1035 birds were counted. The Red-tailed Hawk total of 3861 was a new record high, exceeding the previous high of 3567 in 1988. The flight seemed to be consistently strong from early March right through to early May. The Rough-legged Hawk total of 128 was the third highest on record, and birds were being counted up to the end of the hawkwatch period.

The total of 12 Golden Eagles ties the record high set in 1985. Ten of these occurred during the 12 day period from March 29-April 9. The American Kestrel flight was below average with 92 birds counted. The count of 12 Merlins ties the record high previously set in 1987. A new one day high count was also set on April 13 with four observed. The six Peregrine Falcons also ties the record high from 1990.

The NPH Committee would like to thank the following volunteers for their help as official hawk counters during 1992: John Barker, Gordon Bellerby, Bouwe Bergsma, Barry Cherriere, Michael Clark, Jim Coey, Ted Cole, Dave Copeland, Rob Dobos, Jim Dowall, Bruce Duncan, Chris Escott, Verne Evans, Denys Gardiner, Jerry Guild, Audrey Heagy, Mary Ellen Hebb, Michael King, Walter Klabunde, Bill Lamond, Bruce Mackenzie, Don Malena, Kevin McLaughlin, George Meyers, George Naylor, Alfred Raab, Brian Ratcliff, Tim Reavley, Paul Rose, Robert Shillabeer, John Stevens, Mike Street, Paul Summerskill, Brian Wylie.

MOGGRIDGE GALLERY DONATES ART

Mrs. Vivian Moggridge of Moggridge Gallery, Port Plaza, St. Catharines has made a very generous donation of two framed limited edition wildlife prints to NPH. These have been used as fund raisers for the organization and have brought in a substantial amount of money for our treasury. We may be able to erect some weather instruments at Beamer using this money. The lucky and most appreciative winners of the large print drawn for at the Open House were John and Victoria Carley of Toronto.

The NPH executive and members say a very big thank you to Mrs. Moggridge and Moggridge Galley. If you're shopping for wildlife art, be sure to go there and mention NPH.

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Counts – March 1992

Date –>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Totals
Turkey Vulture						4										1	1	2		1.0	6.0		5	2	60	6		23	227	30	64	432
Osprey																																0
Bald Eagle					1					1						1		1	1				1		2			1	1			10
Northern Harrier		1	1		2		1										1	1		1.0	1.0				8	1		1	9	2	4	34
Sharp–shinned Hawk		1	2	5	3	1			3	3					1		1	5	4	2.0	6.0		3	2	11	2		4	6	12	17	94
Cooper's Hawk		2	1	1					2							1		10			7.0				3	6		1	13	3	10	60
Northern Goshawk				2									1					1							5	1			2	1		13
Red–shouldered Hawk				1	1				13	24			1	1	2	1		42	4		6.0		5	1	32	73		27	169	169	88	660
Broad–winged Hawk																																0
Swainson's Hawk																																0
Red–tailed Hawk	4	129	198	111	24	74			53	11			5	7	44	25	3	243	44	5.0	111.0	1	23	47	32	23		69	299	102	127	1814
Rough–legged Hawk			2		1				3	1						4		1			1.0		2	2	2			1	10	2	2	34
Golden Eagle						1																							3	1	1	6
American Kestrel				1						2										1.0					9			4	3	1	4	25
Merlin																																0
Peregrine Falcon																																0
Gyrfalcon																																0
Unid. Accipiter			1							1					2			1											10	1	5	21
Unid. Buteo					2				23						1			3	3	4.0					5	4		4	186	17	17	269
Unid. Eagle																																0
Total Raptors	4	133	205	121	34	80	1	0	97	43	0	0	7	8	50	33	6	310	56	14.0	138.0	1	39	54	169	116	0	135	938	341	339	3472
Hours Counted	6.5	6.5	7	7	6	6	5	5.75	7	7	0	0	6.5	5.5	6	8	8.25	7	8	8.0	8.3	4	7	8	7.2	6	0	7.75	9	7.25	8	193
Wind Direction	WSW	E	NE	NE	NE	E	VAR	FOG	SSW	S	RAIN	--	WNW	VAR	N	SSW	SW	VAR	NE	VAR	E	SNOW	VAR	VAR	S	SW	RAIN	NW	VAR	N	VAR	

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Counts – April 1992

Date –>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		Totals
Black Vulture				1*																												1
Turkey Vulture	63	19	44	151	164	138	163	224	71	56		21	81	55	11		2		3	21	1	9	82	3	22	7	12	30	16	13		1482
Osprey					1		1	4	1			16	1	4	3				2	12			1	3	1	2	3		1			56
Bald Eagle	1		3			1		1					1							2					1	1						11
Northern Harrier				6	1	6	2	8	3	2		1	12	8	11			1	4	28	2	9	5	1		6	1	8	7	2		134
Sharp-shinned Hawk	4		1	16	7	32	59	41	37	36		16	149	62	148		1	1	292	769	253	244	130	47	64	87	29	83	64	10		2682
Cooper's Hawk	2	1	3	8	4	4	4	7	10	2		3	36	1	5				1	6	3	4	1	2	2	5	1	4	1	1		121
Northern Goshawk						1		3	1	1			8	1									3				1	1				20
Red-shouldered Hawk	28	12	33	101	6	60	34	93	29	25		1	49	2	12					21	1		2		4	7	2		1			523
Broad-winged Hawk															1				10	306	479	1035	78	91	40	135	35	97	27	22		2356
Swainson's Hawk																																0
Red-tailed Hawk	83	54	38	150	59	147	48	193	75	70		17	430	91	86				11	48	12	28	25	12	4	29	36	47	13	5		1811
Ferruginous Hawk													1*																			1
Rough-legged Hawk	1		3	2		3	1	4		1		1	20	3	7				1	7		2	1		2	3	4	7				73
Golden Eagle			2			1		1	1														1									6
American Kestrel	1		1	3	2	4	4	2	4	5		3	1	7	5				1	6		3	1			2	3		2			60
Merlin												2	4						1	3												10
Peregrine Falcon													1	1						1						1		1				5
Gyrfalcon																																0
Unid. Accipiter	1	1	1	6	1	1	3		5				2		2					9		1	3			2						38
Unid. Buteo		6	2	83	4	40	7	7	8	4		1		1	1				3	5	2	7	23			12		6	2			224
Unid. Eagle			1																							2						3
Unid. Falcon							1						1	1	1											1						5
Unid. Raptor	3		3	8	5	3	2	21	3	1			8	1	1				1	21	2		4					1				88
Total Raptors	187	93	135	535	254	441	329	609	248	203	0	82	805	238	294	0	3	2	330	1265	755	1342	360	159	140	302	127	285	134	53		9710
Hours Counted	6.5	6.75	7.85	9	9.5	9	8.7	9.5	9.5	9	3.25	7	8.7	7.25	7	0	6.25	6	9.75	10.5	8.5	7.5	8	7.25	8	10	7.75	10	9.5	6.5		236
Wind Direction	VAR	NW	W	N	NW	VAR	SSW	NW	SW	N	RAIN	NW	NE	W	E	RAIN	FOG	RAIN	NNE	SW	S	SW	SW	NE	ENE	NE	NNE	NE	SSW	NE		

* subject to confirmation by the Ontario Bird Records Committee

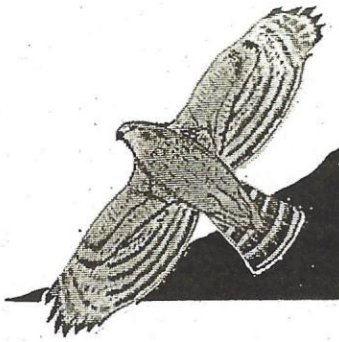
Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Counts – May 1992

Date –>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Totals
Turkey Vulture		4	18	7	2	7	1	4	8	2	5	5	2		7		4															76
Osprey	2	1		1			1	1			2																					8
Bald Eagle		1																														1
Northern Harrier	5	1	4	9	2				4	1	7	5			3																	41
Sharp–shinned Hawk	173	105	26	65	40	25	11	7	21	1	21	75	29		26	8	9															642
Cooper's Hawk	1		3	2	2		2		1			3			3	1																18
Northern Goshawk		1																														1
Red–shouldered Hawk					1		2			1																						4
Broad–winged Hawk	96	26	7	168	11	10			1	1	3	11	1		63	1	6															405
Swainson's Hawk																																0
Red–tailed Hawk	5	3	5	50	43	24	7	6	2	15	15	18	7		36																	236
Rough–legged Hawk	2	1	2	7		4				2					2		1															21
Golden Eagle																																0
American Kestrel	1	3		2									1																			7
Merlin	1							1																								2
Peregrine Falcon		1																														1
Gyrfalcon																																0
Unid. Accipiter																																0
Unid. Buteo			2				4																									6
Unid. Eagle																																0
Unid. Falcon		1	2																													3
Unid. Raptor		1		10	2		1	1					1																			16
Total Raptors	286	149	69	321	103	70	29	20	37	23	53	117	41	0	140	10	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1488
Hours Counted	7.4	7.8	5.5	7.3	7.5	8	6	8	3	9.25	8	7	8	0	7.75	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	112
Wind Direction	VAR	SW	VAR	VAR	VAR	N	NE	NE	N	NE	S	SSW	VAR	--	VAR	NE	SW	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	

Annual Summaries 1975–1992

	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	TOTALS	1975–92 M	1980–92 M	Highest Total & Date	Earliest Date
Black Vulture																		1*	1	0.5	1.0	1 –Apr 4/92	Apr 4/92
Turkey Vulture	53	127	450	293	294	620	671	521	895	616	948	837	977	2331	1406	1463	1785	1990	16277	904.3	1158.5	748 –Mar 26/88	Feb 23/84
Osprey	7	6	10	6	18	24	19	27	20	38	36	33	30	41	36	40	46	64	501	27.8	34.9	16 –Apr 12/92	Mar 26/77
Bald Eagle	1	2	2	1	2	8	1	7	7	5	10	14	7	16	17	15	17	22	154	8.6	11.2	7 –Mar18/86;Mar26/88	Feb 26/86
Northern Harrier	20	42	78	53	54	72	102	131	125	127	113	143	217	162	175	194	219	209	2236	124.2	153.0	28 –Apr 20/92	Feb 19/84
Sharp–shinned Hawk	844	4162	4342	1874	4007	4614	4095	4880	3931	4683	4480	3549	2831	3108	3576	7005	3767	3418	69166	3842.6	4149.0	1556 –Apr 18/76	Feb 11/87
Cooper's Hawk	36	48	113	67	62	135	179	121	160	190	152	196	199	229	180	311	220	199	2797	155.4	190.1	36 –Apr 13/92	Feb 11/87
Northern Goshawk	12	8	9	3	2	3	8	51	73	67	25	21	31	27	14	24	20	34	432	24.0	30.6	11 –Mar 24/84	Feb 28/88
Red–shouldered Hawk	220	438	643	324	624	684	528	638	624	838	764	901	876	861	1102	1440	761	1187	13453	747.4	861.8	390 –Mar 15/90	Feb 23/84
Broad–winged Hawk	968	431	1513	1185	5145	4914	6904	2305	4118	7844	8239	3823	1628	2910	2304	4434	2063	2761	63489	3527.2	4172.8	6007 –Apr 21/85	Apr 4/85
Swainson's Hawk											1			1	1				3	1.0	1.0	3 dates with 1 bird	Apr 21/85
Red–tailed Hawk	1129	1003	2502	2735	2409	2848	2604	2607	3150	3105	3410	2852	3265	3567	2615	3467	3023	3861	50152	2786.2	3105.7	706 –Apr 8/87	Feb 11/87
Ferruginous Hawk																		1*	1	0.5	1.0	1 –Apr 13/92	Apr 13/92
Rough–legged Hawk	46	26	57	65	78	37	41	131	59	85	48	45	77	87	45	87	145	128	1287	71.5	78.1	24 –Apr 2/82	Feb 11/87
Golden Eagle		2	1	3	2	3	4	4	8	6	12	7	6	3	7	10	8	12	98	5.4	6.9	4 –Apr 29/83	Feb 24/84
American Kestrel	32	49	96	60	40	101	114	102	71	56	150	126	85	148	132	207	180	92	1841	102.3	120.3	44 –Mar 14/90	Feb 25/87
Merlin	2	1	2		1	1	2	5	2	2	5	5	12	5	4	9	11	12	81	4.8	5.8	4 –Apr 13/92	Mar 11/77
Peregrine Falcon		1		1	1	1	3	3			2	1	1	4	2	6	5	6	37	2.6	3.1	2 –Mar28/90;Apr16/90	Mar 12/88
Gyrfalcon			1																1	1.0	0.0	1 –Apr 20/77	Apr 20/77
Unid. Raptors	53	373	197	622	132	509	647	435	467	640	880	1504	266	634	592	582	2681	681	11895	660.8	809.1		
Total Raptors	3423	6719	10016	7292	12871	14574	15922	11968	13710	18302	19275	14057	10508	14134	12208	19294	14951	14678	233902	12994.6	14890.8		
Hours Counted	89.3	112	--	--	310	529	562.6	583.1	565	564.6	608.5	576.2	681.5	608	499.3	574.5	548.3	541.5	7953.4	441.9	572.5		
Birds per Hour	38.4	60	--	--	41.52	27.55	28.3	20.52	24.27	32.42	31.68	24.4	15.42	23.25	24.45	33.58	27.27	27.11		26.7	26.2		

* subject to confirmation by the Ontario Bird Records Committee



Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Newsletter

Newsletter No. 6, February 1993

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH ANNUAL BANQUET

SATURDAY, APRIL 24, 1993

The banquet and slide show last March were most enjoyable. This year's will be just as good or better. The location is once again Stoney Ridge Winery's Puddicombe Farm. The highlight of the evening will be an illustrated talk on Osprey and Golden Eagles given by Canadian Wildlife Service researcher Peter Ewins .

Socializing and the bucket raffle begin at 5PM. The before supper wine tasting starts at 6:15, and dinner is at 7:00. At some point there will be a slide quiz and an opportunity to buy some of the wine if you wish.

This will be an enjoyable evening so get your tickets now. The room can accomodate 42 people, and 26 tickets are still available, priced at $15 for members and $20 for non-members. Call Mike Street at (416) 648-3737 to make arrangements.

AUNTIE M.E. WANTS YOU - AGAIN!! PLEASE HELP

Hawk counters are asked to call Mary Ellen Hebb at (416) 937-7671, evenings from 7PM-10PM, to schedule hawkwatching day(s) for 1993.

Your help is needed, especially in the first half of May. We understand the inclination to head for the woods and look for warblers, but our work needs attention too. If enough people offer to help, it should be easy to fill in all the dates.

If you are interested in learning to become a counter, be sure to let Mary Ellen know. Many of our observers are glad to share the work and help newcomers.

In addition to the normal count at the Beamer CA parking lot, this year the NPH is trying to do some research at another nearby location (Casablanca Rd. & QEW - see 'Sattelite Station', P. 2) so more observers are needed. Again we understand that folks "Don't want to miss the main action at Beamer", but even one day of your time at the satellite location may be significant.

SECOND ANNUAL OPEN HOUSE FRIDAY, APRIL 9, 1993

The hawks will again be on public view on April 9 when NPH holds its third Open House. Let's hope for the right weather and a good flight - not like last year when two days of fog spoiled things. In case of bad weather, events will be postponed a day, to Saturday, April 10.

Throughout the day, members of the Hawkwatch stationed in the center of the circle and at the tip will help beginners to see and identify raptors passing over Beamer. (Volunteers are needed for this.)

Bruce and Daina Hunter of the University of Guelph Wild Bird Clinic will be back to show visitors some raptors in the hand, and the very welcome coffee truck will once again be parked in the traffic circle. A special program for kids, developed by Carla Carlson, will be given at 11AM and again at noon. Short 'Hawk Talks' will be held on the hour from 11AM-2PM, and the raffle draw will take place at 3PM. At press time the committee is arranging for displays from conservation areas and the Ministry of Natural Resources.

Be sure to invite your family and friends; it'll be a good day for them and for the birds too - we hope.

SATELLITE STATION TO BE TESTED IN 1993

One of NPH's stated purposes is to conduct research into the movement of raptors through the area. What may not be obvious is that this includes locations other than Beamer CA.

We all know that, depending on winds, the birds can fly north or south of the parking lot. There is general consensus that falcons particularly stay close to the lake, and people viewing from the tip often see birds out over the Grimsby plain which the counters in the parking lot don't see.

Research Director Brian Ratcliff has identified the intersection of Casablanca Rd and the QEW as a good location to conduct some tests. Now all we need are some volunteers to help carry out the work.

If enough people are available, Brian would like to pick two one-week periods during which the location would be staffed every day. Hours would be the same as at Beamer, 8AM-5PM. Otherwise, the spot will be in operation on weekends only. For more information, please call Brian at (416) 562-3102. If you can help, leave your name and date(s) with Mary Ellen or with Brian.

DR. HAROLD H. AXTELL 1904 - 1992

Dr. Harold H. Axtell passed away on October 24, 1992, at the age of 88. A long time Niagara Hawkwatcher, Dr. Axtell had been in poor health for the past year.

His colourful past included a number of years as a big band musician. When the orchestra disbanded he went to Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y. to study and teach ornithology. This ultimately led him to Buffalo and the Museum of Science where for many years he was a Curator of Vertebrate Zoology.

Dr. Axtell's extensive travels across the United States and Canada, led to a particular fondness for Alaska. He has been described by many prominent ornithologists as perhaps the best field biologist in all of North America. Retiring to Fort Erie, Dr. Axtell could often be seen along the Niagara River, binoculars and scope in hand, enjoying his lifelong love affair with birds.

He lived a full, rich and distinguished life, and he clearly enjoyed his work. To his many friends he was warm and friendly individual, eager at any time to talk at length about birds. He will be sadly missed.

Kayo Roy

A UNIQUE GIFT

by Roslynne Price

You may have wondered if it's worthwhile coming out to the annual meeting and banquet of the NPH. Well, consider this your official invitation, for I can assure you that it is a wonderful social evening with fellow hawk-watchers, delicious food (NO hawks on the menu here!), delectable wines, interesting slides (hawks, of course), and many fantastic prizes in the Bucket Raffle!

It's the prizes I wish to discuss here. Last year we were fortunate to win two prizes. The first, *A Field Guide to Flattened Fauna*, was not exactly a topic to discuss over a fine meal, but interesting never-the-less! The second - the almost forgotten final draw - was worth the wait!

We won a day of hawk-banding with the NPH president and his new bride. Of course I am talking about Bruce Duncan and Janet Snaith. On a sunny and warm Saturday morning in mid-September we met Bruce and Janet at their banding station a few kilometers from Hawk Cliff, near St. Thomas, Bruce showed us 'the ropes'. We approached with great anticipation as we had never before held live birds. And these were birds of prey - a great way to be introduced to banding!

Several captives were ready and waiting in their respective 'cans'. Bruce showed us the measurements and data taken - weight, wing cord, fault bars on Kestrels' tails, etc. - and also the number of Flat Flies present! (I'll come back to this later!) It was an education to see these great birds close-up. We banded an immature Red Tail, a beautiful male Kestrel, and a female Sharpie. All birds were released soon after they were measured.

After that, Bruce gave us a thorough demonstration of the effect when one stomps on a Flat Fly! Flat Flies are leech-like parasites that attach themselves to hawks and weaken them. Usually Bruce is very sympathetic to natural creatures, but when it comes to Flat Flies, he's ruthless - you wouldn't know it was the same man!

In between, when things were slow, and the flat flies were all smushed, we counted migrating hummers and monarch butterflies. Just when we thought the most exciting moment had passed, we were surprised by a second thrill!

First we caught a Merlin in the net and got to examine this beautiful falcon closely. Shortly after releasing it, an immature Harrier and a Merlin swooped into the same net at the same time!! We inexperienced folk stayed in the blind while Janet & Bruce ran out to extricate both hawks. Unfortunately, the Merlin got away; we think it may have been the same bird banded earlier.

At the end of a memorable and fun day, we had banded 27 hawks of 5 different species. Bruce & Janet truly have a unique gift, working with and banding these birds. We also got to meet some of the other Hawk Cliff banders.

So the moral of the story is: Sign up early for the annual meeting and banquet. You won't be disappointed! And don't forget to enter the bucket raffle. Maybe you'll win a prize that will educate and entertain you, as we did!

BEAMER CA / BRADDOCK BAY SPRING 1992: A COMPARISON

by Gordon Bellerby

A first look at the spring 1992 statistics from our Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch at Beamer CA and that at Braddock Bay near Rochester, NY is rather depressing: NPH saw 14,678 raptors, vs. BB's 56,493. Worse, twice in April they had great flights of 17,000+, i.e. each day more than NPH saw in the whole season!

April 20 and 22, with SW winds and warm front conditions, were peak days at both: Beamer had 306 BWs & 1,035 BWs respectively, while Braddock Bay counted 15,597 and 14,996 BWs. (Incidentally, Beamer's highest ever BW count is 6,007 on April 21, 1985!)

If Broad Wings are excluded, however, the figures become quite interesting: 11,917 in 72 count days at Beamer vs. 16,429 in 100 days (19 Feb - 10 June) at Braddock Bay.

March figures are very different from April's. In 27 days Beamer counted 3,472 hawks; Braddock recorded 1,579. During most of March cold north and easterly winds prevailed, as is usual. Things changed with the arrival of warm fronts in mid-April.

Comparing individual species, we had a Black Vulture on April 4; Braddock counted one on April 3! Eagles showed well at both stations: 34 vs. 127. Note that Braddock had 11 Golden Eagles (8 in one hour) on April 20, and on one day in June they had 8 Bald Eagles! The ratio at both stations was the same - 2 Bald Eagles to 1 Golden Eagle.

Accipiters were close, 3,651 vs. 3,959, with the same numbers of Sharpies and Northern Goshawks. They had more Cooper's, 477 vs. 199. Our Sharpie count was close to normal, but Braddock notes that its numbers "have crashed".

For Buteos, the late April weather clearly favored Braddock Bay, as I suspect it does each year, although the earlier migrating Red-shoulders were more numerous at Beamer, 1,187 vs. 807. Red-tails were close, 3,861 vs. 4,123 (72 vs. 100 days, remember), but not Rough-legs - Braddock Bay had a record 661 against our 128.

Among the falcons, Peregrines and Merlins were similar, but they had four times as many Kestrels, 92 vs. 355. It does seem that many Kestrels slip by us below the escarpment.

Reading Braddock Bay's report clearly shows the influence weather patterns have on their numbers. Low daily totals are invariably associated with easterly winds, and high numbers with warm fronts and SW winds. Thus early in the season, when northerly and easterly winds prevail, Beamer is favoured; when things warm up in April, Braddock Bay gets the nod.

What does all this tell us, other than that "There are lies, damn lies and then statistics?" Well, basically that the counts are similar, except during warm front conditions with SW winds - when Braddock Bay is flooded with birds and we pity the poor counter.

GOOD WEATHER

American PBS network [Channels 17 (Buffalo), 21 (Rochester) & 54 (Erie)] at 6:45AM, Monday-Friday. Environment Canada provides an excellent local forecast tape 24 hours a day (updated hourly between 6AM-9PM) from the Hamilton Airport Weather Office at Mount Hope - call (416) 679-3361. Two other sources are the Canadian Weather Network and the Weather Channel (USA).

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NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH MIGRATION CALENDAR FOR BEAMER CONSERVATION AREA

NOTES:

1) Species initials and Right (->) or Left (<-) arrow:

This combination indicates the start or end of the normal (at Beamer) migration period for that species. The same in **bold** type indicates the start or end of a noticeable peak period for that species. The box in which this combination is located indicates the day and month on which the period is likely to start.

2) A number, followed by species initials, followed by a slash (/) and a two-digit number:

This combination indicates the largest number (the first number) ever seen in one day of that species; the two-digit number following the / indicates the year in which this occurred. The box in which this combination is located indicates the day and month on which the event occurred. Example: 390 RS /90 in the March 15 box indicates that the highest number of Red-shouldered Hawks recorded in one day was 390, seen on March 15, 1990.

TV - Turkey Vulture
BV - Black Vulture
OS - Osprey
BE - Bald Eagle
GE - Golden Eagle
NH - Northern Harrier
SS - Sharp-shinned Hawk
CH - Cooper's Hawk
NG - Northern Goshawk
RS - Red-shouldered Hawk
BW - Broad-winged Hawk
RT - Red-tailed Hawk
SW - Swainson's Hawk
RL - Rough-legged Hawk
FH - Ferruginous Hawk
AK - American Kestrel
ME - Merlin
PF - Peregrine Falcon
GF - Gyrfalcon

The following information, based on 18 years of data from the Beamer Hawkwatch, has been updated to show significant 1992 events:

Largest number of raptors in one season: 19,724 in 1985

MARCH

1 RT-> RL->** CH-> NG->** BE-> GE->	2 NH-> RS->** AK-> TV->	3	4	5	6	7
8 **RL->**	9 **RT->**	10 **AK->**	11	12	13	14 **RS-> NG->** 44 AK /90
15 **CH-> SS->** 390 RS /90	16	17	18 **BE->** 7 GE /86	19	20 **TV->**	21
22	23	24 11 NG /84	25	26 2 PF /91 7 GE /88 748 TV /88	27 NH-> OS->	28 2 PF /90
29	30	31				

Largest # of raptors in month: 5670 in March 1988; Largest # of raptors in one day in month: 2080 on March 26, 1988

APRIL

1	2 **<-RS**	3 2 PF /91	4 1 BV /92*	5 ME-> PF->	6	7
8 706 RT /87	9	10 **<-RT SS->** BW->	11	12 **OS->** 22 RL /91 16 OS /92	13 4 ME /92 36 CH /92 1 FH /92*	14 28 NH /91
15 **<-TV**	16 **<-BE** 2 PF /90	17	18 1556 SS /76	19 **BW->**	20 1 GF /77 28 NH /92	21 1 SW /85 6007 BW /85
22 1 SW /88	23	24 **<-NG**	25	26	27	28 **<-AK**
29 4 GE /83	30 **<-CH <-RL**					

* Subject to acceptance by Ontario Bird Records Comittee

Largest # of raptors in month: 15,012 in April 1984; Largest # of raptors in one day in month: 7007 on April 21, 1985

MAY

1	2	3	4	5 1 SW /89	6 **<-NH <-BW** **<-BE <-PF**	7
8	9	10 <-OS	11 <-SS	12	13	14
15 <-RL <-ME	16	17	18 <-NG	19	20	21
22	23	24 <-OS <-GE	25 <-RS	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Largest # of raptors in month: 2695 in May 1980; Largest # of raptors in one day in month: 1492 on May 4, 1989

OBSERVATIONS OF TURKEY VULTURE MIGRATION THROUGH GRIMSBY

by Ian Rabenda

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatchers have assumed for many years that the large number of migrant raptors visible in the spring is due to geographical factors such as the Great Lakes and the escarpment ridge, which cause migrants to focus their paths over the Beamer CA observation site in Grimsby.

Over the years, however, each spring season of observation at Beamer presented new clues suggesting that the Turkey Vulture count through Grimsby was vastly underestimated. Finally one event in particular in March of 1987 spurred me into action.

On that late March day I had to leave Beamer observation post in mid-afternoon. On my way home, about 5 km east along the escarpment ridge road, I encountered a large flock of about 100 migrant Turkey Vultures, moving west towards Beamer; a continuous procession of new birds was still arriving from behind the trees on the eastern horizon. I returned to Beamer CA to observe this spectacle again with the other observers there. Not one single Turkey Vulture was observed that day from the parking lot observation post! They all obviously moved by Grimsby that day, since none could be found roosting and very few passed in the following days. I became determined at that point to conduct an investigation into the true nature of the Turkey Vulture movement through Grimsby.

All clues indicated that missed Turkey Vultures were passing south of Beamer. I decided that in 1988 I would conduct the first comprehensive survey of raptor movement past the Grassie Air Park, some 4 km south of Beamer. This station had been used sporadically in the past whenever volunteers were available, and when weather conditions seemed to deflect flights south.

Most of the data from the 1988 Air Park counts were published in the February 1989 H.M.A.N.A. Newsletter. The count period was 16 March to 11 April, by which time a total of 1,129 Turkey Vultures were counted. Even though Turkey Vultures continue to trickle past into June, by 11 April the Air Park count more than doubled Beamer's for the whole season. In fact at Beamer, only 592 Turkey Vultures (74% of the season total) were counted during the Air Park count period. Since it seems likely that roughly the same proportion passed both stations, the season total at the Air Park could have been around 1,500. A major flight line had been clearly identified here for the first time.

The total number of Turkey Vultures passing through Grimsby was still unclear. On 26 March approximately 400 Turkey Vultures were reported by other observers to the north of Beamer, apparently largely unseen by both Air Park and Beamer observers! I decided to focus my 1989 observations on the flight to the north, between Lake Ontario and Beamer.

Prior to the 1989 season a superior site, the east point, was identified at Beamer. Clear unobstructed views in all directions would allow complete observations not only of Turkey Vulture movements to the north but also of flight behavior as they approached from the east.

By 7 April 1989 about 1,100 Turkey Vultures had been counted at the east point. Most notably, on 5 April, 591 Turkey Vultures were counted despite a late morning start in observing. Even with strong southerly winds pushing birds north on that and several other days, at no time did more than about 15% of the Turkey Vultures seen from the point move past to the north unseen at the parking lot. Although still a significant number, it does not represent a major flight line of the same proportion as that at the Air Park.

It was also observed that although large numbers of Turkey Vultures would kettle to the northeast, giving the false impression of large numbers passing north, the vast majority of these birds were merely getting the altitude required to mount the high escarpment ridge and pass Beamer to the south!

In fact this kettling behavior prior to mounting the escarpment appears to be typical along several northerly projecting escarpment bluffs immediately east of Beamer. The very irregular line of the escarpment face to the east appears to play an important role in breaking up the raptor flight as it approaches Beamer. This is most notable near Mountainview Conservation area on the Beamsville Basin, where the escarpment curves especially far southward. It has been observed that from here Turkey Vultures are likely to proceed on a straight line flight path towards the Grassie Air Park, while other raptors display a stronger preference for following the irregular outline of the escarpment ridge.

In 1988 I estimated the actual total number of Turkey Vultures passing Grimsby at around 3,000. I still believe this to be a very reasonable estimate. Although Turkey Vultures clearly move from sunrise to sunset, none of the Grimsby counts come close to covering such long daily hours.

It also seems very unlikely that a significant number of 1988 Turkey Vultures were counted by both Air Park and Beamer observers. Radio towers 4 km southeast of Beamer, several hundred feet high, are not visible from Beamer. Turkey Vultures passing over the Air Park, 4 km to the southwest, were almost exclusively under 100 feet. On the other hand, on big flight days at

Beamer raptors were not visible from the Air Park. In addition, Turkey Vultures just discernable near the limit of binocular vision to the north towards Beamer were not included in Air Park counts.

By 6 April 1989, 1,100 Turkey Vultures had been counted from the east point at Beamer. Two days later a large raptor flight of approximately 2,000 birds, about one third of which were Turkey Vultures, was observed passing the south side of the Beamsville Basin and dispersing westwards towards Grassie and Beamer on a brisk northerly breeze.

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UNUSUALLY COLOURED RAPTORS: TWO REPORTS

A WHITE RED-TAIL

by Roslynne Price

You just never know what you'll see by the side of a familiar road! On a bright, sunny October 18, 1992, my significant other, Wolfgang Luft, and I were driving on Appleby Line in North Burlington, where we often spot raptors near the escarpment.

Just south of Derry Road, in the first large farmer's field on the west side, I spotted a large white bird sitting in a tree not far from the side of the road. At first glance, from a distance, I thought it might have been a Snowy Owl, but when I got my bins on it, I knew it couldn't be.

As we slowed down to stop it took off, of course, flying away from us and landing in some trees a little further away. As it flew, we saw clearly that it was predominately a white bird with several dark secondaries interspersed among white feathers, a few dark feathers in the left hind neck region, and a pale orange-rufous tail.

Finally, a positive ID - one adult (partial) albino Red Tail! We studied the hawk for a while and watched it fly and land several times, so we got some excellent views both in flight and perched, but always from the rear of the bird. At no time did we see its front, so we don't know if it had a belly band.

This bird was seen again in the same area on November 20 by Bill Smith, Jim Dowall, and John Olmsted. Who knows? Perhaps it stayed the winter here.

Rob Dobos also saw an adult albino Red Tail on Feb. 7, 1987 near the town of York, on the Grand River.

TWO UNUSUAL HAWKS

by Bruce Duncan

A female American Kestrel was caught and banded at Hawk Cliff on September 7 in the fall of 1991. It was not your average kestrel; instead, it was a 'blonde'!

There was no black pigment, just red and a bit of dull brown in the wings and back. The eyes were brown, not black, and the entire plumage was white and 'redhead' red. She had very faint cheek marks (just a hint of them), a nice red crown patch, a red and white banded tail, red streaks on the chest and belly, a red-barred back, and wings with red markings and a dull brown suffusion on the inner areas. The primaries were almost all white. She also had sharp fault bars on the tail at several levels - an obvious bird of the year.

The bird was not an albino if you define albinism as a lack of all pigment. However, if you define albinism as a lack of melanin (the black pigment), then the bird was indeed an albino. The large number of severe fault bars and the lack of melanin both make for easily broken feathers.

NOTE: Fault bars are weak lines across feathers that can be seen in the tail and sometimes in the wings of birds. In England, they are called 'hunger traces', a nicely descriptive term. They form because of a lack of food during the time those feathers were growing and are more severe the longer the time without food. For birds of the year whose tail and wing feathers grow all at the same time, fault bars, if present, will be seen at the same level across all of these feathers.

On Sunday, November 12, 1978, an odd Red-tailed Hawk was banded at Hawk Cliff. This bird, a partial albino or 'piebald', was an adult with a normal red tail. The head, body and wings were mostly snow white but had normally coloured feathers scattered throughout. Most of the pigmented feathers were distributed symmetrically across the wings and back, and a belly band, so typical of Red-tails, was present even though attenuated.

This was not a Krider's Red-tailed Hawk, the prairie subspecies, which shows an overall paleness and a bleached or even white tail. This bird's normally-coloured feathers were as dark as those of an eastern Red-tail (*borealis* subspecies). Krider's do not have the patchiness so obvious in this bird.

Hawk Cliff, like Beamer, has seen other 'different' hawks, dark morph Red-tails for example, but these two stand out.

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH
MONTHLY SUMMARIES – 1975–1992

Years	February			March			April			May			Year Total		
	# Birds	Hours	#/Hr	# Birds	Hours	#/Hr	# Birds	Hours	#/Hr	# Birds	Hours	#/Hrs	# Birds	Hours	#/Hrs
1975	0	0	0.0	821	27.5	29.9	2285	55.75	41.0	317	6	52.8	3423	89.25	38.4
1976	80	5	16.0	1543	36	42.9	4954	64	77.4	142	7	20.3	6719	112	60.0
1977	0	0	0.0	2546	--	--	6543	--	--	927	--	--	10016	--	--
1978	0	0	0.0	2565	--	--	2613	--	--	2114	--	--	7292	--	--
1979	0	0	0.0	2266	--	--	8873	--	--	1732	--	--	12871	310	41.5
1980	0	0	0.0	2681	--	--	9208	--	--	2685	--	--	14574	529	27.6
1981	22	4.5	4.9	2980	186.4	16.0	11185	202.5	55.2	1758	173.7	10.1	15945	567.1	28.1
1982	40	8	5.0	2699	179	15.1	7259	223.7	32.4	1970	172.4	11.4	11968	583.1	20.5
1983	49	10.3	4.8	2301	164.8	14.0	8991	210	42.8	2369	179.9	13.2	13710	565	24.3
1984	258	10.4	24.8	1674	151	11.1	15012	232.8	64.5	1358	170.4	8.0	18302	564.6	32.4
1985	0	0	0.0	4059	202	20.1	14817	242.2	61.2	398	164.3	2.4	19274	608.5	31.7
1986	19	8	2.4	5361	210.3	25.5	7894	207.4	38.1	783	150.5	5.2	14057	576.2	24.4
1987	81	23	3.5	3943	213.4	18.5	4719	233	20.3	1765	212.1	8.3	10508	681.5	15.4
1988	6	2	3.0	5670	216.9	26.1	6344	205.4	30.9	2114	183.9	11.5	14134	608.2	23.2
1989	0	0	0.0	2951	179.25	16.5	6699	241.8	27.7	2558	78.25	32.7	12208	499.3	24.5
1990	0	0	0.0	5065	220	23.0	12761	234.5	54.4	1377	120	11.5	19203	574.5	33.4
1991	0	0	0.0	4308	215.8	20.0	9291	223.2	41.6	1352	109.5	12.3	14951	548.5	27.3
1992	0	0	0.0	3480	193.5	18.0	9710	236	41.1	1488	112	13.3	14678	541.5	27.1
Total	555	71.2	7.8	56913	2395.85	23.8	149158	2812.25	53.0	27207	1839.95	14.8	233833	7958.25	29.4
Mean	30.8	4.0		3161.8	133.1		8286.6	156.2		1511.5	102.2		12990.7	442.1	

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch

Newsletter

Newsletter No. 7, August 1993

ANNUAL BANQUET AND WINE TASTING

This year's annual meeting at Stoney Ridge Winery - our third there - was again a great success. Forty people attended and enjoyed Jim Warren's wines, food by Pierre's Catering (rave reviews), Barry Cherriere's hawk quiz, Roslynne Price's bucket raffle and a very interesting slide talk about European raptors by Peter Ewins.

This year the wine pourers kept equal opportunity for those seated at the back of the tables in mind. After last year's drought for some people who were "at the end of the line" for each bottle, this year's was a feast by comparison. We were not sure if George Naylor had developed a better eye and steadier hand or whether he simply wasn't allowed to pour this year. In any event, six wines were sampled but the consensus was that 1991 was a better vintage. Still, Stoney Ridge's 1992 offerings were very good.

The chicken dinner by Pierre was delicious and he and his helpers were brought out of the kitchen to spontaneous applause. We agreed to ask him back for 1994.

Rob Dobos could not attend the banquet. Rumour had it he and Barb Charlton were chasing a Garganey. However, Rob had asked Barry Cherriere to put together some quiz slides for our frustration, and there were the usual surprises in a tray of hawks from all over North America.

The business portion of the meeting was fairly brief with the President making two presentations. One was an award of merit from the Hawk Migration Association of North America for Walter Klabunde in recognition of his unstinting devotion to the Beamer count. This award was brought from Texas where HMANA had held its conference earlier in April. Congratulations once again to our Honourary President on another well-deserved award.

Brian Ratcliff, NPH's retiring Board member responsible for research, is now in Manitoba starting a career with raptors there. Bruce Duncan presented him with a Peterson hawk identification guide autographed by Bill Clark and Brian Wheeler, the author and illustrator, as a memento of his time with the Hawkwatch. We wish both Ellen and Brian well.

The treasurer indicated how financially well off we were and had his report accepted by members. In addition to the end of fiscal year report, he told us the banquet and bucket raffle had produced even more income (about $212).

Following the business we got down to the pleasure of the evening, Peter Ewin's talk on the migration in Turkey. A Canadian Wildlife Service biologist, Peter had previously spent many years studying hawks in Britain and Europe. His slides gave us some idea of the extent of the flight during fall migration there, as well as the variety of raptors that pass from Europe into Africa and the Middle East every year. It was an intriguing look at species like Honey Buzzards, Steppe Eagles and European Sparrowhawks that we only dream about here.

Next year's banquet will again be at Stoney Ridge in April. Don't miss it.

TEXAS HAWK WATCHING

by Bruce Duncan and Janet Snaith

We like hawks. When the Hawk Migration Association of North America set their conference in Corpus Christi, Texas and then Bill Clark of Peterson Hawk Guide fame offered a pre-conference hawk watching tour of south Texas, we made up our minds quickly.

Neither of us had ever been to the Texas coast, but we had read many of John Economidy's reports of huge flights of Broad-winged and Swainson's Hawks in both fall and spring in the Corpus Christi area. John is the Texas regional reporter for HMANA's newsletter and organized the 1993 conference.

It was on the second day of our pre-conference

tour that we found out about hawk watching Texas style. We were driving from Corpus Christi to McAllen near the border and had been stopping to admire the many Harris's Hawks, White-tailed Hawks, White-tailed Kites, Crested Caracaras, Swainson's Hawks, Fuertes' Red-tailed Hawks and ocacsional Ferruginous Hawks. The country is flat and scrubby with power lines following all the roads, providing excellent perches for the hundreds of raptors feeding on ground squirrels, wood rats, lizards and other assorted goodies.

Just past Kingsville and very close to the headquarters of the famous King Ranch, one of our eagle-eyed companions from New Jersey spotted a kettle of Broad-wings. Bill pulled off the asphalt and into the wildflowers that really do line Texas highways. We jumped out and could see swirling masses of adult Broad-wings above and behind us, moving north. We estimated that there were 2,000 birds altogether, in separate flocks that glided towards each other, circled up again and glided anew.

Even after the kettles had passed by, there were plenty of other hawks, Red-tails in particular, hunting low over the ranch. A flock of perhaps a hundred Sandhill Cranes flew up and over a low ridge just north of us as if to emphasize that this was a very different land from Ontario.

The next day we visited Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge on the Rio Grande. It was full of birds. Least Grebes, Jacana, Chachalacas, Green Jays, Couch's Kingbirds, Green Kingfishers, and Hook-billed Kites were easy to see. Bill repeatedly told us how lucky we were as these unusual kites flapped overhead with slow wingbeats reminiscent of Great Blue Herons. Two or three were together in the sky regularly all day. We figured he said that to all his groups.

Late in the afternoon, we boarded the tram and rode part way around the ring road to search for Gray Hawk and anything else that might be in the woods. We stepped off and almost at once saw many more Broad-wings above us.

The tram picked us up at the same spot almost three hours later. We had hardly moved, there were so many hawks. Broad-wings were soaring, kettling and gliding all over the sky. Thousands of birds milled above us at heights that ranged from high to out of sight. Among them were dark morph birds - at least five or six. "The Alberta contingent," Bill called them.

There were not only Broad-wings in numbers that I had never seen before but also scattered Swainson's Hawks, Sharp-shins, Cooper's, Red-tails, American Kestrels and Ospreys. A Hook-billed Kite would flap below this mass of birds now and then just to add a really discordant note to our Ontario-biased eyes.

People just stood and gasped at the spectacle. I remember Barry Cherriere telling me about the huge flight he had seen near Point Pelee on September 15, 1984, the day that Holiday Beach recorded 95,499. We now know how he felt. It seemed overwhelming at times and reminded us of other wildlife spectacles we had witnessed: the 70,000 Semipalmated Sandpipers at Mary's Point, New Brunswick, the Sooty Tern and Brown Noddy nesting colony in the Dry Tortugas and the murres and puffins at Witless Bay, Newfoundland. BUT...These were hawks.

That evening we stood on the dyke to watch the downflight and did see good numbers of Broad-winged Hawks drift into the Santa Ana woods. They were followed by 22 Mississippi Kites who spent 30 minutes working the breeze as they searched for just the right perches. It was a fitting conclusion to a remarkable day and also told us where to begin the next day.

We were there early and the kites flapped up, testing the air briefly then settled down again. It wasn't until 8:00 a.m. that they lifted off and flew over our heads, northward bound. At 8:50, the Broad-wings started their engines and found thermals. Within thirty minutes, all 500 or more were kettling and gliding north. Among them was a distinctly different small buteo, a probable Roadside Hawk, but at great height, and lingering rather than flying north. We were unable to make a 100% identification but accepted Bill's 90% assessment of it as this species. He later sent a report to the American Birding Association describing the bird in detail and arguing why it was a Roadside Hawk.

It wasn't long before Hook-billed Kites were up. Two adult males stooped at each other then "batted the air" in marvellous display flights. A female drifted nonchalantly nearby. White-tailed Kites and Harris's Hawks flew about in ones and twos and occasional Sharp-shins, Red-tails and Cooper's were spotted.

Suddenly, a Swallow-tailed Kite! It just flew by at no great height quite willing to let the hawkwatchers see it eyeball to eyeball. If you have kept count, you'll realize that this bird was the fourth kite species of the morning. In fact, it was the fourth of the hour. Bill had answered a question about kites from John Barker (another NPH member) at our first meeting in Corpus Christi by saying that we would be lucky to see any but White-tails. Well, we cleaned up and once again had Bill explain how lucky we were.

At 11:00 a.m. three massive kettles of Broad-wings, about 5,000 birds in all, flew past in thirty minutes. We were told that there usually was this delay between birds getting up and leaving Santa Ana and those that have flown in from Mexico because of the lack of habitat in Mexico anywhere near the Rio Grande. Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge is a wooded island in a barren sea.

After returning home, we saw very few Broad-wings in migration this spring here in Ontario; however, our memories of the flights at Santa Ana more than made up the difference. It really is true that they do things in a big way in Texas.

1993 OPEN HOUSE VERY SUCCESSFUL

About 400 - 500 people visited Beamer Memorial Conservation Area on Good Friday, April 9, 1993 for NPH's third annual Open House. Threatening weather held off for the whole day, the hawks cooperated, and no-one went home disappointed. Winds were south-southeast or south for most of the day, and varied between 15-30 km/h. Temperatures ranged from 7°C to 20°C.

Almost 300 hawks and vultures passed overhead during the day. There were 171 Sharp-shins, 45 TVs, 43 RTs, 9 late Red-shoulders, 9 American Kestrels, plus a few Cooper's, Harriers, and Rough-legs, and one Osprey. Unfortunately, it was not to be an eagle day, at least overhead.

The Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, through Shelly Dunn's good work, provided us with picnic tables for displays and handouts, and had Shelly on hand to help with essential tasks. The Niagara Escarpment Commission was also on hand; visitors to their table were given a magnificent poster depicting many aspects of the natural history of the escarpment.

Around 1:00PM Bruce and Daina Hunter of the University of Guelph's Wild Bird Clinic arrived with their non-releasable Bald Eagle. They described the work of the clinic while close to 300 people listened and enjoyed the chance to see this magnificent bird up close.

What proved to be the highlight of the day came when Mary-Ellen Hebb released a Peregrine Falcon, which promptly flew over the official counters, leaving them in a quandary as to whether or not the bird was countable. The Peregrine, hacked in Ohio during 1992, was injured near Windsor last fall. A rehabilitator in the area helped the bird, then arranged for it to go to Bruce Hunter for an operation on its leg. Bruce in turn asked Kay McKeever and the Owl Rehabilitation Foundation to help the falcon convalesce, which is how it came to be at Beamer for the open house. To top it all off, the lady who hacked the Peregrine drove up from Ohio to see it released again!

We talked to newspaper, radio and TV reporters, and gave the coffee truck good coverage as well. Between our donation box and the raffle of the two lovely paintings donated by Peter McBurney (frame courtesy of Moggridge Gallery) and Barry Cherriere (frame courtesy of NPH), visitors contributed enough to cover the Wild Bird Clinic's expenses and leave some for the NPH treasury.

All-in-all, it was a very successful day with raptors in the air and in the hand, and plenty of good company. Special thanks for all their help to the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, Shelly Dunn, the Wild Bird Clinic and the NPH members who assisted during the day.

In 1994 Good Friday falls on April 1. With a little help from the weather we could have a good species mix. See you at Beamer!

FALL HAWKWATCH LOCATIONS

by Mike Street

It isn't necessary to wait for next spring's Beamer Hawkwatch to see more raptors. Just as the southern shore of Lake Ontario causes hawks to pass by Beamer early in the year, the east side of Lake Huron and the north shores of both Lake Ontario and Lake Erie concentrate birds in the fall. Good locations are:

CRANBERRY MARSH: take Hwy 401, exit south at Harwood Ave., Ajax. Turn left (east) on Bayly Rd., then right (south) on Halls Rd. to the 2nd path to the marsh. Park on the east side and take the boardwalk. Numbers are good except in strong south winds. (Fall Hawkwatch)

WOODLAND CEMETERY/HIGH LEVEL BRIDGE: Cemetery is off Plains Rd., behind the Royal Botanical Gardens in Burlington (follow RBG signs). Further west Plains Rd. becomes York Blvd. in Hamilton and leads to the bridge. A small park (historical site) near the bridge overlooks the cemetery. Numbers are best with moderate north or northwest winds.

LONG POINT: from Hwy. 59 take Reg. Rd. 42 west to Clear Creek. The Long Point Bird Observatory has had a banding station in this area. Most species are seen and numbers are good except in strong south winds.

HAWK CLIFF: From Aylmer, take Hwy. 73 south to the lake, turn right (west) on Reg. Rd. 24 to T-intersection with Reg. Rd. 22 (look for sign), go south to end of road. From Port Stanley, take Reg. Rd. 24 east to same intersection. Numbers usually higher than Long Point, good except in strong south winds. (Fall Hawkwatch)

POINT PELEE NATIONAL PARK: Westbound birds sometimes turn left and go to the tip of Pelee. Falcons and Osprey will cross the lake, most others will turn around. Numbers usually small, southwest winds seem to be best for peregrines. Falcon peak occurs at the end of September.

HOLIDAY BEACH CA (north shore of Lake Erie): take Hwy. 18 west from Leamington or east from Amherstburg, turn south at Malden Center (follow signs). Numbers can be very high, best with northerly winds. (Fall Hawkwatch)

CAPE MAY TRIP PROPOSED

Are any of our members interested in a group trip to Cape May this fall? Such an outing would take place to coincide with the annual peak of the fall migration of hawks and especially falcons, usually around the first week of October.

If you would like to talk about going to Cape May, please call either Roslynne Price in Burlington, at (416) 681-2276, or Gordon Bellerby in Niagara-on-the-Lake, at (416) 468-3961.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS: 1ST MARCH 1992- 28TH FEBRUARY 1993

	1992-1993		1991-1992	
Balance in bank 1st March		472.68		$ 302.31
Receipts				
Memberships	675.00		753.92	
Open House	273.00		100.65	
Banquet & Raffle	865.00		564.36	
Donations	13.00		---	
Grants - CWIP	284.96		---	
Grants - Ont. Heritage	367.40		---	
Badges	---		40.00	
Bank Interest	21.19	2,499.55	9.52	1,468.45
		$2,972.23		$1,770.76
Disbursements				
Newsletter	150.60		170.96	
Postage etc.	60.50		114.04	
Telephone L.D.	50.00		---	
Open House	100.00		75.00	
Banquet	780.59		635.42	
Display Board	532.32		------	
Donation N.P.C.A.	250.00		------	
Brochure	---		174.90	
Badges	---		103.76	
Bank Charges	4.00	1,928.01	24.00	1,298.08
Bank Balance Feb. 28/29		1,044.22		472.68
		2,972.23		1,770.76

Respectfully submitted by: Gordon Bellerby, Treasurer

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH EXECUTIVE 1993

HON. PRESIDENT: Walter Klabunde
PRESIDENT: Bruce Duncan, 1049 Kirkwall Road, RR 1, Dundas, L9H 5E1 (519) 622-4709
VICE-PRESIDENT: Mary Ellen Hebb, 32 Maplewood St; St. Catharines, L2M 3P1 (416) 937-7671
SECRETARY: Glenn Barnett, 87 Highland Park Dr., Dundas, ON L9H 6G5 (416) 628-2093
TREASURER: Gordon Bellerby, Box 1276, Niagara-on-the-Lake, L0S 1J0 (416) 468-3961
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TOWER/PLATFORM: Roslynne Price, Townhouse 83, 5045 Pinedale Avenue, Burlington, L7L 5J6 (416) 681-2276
STATISTICS: Rob Dobos, 178 Cedarbrae Avenue, Waterloo, N2L 4S3 (519) 888-0553

Summary of the 1993 Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch

by Rob Dobos

The 1993 Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch (NPH) at Beamer Memorial Conservation Area above Grimsby, Ontario, while not a particularly great year for the hawk count, may still be remembered for the lack of birds during early spring, at least. The season's total of 12107 hawks counted between March 1 and May 22 was well below the 1980-93 average of 14692 birds, and was the lowest count since 1987. The total number of hours of observation (538.5) was also below the 1980-93 average (this average is used throughout this report), and was the second lowest since 1979. The statistic representing the numbers of hawks per hour of 22.5 is also below the average of 25.9, and is the second lowest ever.

The generally poor count can be largely attributed to the lousy weather conditions during March. The monthly mean temperatures at Mount Hope Airport and St. Catharines Airport were -2.7°C and -1.7°C, respectively, both considerably below normal (Environment Canada Monthly Meteorological Summaries). Mount Hope had 13 days with measurable precipitation, while St. Catharines had 14 days, both normal for March, but total hours of sunshine were well below normal at both stations. Finally, there were 19 days where wind direction had a predominantly northern component at Mount Hope, while St. Catharines had 18 similar days. In summary, the conditions during March did not appear to be favourable for hawk migration.

The total count of 2014 for March birds was the second lowest since 1976. During the month, there were nine days with zero birds counted (only three of these had no hours of observation), and there were another nine days with less than ten birds counted. A consistent hawk flight did not really develop until March 28. Conditions finally improved and "the dam burst", so to speak, in early April. April 5 saw the season's best one day count, with 1547 birds tallied. It was a record high one day count for Red-shouldered Hawk (449) and Cooper's Hawk (50), and tied the one day count for Northern Harrier (28). The only other day with over 1000 birds was April 27. Following is an account for each species.

The 1852 Turkey Vultures counted was the third highest on record. The Osprey total of 45 was down almost 30 % from last year's record high of 64, but was still the third highest to date. The 14 Bald Eagles recorded was above average, but was the lowest number since 1987; the species was recorded late into the season, with one on May 14. A total of 126 Northern Harriers were counted, which is below average and the lowest number since 1985.

Among accipiters, flights for Sharp-shins and Goshawks were below average, while that for Cooper's was above average. The Sharp-shinned Hawk total of 3475 was up only slightly from last year's count. There is growing concern about this species' apparent decline in northeastern North America. The Cooper's Hawk total of 209 was the fourth highest yet, with the new record high one day count mentioned above a definite highlight. Northern Goshawk numbers totalled a disappointing 28. This cyclical species last peaked in numbers in 1983 (73 birds), but the ten year cycle obviously did not materialize this year at Beamer.

The 1030 Red-shouldered Hawks were an above average count, being the fourth highest on record. About 72% of the total flight occurred during April, due to the unfavourable conditions during March, the month in which the majority of this species typically occurs. As mentioned above, the new record one day count for this species was a welcome highlight. The Broad-winged Hawk total was disappointingly low at 1963, well below the 1980-93 average of 4015. This was the second lowest count since 1978. The first bird arriving on April 9 was considerably early. The highlight of the season was undoubtedly the observation of two light morph Swainson's Hawks, one each on April 20 and April 27. These provincial rarities will be officially added to the NPH count if documentation is accepted by the Ontario Bird Records Committee (OBRC). The Red-tailed Hawk count of 2684 birds was below average and was the second lowest since 1982. The total of only 35 Rough-legged Hawks was about 50% below average, and the second lowest count on record (1976 was the lowest with 26). This low count is indicative of last summer's apparent poor breeding success due to cool temperatures in their Arctic breeding grounds. As reported in American Birds seasonal summaries, an unusually high number of this species were encountered during the summer months last year in southern Canada and northeastern United States.

The total of six Golden Eagles was below average, and the lowest since 1988. American Kestrel numbers were also below average, and had the second lowest count since 1987. The nine Merlins counted was above the average of six birds, but was still down from the high counts from the past two years. Only two Peregrine Falcons were counted (on April 4 and May 1), the lowest number since 1989, and below the average of three birds.

Two new species are officially added to the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch count with the acceptance by the OBRC of documentation received on the Black Vulture seen April 4 and the Ferruginous Hawk observered April 13, both in 1992 (M. Bain, in prep., Ontario Bird Records Committee report for 1992. Ontario Birds.).

The NPH Committee would like to thank the

following volunteers for their help as official hawk counters during 1993: Roy Baker, John Barker, Gordon Bellerby, Bouwe Bergsma, Rosalind Chaundy, Barry Cherriere, James Coey, Dave Copeland, Bob Curry, Rob Dobos, Bruce Duncan, Chris Escott, Jerry Guild, Michael King, Walter Klabunde, Kevin McLaughlin, George Meyers, George Naylor, Brian Ratcliff, Paul Rose, Jack Ryan, John Stevens, Mike Street, Paul Summerskill, Peter Whelan, Don Wiens. Thanks also to those many hawkwatchers who assisted with the counts in an unofficial capacity.

Satellite Hawk Counts in 1993

by Rob Dobos

As mentioned in the last issue of the newsletter, the NPH was interested in conducting some test counts during 1993 from a satellite station in Grimsby to detect hawk flights close to Lake Ontario which might be missed from Beamer C.A. A number of counts were made away from Beamer, and the results from those submitted are reported here.

On April 5, which was the best flight day of the season at Beamer, a count of 1227 birds was made during six hours of observation from Casablanca Blvd. and Livingston Ave. in Grimsby, just northwest of Beamer. The species totals were as follows: TV -475, NH -9, SS -79, CH -25, RS -339, RT -261, AK -2, UA -7, UB -30. The numbers were comparable to those from Beamer which had a longer count period (7.7 hours) with the exception of Turkey Vultures of which fewer were counted at Beamer. Also on April 5, a count at the Grimsby Airfield (about 4 km SW of Beamer) over four hours tallied 316 birds, including: TV -88, BE -1, NH -2, SS -13, CH -4, RS -33, RT -146, RL -1, UA -1, UB -27. Of interest was the mention of a "dark" Red-tailed Hawk.

Three counts were made from the Grimsby Community Centre on Livingston Ave., Grimsby, on April 6, 7 and 8. The totals for these days were 116, 89, and 182 birds, respectively. The counts were comparable to those at Beamer for these days. A report was also received of a Golden Eagle over Bedford Park Dr., Grimsby on April 9, which was not recorded at Beamer that day.

One last report was received from April 24 at Port Weller (St. Catharines), between 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., when two observers estimated a flight of about 100 Sharp-shinned Hawks, 100 Turkey Vultures and 2300 Broad-winged Hawks! The counts for these species at Beamer that day were: TV -8, SS -285, BW -35. Unfortunately, this large Broad-winged flight somehow bypassed Beamer.

Although not useful quantitatively, the few surveys from satellite stations proved to be interesting nonetheless, and undoubtedly this effort will be stepped up in 1994.

WINTER RAPTORS IN HALDIMAND-NORFOLK

by Mike Street

If you told non-birders that our region is a good place to find hawks and owls during the winter, many would be surprised. But it is true; the Niagara Peninsula, nestled between the south shore of Lake Ontario and the north shore of Lake Erie, normally has a mild enough winter to allow rodents to be fairly active. Raptors are thus encouraged to halt their southward journeys and linger - and give the mice, voles and rabbits fits!

As a for instance, consider the following species and numbers from the December 21, 1991 Fisherville Christmas Count: Red-tailed (186) and Rough-legged (84) Hawks, Northern Harriers (43), American Kestrels (154), Long-eared (13), Short-eared (80), Snowy (5) and Northern Saw-whet (1) Owls joined the large numbers of resident Great Horned (16) and Eastern Screech (71) Owls.

The best area for raptors is the triangle formed on by the Grand River from Caledonia southeast to Lake Erie, the Lake Erie shoreline west to Port Dover, and Highway 6 from Port Dover back to Caledonia. What makes it particularly attractive is that almost the whole territory is farmland where corn and grain, crops loved by rodents, are the normal product. Just about any road in the area will do.

A prime location for hawks and owls is the 5-8km circle around the Hagersville Metal Recycling plant (read junkyard) at the intersection of Regional Road 20 and the York Road (Reg. Rd. 9), about 3km southeast of the main traffic light in Hagersville. The field opposite the junkyard is usually unkempt and weedy; as many as 14 Harriers and a dozen Short-ears have been seen at one time here in the late afternoon.

Kestrels like telephone lines, Red-tails tops of telephone poles and (usually) middle branches of big trees, Rough-legs normally sit at the top of big trees. Short-ears can often be found on fence posts, especially on dull or foggy days, or on the day following a major storm. Great Horneds and Screech prefer woodlots, while Long-eareds and Saw-whets are found in pine plantations.

GOT THE FUZZIES?

Sharp-eyed readers (as all hawkwatchers are, of course) may have noticed that this issue's newsletter masthead is not as sharp as usual. The masthead original is usually pasted onto the top of the first sheet of an issue. Through one of the miracles of the computer age, we have run the masthead through a scanner and then reproduced it by laser printer along with the rest of the text for this issue. The process of smoothing a scanned graphic requires touching the lines up pixel by pixel, or dot by dot, and time was short. Please bear with us.

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Counts – March 1993

Date –>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Totals
Black Vulture																																0
Turkey Vulture																						1	1						1	44	14	61
Osprey																																0
Bald Eagle																						1						1		3		5
Northern Harrier																						1					1	3		6	2	13
Sharp–shinned Hawk	1			1			2		3		2			1					2		2					2		10	4	16	12	58
Cooper's Hawk									1		1	1										1	1					1	1	11	10	28
Northern Goshawk										1												1							1	2	1	6
Red–shouldered Hawk												2							3			11	2			1		45	12	58	150	284
Broad–winged Hawk																																0
Swainson's Hawk																																0
Red–tailed Hawk			18	7			4		37	47	6	51					18	85	52			132	12		5	5		89	64	183	377	1192
Ferruginous Hawk																																0
Rough–legged Hawk							1			1									2			5				1				2		12
Golden Eagle																			1									2				3
American Kestrel																						1							1	8	1	11
Merlin																																0
Peregrine Falcon																																0
Gyrfalcon																																0
Unid. Accipiter			1																1									2		3	1	8
Unid. Buteo																														325	4	329
Unid. Eagle																																0
Unid. Falcon																						1										1
Unid. Raptor							1		1																			1				3
Total Raptors	1	0	19	8	0	0	8	0	42	49	9	54	0	1	0	0	18	85	61	0	2	155	16	0	5	9	1	154	84	661	572	2014
Hours Counted	5.5	6	6.5	6.7	0	5.75	7	6	7	5.2	6.25	6.5	0	2.2	0	5	5.5	7	6.75	5.5	6.5	6.5	6	5	6.2	7.2	7.5	8	6	10	7	176
Wind Direction	SW	SW	NE	NE	SNOW	SNOW	S	RAIN	W	ENE	VAR	VAR	--	NW	--	RAIN	N	NE	N	SSW	SSW	NE	NE	FOG	NE	NW	FOG	NE	NE	NE	ENE	

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Counts – April 1993

Date –>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		Totals
Black Vulture																																0
Turkey Vulture			55	330	453	59	81	128	45	65	137	11	106	20	12	9	8	22	6	5			5	8		9		5		69		1648
Osprey						2		1	1		1		2		6	7		2	1	2	1	5	1	2		1	2		1	1		39
Bald Eagle			1	1		1				1		1			1												1					7
Northern Harrier			4	6	28	12	8	2	2	1			5	2	3	5		3	2				1	1		1	3	2		2		93
Sharp-shinned Hawk			7	31	160	60	66	228	171	20	76	21	21	65	74	181	30	164	142	92		33	84	285	40	67	134	185	241	148		2826
Cooper's Hawk			1	23	50	11	5	2	2	4	8	1	2	3	10	5		5	1	2		1	2	1		4	7	5	7	3		165
Northern Goshawk					2	2	2	2						1	4			1				1					1					16
Red-shouldered Hawk			12	182	449	31	3	9	9	16	11			1	4	6	1	2	1					1		1	5					744
Broad-winged Hawk									1							10	2	15	34	33		6	8	35	1	24	938	54	182	342		1685
Swainson's Hawk																				1*							1*					2
Red-tailed Hawk			37	241	396	69	35	21	43	13	150	26	46	36	31	23	11	47	4	12			4	12		58	19	7	2	7		1350
Ferruginous Hawk																																0
Rough-legged Hawk			3	1	1		1		2	1	2	1		1				3						1		1	4					22
Golden Eagle																											1			1		2
American Kestrel			1	1	2	3	3	9	9	2	1				1	3		4	2	1		2		1		1	2	1	4	3		56
Merlin										1					1							2	1					1	1			7
Peregrine Falcon				1																												1
Gyrfalcon																																0
Unid. Accipiter				6	1	2	3				16	1	5	1			1	6	1			1					1	1				46
Unid. Buteo			2	52	4		2	1	1		17	2	2	3		3	3	10								1				1		104
Unid. Eagle																											1					1
Unid. Falcon																			1				2					2				5
Unid. Raptor					1		2		3		1		1			1		4	1					2						1		17
Total Raptors	0	0	123	875	1547	252	211	403	289	124	420	64	190	133	147	253	56	288	196	148	1	51	108	349	41	168	1120	263	438	578		8836
Hours Counted	0	4	6.5	10	7.7	8.5	7	8.75	8.1	7	9	7.3	9	8	6.75	9.2	8	10	7.3	6.5	6.3	8	8	7	7.4	7	8.75	7.8	10	8		227
Wind Direction	RAIN	FOG	W	W	NE	NE	NE	N	S	WNW	NE	NE	N	NE	NE	S	W	SW	VAR	SW	SNOW	ENE	NW	SE	SW	NE	NE	S	VAR	SW		

* subject to confirmation by the Ontario Bird Records Committee

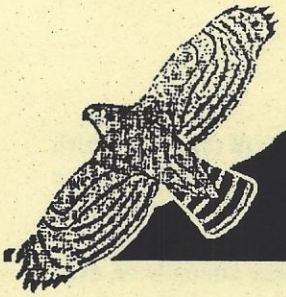
Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Counts – May 1993

Date –>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Totals
Black Vulture																																0
Turkey Vulture	24	11	26	2	13	16	5	10		1	6	11	2	5		4						7										143
Osprey			1	2		2							1																			6
Bald Eagle			1											1																		2
Northern Harrier		2	6	1	2	2	1	1	1	1		1										2										20
Sharp–shinned Hawk	26	166	52	71	44	21	37	27	33	26	5	8	4	40	24	6						1										591
Cooper's Hawk	1	6	3	2	1		2								1																	16
Northern Goshawk	2	1	1	1		1																										6
Red–shouldered Hawk							2																									2
Broad–winged Hawk	186	27	15	12	11	1	14			1			4	1		3						3										278
Swainson's Hawk																																0
Red–tailed Hawk	18	26	6	3	4	2	33	1	2	3	2	3	11	9	7	3						9										142
Ferruginous Hawk																																0
Rough–legged Hawk		1																														1
Golden Eagle		1																														1
American Kestrel		6	3	3	1	2	2	3					1	2	1	1						1										26
Merlin		1									1																					2
Peregrine Falcon	1																															1
Gyrfalcon																																0
Unid. Accipiter	3		1																													4
Unid. Buteo			1												3							1										5
Unid. Eagle																																0
Unid. Falcon																																0
Unid. Raptor	4	1	4												1	1																11
Total Raptors	265	249	120	97	76	47	96	42	36	32	14	23	23	58	37	18	0	0	0	0	0	24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1257
Hours Counted	8.6	8.5	8.3	9,75	8	7.75	8	9.5	8	8.3	8	8.3	7.75	7.5	5.5	4.5	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	135
Wind Direction	NE	E	VAR	VAR	SW	VAR	ENE	NNE	N	VAR	VAR	W	NE	VAR	S	SW	--	--	--	--	--	VAR	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	

Annual Summaries 1975–1993

	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	TOTALS	1975–92 Mean	1980–92 Mean	Highest Total & Date	Earliest Date
Black Vulture																		1		1	0.5	1.0	1 – Apr 4/92	Apr 4/92
Turkey Vulture	53	127	450	293	294	620	671	521	895	616	948	837	977	2331	1406	1463	1785	1990	1852	18129	954.2	1208.0	748 – Mar 26/88	Feb 23/84
Osprey	7	6	10	6	18	24	19	27	20	38	36	33	30	41	36	40	46	64	45	546	28.7	35.6	16 – Apr 12/92	Mar 26/77
Bald Eagle	1	2	2	1	2	8	1	7	7	5	10	14	7	16	17	15	17	22	14	168	8.8	11.4	7 – Mar 18/86; Mar 26/88	Feb 26/86
Northern Harrier	20	42	78	53	54	72	102	131	125	127	113	143	217	162	175	194	219	209	126	2362	124.3	151.1	28 – Apr 20/92; Apr 5/93	Feb 19/84
Sharp–shinned Hawk	844	4162	4342	1874	4007	4614	4025	4880	3931	4683	4480	3549	2831	3108	3576	7005	3767	3418	3475	72841	3823.2	4100.9	1556 – Apr 18/76	Feb 11/87
Cooper's Hawk	36	48	113	67	62	135	179	121	160	190	152	196	199	229	180	311	220	199	209	3006	158.2	191.4	50 – Apr 5/93	Feb 11/87
Northern Goshawk	12	8	9	3	2	3	8	51	73	67	25	21	31	27	14	24	20	34	28	460	24.2	30.4	11 – Mar 24/84	Feb 28/88
Red–shouldered Hawk	220	438	643	324	624	684	528	638	624	838	764	901	876	861	1102	1440	761	1187	1030	14483	762.3	873.9	449 – Apr 5/93	Feb 23/84
Broad–winged Hawk	968	431	1513	1185	5145	4914	6904	2305	4118	7844	8239	3823	1628	2910	2304	4434	2063	2761	1963	65452	3444.8	4015.0	6007 – Apr 21/85	Apr 4/85
Swainson's Hawk											1			1	1				2*	5	0.8	0.8	5 dates with 1 bird	Apr 20/93
Red–tailed Hawk	1129	1003	2502	2735	2409	2848	2604	2607	3150	3105	3410	2852	3265	3567	2615	3467	3023	3861	2684	52836	2780.8	3075.6	708 – Apr 8/87	Feb 11/87
Ferruginous Hawk																		1		1	0.5	1.0	1 – Apr 13/92	Apr 13/92
Rough–legged Hawk	46	26	57	65	78	37	41	131	59	85	48	45	77	87	45	87	145	128	35	1322	69.6	75.0	24 – Apr 2/82	Feb 11/87
Golden Eagle		2	1	3	2	3	4	4	8	6	12	7	6	3	7	10	8	12	6	104	5.5	6.9	4 – Apr 29/83	Feb 24/84
American Kestrel	32	49	96	60	40	101	114	102	71	56	150	126	85	148	132	207	180	92	93	1934	101.8	118.4	44 – Mar 14/90	Feb 25/87
Merlin	2	1	2		1	1	2	5	2	2	5	5	12	5	4	9	11	12	9	90	5.0	6.0	4 – Apr 13/92	Mar 11/77
Peregrine Falcon		1		1	1	1	3	3			2	1	1	4	2	6	5	6	2	39	2.6	3.0	2 – Mar 28/90; Apr 16/90	Mar 12/88
Gyrfalcon			1																	1	1.0	0.0	1 – Apr 20/77	Apr 20/77
Unid. Raptors	53	373	197	622	132	509	647	435	467	640	880	1504	266	634	592	582	2681	681	534	12429	654.2	789.4		
Total Raptors	3423	6719	10016	7292	12871	14574	15922	11968	13710	18302	19275	14057	10508	14134	12208	19294	14951	14680	12105	246011	12947.8	14692.0		
Hours Counted	89.25	112	--	--	310	529	562.6	583.1	565	564.6	608.5	576.2	681.5	608	499.3	574.5	548.3	541.5	538.5	8491.9	446.9	570.0		
Birds per Hour	38.35	59.99	--	--	41.52	27.55	28.3	20.52	24.27	32.42	31.68	24.4	15.42	23.25	24.45	33.58	27.27	27.11	22.5		28.4	25.9		

* subject to confirmation by the Ontario Bird Records Committee



Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Newsletter

Newsletter No. 8, February 1994

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH ANNUAL BANQUET

SATURDAY, APRIL 23, 1994

The banquet and slide show last April were most enjoyable. This year's will be just as good or better. The location is once again Stoney Ridge Winery's Puddicombe Farm. The highlight of the evening will be an talk by Dick Benoit of Detroit. Dick is Hawk Migration Chairman of the Holiday Beach Migration Observatory

Socializing and the bucket raffle begin at 3PM. (PLEASE NOTE the earlier time.) The before supper wine tasting starts at 3:15, and dinner is at 5:00. There will be a an opportunity to buy some of the wine if you wish, and we will also have our traditional slide quiz.

This will be an enjoyable evening so get your tickets now. The room can accomodate 42 people, and 26 tickets are still available, priced at $15 for members and $20 for non-members. Call Mike Street at (416) 648-3737 to make arrangements.

IT'S THAT TIME AGAIN - PLEASE HELP

Hawk counters are asked to call Mary Ellen Hebb at (905) 937-7671, evenings from 7PM-10PM, to schedule hawkwatching day(s) for 1994.

Your help is needed, especially in the first half of May. While the natural inclination is to head for the woods and look for warblers, our work needs attention too. If enough people offer to help, it should be easy to fill in all the dates.

If you are interested in learning to become a counter, be sure to let Mary Ellen know. Many of our observers are glad to share the work and help newcomers.

In addition to the normal count at the Beamer CA parking lot, this year the NPH is trying to do some research on the flight patterns of raptors in the wider Grimsby area, from the shore of Lake Ontario to about 10km inland (see 'Special Count', P. 2) so more observers are needed. We know that people "Don't want to miss the main action at Beamer", but the information produced by the special count could lead to better sighting days in the future.

FOURTH ANNUAL OPEN HOUSE FRIDAY, APRIL 1, 1994

The hawks will again be on public view on April 1 when NPH holds its fourth Open House. Last year's raptor activity was fair, and we are about due for a warm day, so let's hope for the right weather and a good flight. In case of bad weather, however, events will be postponed a day to Saturday, April 2.

Members of the Hawkwatch stationed in the center of the circle and at the tip will help beginners to see and identify raptors passing over Beamer. (Volunteers needed.) If all goes well, another rehabilitated Peregrine Falcon will be released around 1PM.

The very welcome coffee truck will once again be parked in the circle. A special program for kids, developed by Carla Carlson, will be given at 11AM and again at noon. Short 'Hawk Talks' will be held on the hour from 11AM-2PM, and the raffle draw will take place at 3PM. There will also be displays from conservation areas and groups, as well as the Ministry of Natural Resources.

Be sure to invite your family and friends; it will be a good day for them and for the birds too - we hope.

ANYONE FOR CAPE MAY?

Looking for hawkwatchers to share accommodation (all or part of the time) at Cape May, NJ for this fall's raptor migration. A large house which sleeps 14 (and a crib) is available between Sept. 28 and Oct. 5. If you are interested please contact Gordon Bellerby at (905) 468-3961.

SPECIAL COUNT IN 1994

On Saturday, April 23, the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch will be holding its fourth annual banquet beginning at 3:00 pm. There will be another event earlier in the day, however, one for which we need volunteers.

From 10:00 am to 1:00 pm, NPH will set up an "interceptor line" of hawk counters stretching from the lakeshore to about 10 km inland. Groups of counters will be stationed about 1 - 2 km apart from the lake south to Beamer and south again to Highway 20.

Each group will count hawks in its part of the sky (and we hope there will be many Broad-wings) for the three hours. All counts will be collected, overlaps noted and a final tally drawn up.

The intent is to assess the extent of the flight which we sample at Beamer. We know that many birds migrate overhead and that others fly by to the north and south. We may get an inkling of how many pass by on April 23.

If we continue with such counts annually or even more frequently, we may even establish a picture of the flight at Beamer during certain weather conditions.

Please contact Bruce Duncan at Beamer or anytime at 519-622-4709 this spring if you want to participate. If enough interest is expressed, we may extend this survey to the following day to gather additional data.

GOLDEN EAGLES

by Bruce Duncan

Over the years, 104 Golden Eagles have been counted at Beamer Memorial Conservation Area during the spring migration, an average of 5.5 annually. Numbers seem to have increased since the beginning of the count in 1975, but there are usually fewer than 10 per spring. There have been 10 or more only in 1985 (12), 1990 (10) and 1992 (12).

Most of these birds are likely eagles hatched in the east, by which I mean Ontario, Quebec and the Maritimes. The northeastern United States has seen only a single nest site in the past decade (in Maine). Before that, there was a second nest in 1983 in northwestern Maine and in 1972 in the Adirondacks of New York (Todd, 1988). Even if they were at one time more plentiful, it is unlikely that birds from this area would migrate past Beamer in spring .

"Unlikely" is the appropriate word, not "impossible". I say that because the single recovery of a Golden Eagle banded during the fall migration at Hawk Cliff, Ontario was along the Maine - New Brunswick border 9 years later (Fowler and Fowler, 1990). This was not a breeding season recovery, however. I think that some of the eagles seen at Hawk Cliff during the fall migration pass by Beamer during the spring.

The eyries reported from the northeastern states and southeastern Canada are in what Todd (*op. cit.*) regarded as marginal habitat. The large openings in remote forested areas that serve as good hunting habitat for Golden Eagles are scarce in these breeding areas. Improved forest fire protection and reversion of marginal agricultural land to woodland are factors that have reduced suitable hunting areas in the past century.

The Maine eagles caught a large number of waterbirds, particularly herons and bitterns, as well as some cormorants and mergansers (Spofford, 1971). In fact, Palmer (1988) described them as "bog birds" to indicate their preference in hunting habitat. Species like these in the diet indicate that what we think of as more traditional prey (mammals such as hares, rabbits, muskrats, foxes and groundhogs) occur in insufficient numbers to meet the needs of the eagles. In addition, the chances of high levels of chemical contaminants increase as the number of fish-eating birds in the diet increases.

Most of Beamer's Golden Eagles likely breed in the most northerly parts of their eastern range, especially the Ungava Peninsula of Quebec. The area has tundra and boreal forest habitats with prey species such as hares, foxes, waterbirds and other similarly-sized birds. These eagles are migrants through our area and further east and west.

Millsap and Vana (1984) examined and mapped over 600 records of Golden Eagles in eastern North America and found a scattered pattern, except near Chesapeake Bay. Wintering eagles, however, were almost always near wetlands. Non-adults in most cases were along the coast - a familiar theme of young raptors.

There are some individual banding recoveries and satellite-tracked birds that show where Quebec birds travel. One nestling banded near Wakeham Bay in Hudson Strait was retrapped at Hawk Mountain, Pennsylvania in October of the same year.

In 1992, as part of the environmental assessment of Hydro Quebec's megaproject, scientists from MacDonald College of McGill University fitted transmitters to six nestlings in the Great Whale region just east of Hudson Bay. Here's how Scott Weidensaul (1993) described it:

"Two of the transmitter signals failed to move from the breeding grounds (either because the eagles died or the transmitters fell off), but the remaining four provided some surprises. One cut around Lake Huron and spent the winter

in central Michigan, while the other three crossed Quebec and New York, then passed through Pennsylvania. One stayed in the mid-Atlantic region, and one wintered in West Virginia, where again, the eagle died or the transmitter fell off. The last wandered well into Dixie, moving between Alabama and Tennessee. By this April, the remaining three had returned to Quebec."

When I looked at the accompanying map, I noticed that the "Alabama bird" may have passed along the south shores of Lakes Ontario and Erie when it returned to Quebec in the spring. Did we see it at Beamer?

Addendum: Hawk Cliff has just received word of another of its Golden Eagles. The remains of the bird, at least six years old, were found in June 1992 (breeding season) at Manicouagan, PQ., about 450km NNE of Quebec City and 1000km south of Ungava.

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A RELAXING AUTUMN TOUR

by John Stevens

In anticipation of a climactic final showdown between the Baltimore Orioles and the Toronto Blue Jays for the American League Divisional Championship, I arranged for a holiday starting last September 29. The plan was to visit the Orioles' new stadium for a couple of weekend games, then go on to Cape May for the raptor migration. Unfortunately the Jays clinched the title a week before I left, making the rest of the games exhibitions, but the weather was beautiful and I left at noon Thursday.

HAWK MOUNTAIN

After an overnight stay in Pottsville, PA, Friday began in a fog - literally - but I still managed to find the turnoff to the Hawk Mountain Sanctuary. The route up the ridge, about two kilometres through a hardwood forest, became dangerously beautiful as the early morning sun broke through the ground fog and one's eyes wandered from the winding road.

Atop the ridge there is ample camouflaged parking throughout the forest, and the rustic sanctuary building itself nestles inconspicuously into the landscape. As a hawkwatcher I declined to explore the exhibits and other features and headed instead for the lookouts.

The south lookout is about as far from the sanctuary building as the point is from the entrance to Beamer. It is situated near the south end of a u-shaped valley aligned southwest/ northeast. The drop in front of the lookout is not as steep as the escarpment at Beamer, although the valley floor is much lower than the lake plain.

After admiring the view for several minutes but not seeing any hawks, I left for the north lookout. This required a considerable hike, most of it uphill, through some rugged terrain. The north lookout is a pile of large rocks on the north side of a slight rise atop the Kittaniny Ridge. The view along the ridge to the northeast is unimpeded.

Forty to fifty people were sitting, leaning or standing on various parts of the rock pile. The day's counter was stationed near the top center of the pile, in a slight depression which provides some wind protection. The young woman counting this day was very good in announcing the identity and location of birds as they were spotted. She was assisted by others on the pile, particularly a middle aged fellow with exceptionally good eyes and skills who sat beside her. Every hour the counter used a walkie-talkie to report all the data to Laurie Goodrich, the official counter for the watch, who was working in the sanctuary building.

With a light to moderate wind blowing from the north, a fair flight was taking place. Sharpies, Cooper's, Kestrels and Red-tails, plus two Peregrines and three Black Vultures went by. Turkey Vultures were in the air continuously, but none were migrating.

From the north lookout I got a better perspective of the visibility index on the HMANA data forms. Looking to the west from Hawk Mountain one can see ridge after ridge out to the horizon; if the distance to each ridge were known it would be fairly easy to estimate the visibilty.

Saturday was spent looking at dickey birds (Orioles and Blue Jays) in Baltimore, on a day when a tee shirt was alsmost too warm. On Sunday I visited friends near Washington and got in a round of golf during which only one bird was tallied - it wasn't an eagle.

SNICKER'S GAP

In geographical terms, a gap is a notch in a

mountain ridge. Snicker's Gap is located on western Virginia's Blue Ridge, on the eastern side of the Shenandoah River. During fall migration the hawkwatch is conducted from a commuter parking lot near the base of the southern ridge in the saddle of the gap. The wooded northern ridge starts about .5km from the viewing site and angles 3-4km to the northeast until it becomes obscured.

There is a strong similarity to the watch at Beamer in the way one waits for birds to appear over the trees. Good binoculars are very necessary as the birds can be quite distant and tend to pass over very high as well. Some birds heading along the western side of the ridge could be seen through the gap, often passing below the lookout.

On the Monday I visited this site the weather was sunny and warm, with very clear air and a light breeze from the northwest. Viewing conditions were difficult because of the totally blue sky. I had arrived before anyone else and the only raptor I saw by 10 AM was sharpie which the official counter, who had arrived at 9:30, never did see. Things picked up around 10:30 with a fairly steady flow mostly of accipiters, including one Northern Goshawk, and other species such as Broadwings and Osprey.

CAPE MAY

Being anxious to get to Cape May, I left Snicker's Gap before 3PM. The folks there had warned me to avoid Washington traffic, so I drove around Chesapeake Bay rather than taking the ferry across. The weather forecast for Tuesday suggested that there could be a good flight, and many experienced hawkwatchers had arrived in Cape May from places like New York, Washington and Philadelphia in anticipation. A strong steady breeze from the northwest concentrated the birds near the coast and provided a good flight.

The Cape May peninsula is very flat. The princpal viewing point is a low platform about 2km west of the town near the lighthouse at the extreme southwest of the peninsula. The counter here is an employee of the Cape May Bird Observatory, which owns and manages a significant tract of land. The counter on this day had acquired his skills at Minnesota's Hawk Mountain.

At first I was baffled by the conditions. The sky was full of raptors, apparently moving in all directions. There were Sharpies and Cooper's, Bald Eagles, Turkey and Black Vultures, Kestrels and Merlins. Binoculars were pointing everywhere. Gradually I realized that the birds were as confused as I was. The wind was pushing them off the end of the cape; upon coming back they were faced with the dilemna of having to go before the wind up the eastern coast, or heading straight into the wind and up the western side.

The migrants were generally coming along the shore from the east; the trick for the counter was to determine if the birds he was seeing were coming or going. There was no doubt, however, as to which direction the four Peregrines that cruised through in the afternoon were heading. The day's count included 240 Cooper's Hawks, making it one of the top five days for the species at the site.

The viewing platform at Cape May is about 1.5m high, 50m long, and perhaps 3-4m wide. This provides enough elevation to permit everyone to overlook the lush growth of a wetland which extends outward 300-500m to the east. Much like Cranberry Marsh, there are almost no reference points to provide verbal desriptions of birds' positions on the distant horizon.

During the two full days I spent at the cape there was a continuous flow of of people to the platform. On occasion there may have been close to 100 viewers, with as many as 75 people on the platform at one time. It provided an equal opportunity for all to view the birds.

It was interesting to see how many people were making notes of the species and numbers of birds they were seeing. For nearly an hour one gentleman from Florida with rather too loud a voice had been routinely misidentifying the hawks for his three less experienced friends. Then he turned his attention to a Great Egret which had been feeding in a nearby pond on and off all day. After consultation with his bird guide and perhaps five minutes perusal through his telescope, he announced to the assembled crowd that the bird was an immature white phase Reddish Egret, and duly made a notation. Apart from his group, no one else turned to look, which must have been somewhat deflating as they left shortly thereafter.

There are a numer of banding stations on the Cape May Observatory property, all in communication with each other, the platform and their headquarters. On my second day a biologist brought a young Goshawk to the platform. He gave an excellent extemporaneous talk which generated a good discussion and only ended when the screams of the bird began to irritate people and it was released.

Leaving Cape May on Thursday I headed up the New Jersey turnpike and got off to visit the Montclair Hawkwatch. It is situated on a ridge, with a height similar to that of the escarpment at Grimsby, which parallels the Hudson River about 30km west of New York. I managed to investigate the top of the ridge and found lookouts from which the Statue of Liberty and the Manhattan skyline were visible, but I never did find the hawkwatch.

Once again it was a cloudless day with difficult raptor viewing conditions, so I opted to take a liesurely drive throught the Catskills to Cooperstown, New York. With the maples at their fall best, this was a winning move. A three hour visit to the Baseball Hall of Fame was more than sufficient. I found it very nationalistic, with almost no references to the Expos or Blue Jays. I then rushed back to Toronto to catch events later that month which were thus made even more satisfying.

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH MIGRATION CALENDAR FOR BEAMER CONSERVATION AREA

NOTES:

1) Species initials and Right (->) or Left (<-) arrow:

This combination indicates the start or end of the normal (at Beamer) migration period for that species. The same in **bold** type indicates the start or end of a noticeable peak period for that species. The box in which this combination is located indicates the day and month on which the period is likely to start.

2) A number, followed by species initials, followed by a slash (/) and a two-digit number:

In this combination the largest number of that species ever seen in one day is given first; the two digit number following the / indicates the year in which this occurred. The box in which this combination is located indicates the day and month on which the event occurred. Example: 449 RS /93 in the April 5 box indicates that the highest number of Red-shouldered Hawks recorded in one day was 449, seen on April 5, 1993.

TV - Turkey Vulture
BV - Black Vulture
OS - Osprey
BE - Bald Eagle
GE - Golden Eagle
NH - Northern Harrier
SS - Sharp-shinned Hawk
CH - Cooper's Hawk
NG - Northern Goshawk
RS - Red-shouldered Hawk
BW - Broad-winged Hawk
RT - Red-tailed Hawk
SW - Swainson's Hawk
RL - Rough-legged Hawk
FH - Ferruginous Hawk
AK - American Kestrel
ME - Merlin
PF - Peregrine Falcon
GF - Gyrfalcon

The following information, based on 19 years of data from the Beamer Hawkwatch, has been updated to show significant 1993 events:

Largest number of raptors in one season: 19,724 in 1985

MARCH

1 RT-> RL-> CH-> NG-> BE-> GE->	2 NH-> RS-> AK-> TV->	3	4	5	6	7
8 **RL->**	9 **RT->**	10 **AK->**	11	12	13	14 **RS-> NG->** 44 AK /90
15 **CH->** SS->	16	17	18 **BE->** 7 GE /86	19	20 **TV->**	21
22	23	24 11 NG /84	25	26 2 PF /91 7 GE /88 748 TV /88	27 **NH-> OS->**	28 2 PF /90
29	30	31				

Largest # of raptors in month: 5670 in March 1988; Largest # of raptors in one day in month: 2080 on March 26, 1988

APRIL

1	2 <-RS	3 2 PF /91	4 1 BV /92	5 ME-> PF-> 449 RS /93 50 CH /93 28 NH /93	6	7
8 706 RT /87	9	10 <-RT SS-> BW->	11	12 OS-> 22 RL /91 16 OS /92	13 4 ME /92 1 FH /92	14 28 NH /91
15 <-TV	16 <-BE 2 PF /90	17	18 1556 SS /76	19 BW->	20 1 GF /77 28 NH /92 1 SW /93*	21 1 SW /85 6007 BW /85
22 1 SW /88	23	24 <-NG	25	26	27 1 SW /93*	28 <-AK
29 4 GE /83	30 <-CH <-RL					

* Subject to acceptance by Ontario Bird Records Comittee

Largest # of raptors in month: 15,012 in April 1984; Largest # of raptors in one day in month: 7007 on April 21, 1985

MAY

1	2	3	4	5 1 SW /89	6 <-NH <-BW <-BE <-PF	7
8	9	10 <-OS	11 <-SS	12	13	14
15 <-RL <-ME	16	17	18 <-NG	19	20	21
22	23	24 <-OS <-GE	25 <-RS	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Largest # of raptors in month: 2695 in May 1980; Largest # of raptors in one day in month: 1492 on May 4, 1989

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch

Newsletter

Newsletter No. 9, August 1994

1994 OPEN HOUSE AGAIN SUCCESSFUL

by John Stevens and Mike Street

Over 600 people visited Beamer Memorial Conservation Area on Good Friday, April 1, 1994 for NPH's fourth annual Open House. Cars were lined up on both sides of Ridge Road back to the falls! Morning cloudiness gave way to sunny skies around noon, southwest winds ranged from 15-25 km/h, temperatures ranged from 4°C to 12°C.

A total of 343 raptors were counted during the day, mostly Red-tails and Turkey Vultures but with enough other species - including Northern Goshawks, Harriers and a Bald Eagle - to keep things interesting.

The Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, through Dave Stuart and Gord Harry, provided us with tables for displays and picnics.

PEREGRINE RELEASE

For the second year in a row NPH was fortunate enough to have a Peregrine Falcon released during the Open House. The Peregrine was injured near Fort Erie last fall and found by Blair Morden. A local veterinarian recommended Kip Parker at the Owl Foundation. After a broken wing was set, the falcon spent the winter in Vineland convalescing.

Blair was on hand as Kip released the bird. Unlike the falcon at last year's open house, which blasted out of sight, this Peregrine gave the crowd quite a show as it circled for several minutes, getting its bearings and gaining hight before heading - east!

DUNCAN DOES IT AGAIN!

For at least the second time at an Open House Bruce Duncan had to interrupt his main talk to let the assembled crowd have a good look at a Bald Eagle. While Bruce was telling our visitors a bit about the Hawkwatch and the story of the about-to-be-released Peregrine Falcon, the official counter alerted everyone to an adult Bald Eagle which was passing by directly overhead and fairly low. As if that wasn't enough, a few minutes later a Northern Goshawk went through too!

RAFFLE

Our sincere thanks are extended to Kay McKeever of the Owl Foundation for the donation of a print of a Great Gray Owl (and to Diane Bellerby for having it framed), to Barry Cherriere for the donation of a beautifully painted Peregrine Falcon sweat shirt, and to David and Ann Lewis for donating a night's stay for two at

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their Grandview Bed and Breakfast in Grimsby. With these exceptional prizes we were able to raise $379.00 from the raffle. The happy winners were:

George Neole of Dundas: the print;
Ron Pittaway of Minden: the shirt; and
Donna Speranzini of Beamsville: the night's stay.

Generous George Coker of Winona donated ten of his famous bluebird nesting boxes. Thanks very much George. Five of the boxes were sold, raising another $50 and bringing the total receipts for the day to $429.00. Purchasers of the raffle tickets came from Niagara-on-the-Lake to Fort Erie, to Dundas and most places on the peninsula in between, from every community along the north shore of Lake Ontario as far as Whitby and from such distant points as Barrie, Minden, St. Lazaire, Que., and Philadelphia, Pa.

Once again Open House was a very successful day with raptors in the air and in the hand, and plenty of good company. Thanks again for all their help to the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, the Owl Foundation and the NPH members who assisted during the day.

In 1995 Good Friday falls on April 14. Just check the next page to see what happened on April 15 this year!!! See you at Beamer next Open House!

MPP INVITES COLLEAGUES TO NPH OPEN HOUSE, PRAISES HAWKWATCH

On March 31, 1994 Lincoln MPP Ron Hansen addressed the Provincial Legislature:

Mr. Speaker:

I rise to tell the house about a very uplifting event that will take place in my riding tomorrow - the fourth annual Hawkwatch at Beamer Memorial Conservation Area atop the Niagara Escarpment in Grimsby.

This special open house gives the public a unique opportunity to see hawks soaring on thermal updrafts as they wing their way northward on their spring migration route.

It is hosted by Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch and the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority.

Visitors will likely see a large number of Red-Tailed Hawks, Red-Shouldered Hawks, some Eagles, and Cooper's Hawks.

Experts will be on hand to help visitors identify the hawks as they fly overhead - and to give hourly talks on why the birds migrate and how they manage to travel so effortlessly.

Also, a rehabilitated hawk will be released into the wild by Mary Ellen Hebb of the nearby Owl Foundation.

The Hawkwatch open house will run from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. with children's activities scheduled for 11 a.m. and noon. The rain date is Saturday, April 2.

There is no charge for the event and visitors are urged to dress warmly and bring a lawn chair, binoculars and a bird guide.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to pay tribute to the many volunteers from Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch who come out each spring to count and tally the passing hawks.

From March until early May, they station themselves at Beamer Point and count thousands of hawks.

This vital information is then sent to the Hawk Watch Migration Association of North America, where experts examine the data and assess the health of hawk populations.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my elected colleagues and their constituents to come down to Grimsby tommorrow and join in the Hawkwatch.

What an awesome way to enjoy the unique resources of our beautiful and well-protected Niagara Escarpment. Thank you.

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH EXECUTIVE 1994

HON. PRESIDENT: Walter Klabunde
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APRIL 15, 1994 - WHAT A DAY!

by Mike Street

After the long cold winter most of us were looking forward to some warmth but, with the exception of a couple of days, March and early April were not much of an improvement. There had been a few good flights at Beamer CA, but only two 1000 bird days, March 23 and March 26. It was definitely shaping up to be an eagle year - nine Balds and two Goldens went through on March 23, on March 26 it was 5 and 3, and on April 4 six more Balds had appeared.

The morning of April 15 dawned dry and bright, with a temperature of 12°C and a light wind from the east. The 10AM Hamilton Weather Office forecast called for winds to become strong from the south and temperatures to shoot into the lows 20s. On hearing this at least one hawkwatcher (who shall remain nameless) developed itchy binocular focussing fingers, asked for the rest of the day off as vacation time, and headed to Grimsby.

The first Broad-wing of the day flew past just at noon. Half an hour later there was some excitement when a Swainson's Hawk was reported at the tip. Apparently it had been flying around for close to an hour, but by the time people reached the tip the bird had gone to ground on the far side of the valley. A bird which might have been the Swainson's Hawk was seen briefly from the tip down the valley, however, and around that time a Swainson's was recorded from the circle.

Some watchers stayed at the tip, hoping the Swainson's would reappear. More Broad-wings and many Sharp-shins started to arrive. Around 2PM people at the tip began to notice that their binoculars seemed unable to focus on anything if it was above them and more than 50 or 100 feet away. It became clear that while the promised warm air had arrived, there was still plenty of cold air moving south off the lake and meeting the warm air just above the ridge. The mixing air caused an effect similar to heat waves.

By 3 o'clock it was obvious that a really big flight was underway. About two hundred Broad-wings and close to a thousand Sharp-shins had been counted, and more were coming every minute. At 3:22PM (14:22 by the sun) a large group of Broad-wings was coming in low over the trees when Paul Rose shouted, "Swallow-tailed Kite!"

A few people grasped the significance immediately. The rest of us took a few seconds to comprehend. In any case the result was pandemonium. The kite did everything but turn cartwheels - it soared, it circled, it turned left, it turned right - so everyone present got a good long look.

Afterwards people just stared at each other in disbelief. "Holy (definitely unholy) expletive!", was heard more than once. Pictures were taken of Paul Rose, who made the call, George Meyers, the day's official counter, and others present. For at least an hour happy hawkwatchers could be seen grinning broadly, mumbling "Swallow-tailed Kite!" to themselves, shaking their heads, then repeating it like a mantra.



SWALLOW-TAILED KITE

with broadwings
over the hempine
treetops
low
wow

a haiku
by George Meyers

The day wasn't over. Birds kept arriving. By 5:30PM 2246 raptors had been counted, including 1285 Sharp-shins and 634 Broad-wings, not to mention 14 Osprey, 124 Turkey Vultures and a more than respectable 38 Cooper's Hawks and 3 Merlins. Thirteen species of raptor were recorded for the day.

The weather provided more to talk about. Around 4PM a group in the centre of the circle noticed that the temperature had gone up at least 6-8°C in a matter of seconds as a strong gust of air came from the south. Moments later the temperature plunged again as a strong gust came from the lake. The thermometric roller coaster continued for at least half an hour before the south wind finally prevailed. During this period the focussing phenomenon experienced earlier at the tip was repeated in the circle.

The hawkwatch shut down for the day at 5:30PM. The last bird recorded was - a Great Egret! What a day!!!

Postscript: At the NPH Annual Meeting on April 23 guest speaker Dick Benoit told members how on April 6 he had been sitting in the backyard of his daughter's home in Texas. Being a true hawkwatcher he noted the passage of raptors. One group of about 600 Broad-wings particularly caught his eye. Something was strange. Checking them over with his binoculars, Dick found that the anomaly was - you guessed it - a Swallow-tailed Kite. Did the same bird fly over Beamer nine days later? Hmmmm.....

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by Mike Street

My first task as President of the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch is to thank Bruce Duncan for all his efforts on the NPH's behalf as President during the first five years of the organization's life. The best way to say "Thank You" to Bruce is to carry on the work, so that's what we will do.

Do we need an association, a formal group? If all we had to do was count birds and pass the numbers on to HMANA, probably not. But counting hawks is just the beginning. So what else is there? Two things: 1) Educating the public, and 2) educating ourselves.

Educating the public doesn't just mean showing people how to tell one raptor from another - there's a much, much more important lesson. We all know how it is often difficult to get politicians and business people to pay attention to the environment, let alone to take action to protect and/or preserve natural things. But we also know that they will listen - sometimes - to the people who pay the freight, their constituents and their customers.

How many residents of the Niagara Peninsula Region even realize that this great natural phenomenon is happening literally over their heads not just once, but twice, a year? Every person the NPH makes aware of the raptor migration is one more individual who might start to take an interest in nature. Can we do this? The line of cars parked up and down both sides of Ridge Road during our Open House - we estimate more than 600 people came that day - indicates that people are willing to be shown. If NPH is not there to do it, who will be?

Educating ourselves, i.e. the hawkwatching community, also means doing more than just counting birds. The Intercept Line study (see P. 7) we initiated this year is an example. Anything we learn about how lake effect and local winds affect the movement of the hawks may allow us to count them better. The information we gather may be useful to other hawkwatches on the south shore of Lake Ontario, or anywhere else with similar local topology and conditions. Someday we might learn enough about all the variables to know if we should shift the count site in some situations.

Another area which may get a look in the not too distant future concerns how the numbers we get at Beamer fit into the larger picture. We know, for instance, that there has been a significant drop in the number of Sharp-shins counted at east coast sites. Yet our average number of Sharp-shins has increased over the years. The likely answer is that there are two distinct populations, and we might be able to help in getting an answer.

A lot of new and interesting things are happening at the NPH. You may not be interested in every single aspect, but your involvement in any way helps the whole effort. Read the rest of this issue of the newsletter for information on a temporary tower next year, trips to see hawks this fall, a worldwide intitative to protect raptors, and even a local intitative in Mexico with a NPH connection. You can be sure that your executive will be busy over the winter.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 1994 annual meeting at Stoney Ridge Winery - our fourth at the same location - was once again a success. Forty people attended and enjoyed Jim Warren's wines, good food by Pierre's Catering, the always interesting hawk quiz, Roslynne Price's bucket raffle and a very interesting slide talk about the Holiday Beach Migration Observatory Hawkwatch by guest Dick Benoit.

Another nice selection of Stoney Ridge's wines helped get things off the ground (the meeting that is). Jim explained the differences between the types of grapes and where they were grown, and filled us in on the meaning of the Vintner's Quality Assurance (VQA) label on Ontario wines, including some he was pouring.

The business portion of the meeting was fairly brief. Treasurer Gordon Bellerby advised everyone of our fiscal solvency, then Bruce Duncan gave his last annual report before retiring as President. After Bruce introduced the new executive, incoming President Mike Street thanked Bruce, on behalf of all NPH members and others, for his major contribution to the Hawkwatch.

Following the business meeting and quiz, Dick Benoit showed slides which helped illustrate his story of the development and activities of the Holiday Beach Migration Observatory Hawkwatch, which takes place every fall at the Holiday Beach Conservation Area near Amherstburg. It was impossible not to be envious as he told of days such as the one last fall when 67,000 Broad-wings went through. It was interesting to learn that HBMO counts everything, not just raptors. Thirty to fifty thousand Blue Jays are not uncommon on an early October day, for instance. Dick also had some kind words for the NPH, especially concerning the way our people get along and work together and are not afraid to make mistakes when calling birds, and encouraged us to keep building.

Next year's banquet will again be at Stoney Ridge in April. Don't miss it.

NIAGARA PENNINSULA HAWKWATCH

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS: 1ST MARCH 1993- 28TH FEBRUARY 1994

		1993-1994		1992-1993
Balance in bank 1st March		1,044.22		$472.68
Receipts				
Memberships	768.61		675.00	
Open House	440.00		273.00	
Banquet & Raffle	941.31		865.00	
Donations	20.00		13.00	
Grants - CWIP	------		284.96	
Grants - Ont. Heritage	487.50		367.40	
Bank Interest	10.87	2,668.29	21.19	2,499.55
		$3,712.51		$2,972.23
Disbursements				
Newsletter	202.23		150.60	
Postage etc.	108.73		60.50	
Telephone L.D.	------		50.00	
Open House	200.81		100.00	
Banquet	794.74		780.59	
Display Board	202.97		532.32	
Donation N.P.C.A.	------		250.00	
Met. Reports	18.00		------	
Migration Summary	129.47		------	
Bank Charges	2.50	1,659.45	4.00	1,928.01
Bank Balance Feb. 28		2,053.06		1,044.22
		$3,712.51		$2,972.23

Respectfully submitted by: Gordon Bellerby
Treasurer

GRANDVIEW BED & BREAKFAST

88 Mountain Street, Grimsby, Ontario L3M 4E7 (905) 945-2801

Perched on the Niagara escarpment overlooking historic Grimsby. A perfect place to break trail or just relax. Adjacent to a conservation area and the Bruce Trail. Just one mile from Beamer's Hawkwatch lookout. Inground pool for cooling off. Full breakfast.

Your hosts: Ann & David Lewis (Nature Photographer)

HAWKWATCH HAPPENINGS

NPH EXECUTIVE CHANGES

The 1994-95 slate of officers for the Niagara Pennsula Hawkwatch was announced at the 1994 Annual General Meeting. The entire previous slate was returned, despite extensive efforts to recruit new volunteers willing to stand for office, although there is one major change. After leading the Hawkwatch from its inception in 1990, Bruce Duncan had asked to be replaced as President. Mike Street agreed to stand for the office and was elected as our new President by acclamation. Bruce is staying on to look after NPH Research efforts and will also be our representative with the Hawk Migration Association of North America (HMANA).

At the NPH Executive regular meeting June 21 Mike announced that John Barker has joined the executive to act as Liason with other hawkwatches. John, Mike and Bruce will attend the Great Lakes Raptor conference at Detroit later this month.

JOIN US FOR FALL HAWKWATCHING!

Rather than let our ID skills rest until next spring, the NPH will coordinate two trips to fall hawkwatch sites. On Sept. 24 (rain date Sept. 25) we will see what is passing through the Hamilton area. Meet at 8AM at the main parking lot of the Royal Botanical Gardens on Plains Rd. W. in Burlington. The day's weather will determine the exact destination, so please try to be on time.

On Nov. 12 (rain date Nov. 13) we will travel to Hawk Cliff, near Port Stanley, to look for Golden Eagles and other raptors. Because of the distance, car pooling is likely. If you are interested in this trip please contact Paul Summerskill at (905) 934-7887.

TOWER/PLATFORM PROGRESS

One of the most often asked questions this spring was, "What's happened to the tower?" The lack of any visible or tangible results of NPH's study of this question does not mean there hasn't been any activity.

Members will remember that NPH conducted a survey to determine people's views on the subject of a tower at Beamer CA. There was also an article in the newsletter discussing the pros and cons of one part - consistency of the data - of the wider picture. Tower vs. platform was another issue. While there was broad agreement on the need for 'something' to help us get a better view over the ever taller trees, there was enough disagreement for caution.

Another issue which reared its ugly head was the matter of regulatory permission to do anything. The simple fact is that the Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC) must give its consent to all building activity which takes place on the escarpment. The problem here was that NPH felt it could not go to the NEC without a firm plan; difficult because of the differences of opinion in the hawk watching community. This spring it seemed quite clear that it was time to do 'something'. But what? Then came a 'waiting-for-the-birds' type of conversation between two members of the executive. Mike Street commented, "What we need is something temporary, say for 6 or 8 weeks, to see what an increase in height will do for us and how best to obtain the height." To which Paul Summerskill replied, "You mean like a small scaffold." An idea was born.

To make a long story short, as this issue of the Newsletter is going to press Bruce Duncan and Mike Street are in the process of talking to the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA), the 'owner' and operator of Beamer CA, - not to be confused with the NEC - to see if we can try something temporary next spring. Stay tuned!

HMANA CONFERENCE IN WINDSOR NEXT MAY

The Holiday Beach Migration Observatory (HMBO) will play host to the Hawk Migration Association of North America's HMANA Conference VII next May 4-7 at the Ramada Inn in Windsor, Ontario.

Organizers are soliciting papers on the seven conference topics, which include: Raptor Identification; Technology in Hawk Watching; Education; Population Management; Habitat and Food; and Weather and Its Relationship to Raptor Migration.

NPH will be represented at the conference and has offered to assist HMBO if required. Registration and other details will be available in the next NPH Newsletter.

NPH WORKING WITH VERACRUZ HAWKWATCH

Despite incomplete coverage at both ends of the season, in fall 1992 Mexican and American observers counted more than 2.2 million raptors passing through central Veracruz in Eastern Mexico. Turkey Vultures, Broad-winged Hawks and Swainson's Hawks made up the great majority of the birds counted. In 1993 counting started earlier and resulted in 47,000 Missippi Kites being recorded, but overall numbers were down to 1.9 million, possibly to to severe weather.

Any nature-related effort in less developed countries needs funds as it tries to do the work necessary both to count the hawks and to educate the local population to gain support at home. The Veracruz project is no different and NPH is trying to help.

(continued on P. 10)

INTERCEPTOR LINE COUNT RESULTS

by Bruce Duncan

INTRODUCTION

On April 23, 1994, 11 members of the Hawkwatch spent three hours recording migrant hawks on a broad north to south front from Lake Ontario to Grimsby Air Park, a distance of 6.5 km. The intent was to record all raptors migrating west and compare results to the Beamer count for the same three hours to see what sort of broader flight is occurring. This type of line count is called an interceptor line. We had hoped to see a big Broad-winged flight but the weather and birds did not cooperate.

Interceptor line counts like this are far from new. From 1954-56 Bill Gunn did the same at Hawk Cliff during the fall, spacing observers one mile apart along the Hawk Cliff Road inland and counting for a day or two on a weekend in September. He, like us, did not get a large Broad-winged Hawk flight.

The New England Hawk Watch group has done the same over far larger distances and for many years in those states, with a mixture of results. The intent has been to assess whether Broad-winged Hawks are distributed evenly or randomly across the map as they move through southern New England, or if they collect along "paths" and if so, whether the same paths are used year after year.

John Barker kindly gave me a copy of a paper on an Israeli interceptor count, the Kefar Kassem raptor migration survey, that was run from 1977 - 87 and was as long as 65 km in some years. They sampled a huge flight of many species over many days and saw thousands of raptors, mainly Honey Buzzards, Lesser Spotted Eagles, Levant Sparrowhawks and Booted Eagles.

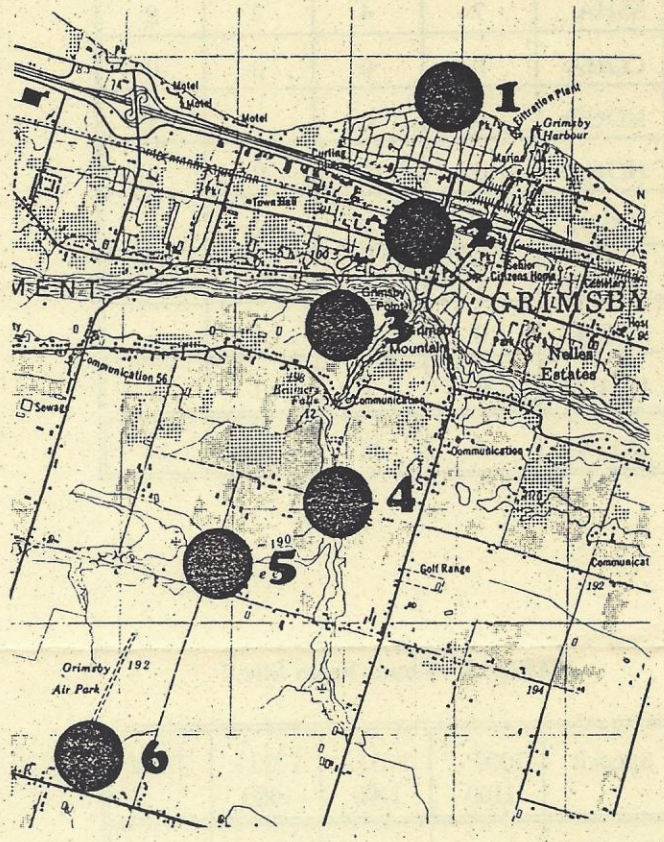
METHODS

Our interceptor line had six locations including the Beamer parking lot. They are shown on the accompanying map. You can see from the map that count sites are not in a straight north - south line. This was not possible due to topography and road locations. Distances between count sites from the lake inland (number 1 - 6) are as follows:

1 - 2	1.2 km
2 - 3	1.0 km
3 - 4	1.5 km
4 - 5	1.2 km
5 - 6	2.0 km

Counters at each site were asked to record hawks flying by during each 5 minute interval and to note whether or not they were north or south of their particular site.

Each site count is tallied in Tables 1 - 6. In addition, comments by observers about distances, ages of birds, unusual marks, etc. added detail to the counts.



Count Sites:

1 - Lake Ontario shoreline
2 - Grimsby Plaza
3 - Beamer CA
4 - Concession road 1.5 km south of Beamer
5 - Concession road 2.7 km south of Beamer
6 - Grimsby Air Park

RESULTS

I have totalled results by species for all sites and listed them in Table 7. In addition, I have indicated what I considered to be hawks seen at two or more sites as "Overlap". It was possible to pick these birds out from the counts since each group of observers provided the details mentioned above. I have been generous in assigning birds to this overlap category in order to obtain a conservative figure of the total count from the six sites.

TABLE 1 - Count From Site 1

Species	1000 - 1100	1100 - 1200	1200 - 1300	Total
TUVU	0	4	7	11
SSHA	2	4	2	8
COHA	0	0	0	0
NOGO	0	0	1	1
NOHA	0	2	0	2
RTHA	0	4	2	6
BWHA	1	1	1	3
AMKE	0	0	0	0
UNID	0	3	0	3
TOTAL	3	18	13	34

TABLE 2 - Count From Site 2

Species	1000 - 1100	1100 - 1200	1200 - 1300	Total
TUVU	0	5	9	14
SSHA	0	0	0	0
COHA	0	1	0	1
NOGO	0	0	0	0
NOHA	0	0	0	0
RTHA	0	0	0	0
BWHA	0	2	0	2
AMKE	0	0	0	0
UNID	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	0	8	9	17

TABLE 3 - Count From Site 3

Species	1000 - 1100	1100 - 1200	1200 - 1300	Total
TUVU	1	4	9	14
SSHA	21	31	31	83
COHA	0	0	1	1
NOGO	0	0	0	0
NOHA	0	3	0	3
RTHA	0	4	1	5
BWHA	1	1	2	4
AMKE	0	0	1	1
UNID	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	23	43	45	111

TABLE 4 - Count From Site 4

Species	1000 - 1100	1100 - 1200	1200 - 1300	Total
TUVU	1	1	7	9
SSHA	1	2	1	4
COHA	0	0	0	0
NOGO	0	0	0	0
NOHA	1	0	0	1
RTHA	1	4	0	5
BWHA	2	2	0	4
AMKE	5	1	0	6
UNID	1	0	0	1
TOTAL	12	10	8	30

TABLE 5 - Count From Site 5

Species	1000 - 1100	1100 - 1200	1200 - 1300	Total
TUVU	0	2	8	10
SSHA	3	4	5	12
COHA	0	0	0	0
NOGO	0	0	0	0
NOHA	0	0	0	0
RTHA	5	5	5	15
BWHA	2	4	1	7
AMKE	0	0	1	1
UNID	1	0	3	4
TOTAL	11	15	23	49

TABLE 6 - Count From Site 6

Species	1000 - 1100	1100 - 1200	1200 - 1300	Total
TUVU	10	2	3	15
SSHA	0	2	2	4
COHA	0	0	0	0
NOGO	0	0	0	0
NOHA	0	0	0	0
RTHA	8	3	3	14
BWHA	0	4	2	6
AMKE	1	0	0	1
UNID	0	4	3	7
TOTAL	19	15	13	47

TABLE 7 - Overall and Net Counts

Species	1000 - 1100	1100 - 1200	1200 - 1300	Total	Overlap	Net
TUVU	12	18	43	73	10	63
SSHA	27	43	41	111	2	109
COHA	0	1	1	2	0	2
NOGO	0	0	1	1	0	1
NOHA	1	5	0	6	0	6
RTHA	14	20	11	45	4	41
BWHA	6	14	6	26	1	25
AMKE	2	1	2	5	0	5
UNID	6	7	6	19	0	19
TOTAL	68	109	111	288	17	271

Overlap was spread unevenly between sites as follows:

1-2	0	
2-3	1	(TUVU 1)
3-4	3	(TUVU 2; SSHA 1)
4-5	6	(TUVU 5; RTHA 1)
5-6	7	(TUVU 2; RTHA 3; BWHA 1; SSHA 1)

DISCUSSION

Larger birds, Turkey Vultures and Red-tailed Hawks which are more easily seen at a distance, accounted for the bulk of the overlap and most were seen inland where there were fewer barriers to long views. Between the lake and escarpment and at Beamer, trees, the escarpment

itself and perhaps even buildings act to constrict vision.

Note that Site 3 was the official count area at the Beamer parking lot and that it produced the highest number of birds (111), the majority being Sharp-shins who may be attracted by the long, linear woodland of the Niagara Escarpment.

The next highest counts were inland, at Stations 5 and 6 where Red-tails and Turkey Vultures made up a substantial portion of the migration. Turkey Vultures seemed to be fairly evenly spread out over all of the stations.

There were better results from the lakeshore itself rather than just 1.2 km inland at the plaza in Grimsby with the lakeshore acting as a leading line attracted 8 Sharp-shins. No kestrels were seen there on this count although we have for years speculated that the falcon flight may follow the shore rather than the escarpment.

It is evident from the interceptor line that the current count location has been well selected - thanks to Dave Copeland and the original counters from the seventies who found it.

It's important to keep in mind that firm conclusions about anything can't be based on one three-hour count, but the results do indicate that it is worth doing on an annual basis with the hope that a big Broad-winged Hawk flight may coincide with the interceptor line count and some indication of the size of Broad-wing broad front migration may be obtained.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to John Barker, Barb Charlton, Rob Dobos, Mary Ellen Hebb, Wolfgang Luft, Stuart Mackenzie, Roslynne Price, John Stevens, Paul Summerskill and Tina Summerskill for helping with this count.

(HAWKWATCH HAPPENINGS - continued from P. 6)

Because many of the Veracruz raptors start their fall migrations in Canada, the Mexican project may be eligible for funds from CIDA, the Candian International Development Agency. NPH is involved because a Canadian sponsor is needed. Bruce Duncan is pursuing this for us, working with Ernesto Ruelas Inzunza in Veracruz. We will keep you posted as things develop.

CHANGES AT BEAMER

At the request of the NPH, sometime during the fall Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority staff will make two changes to the Beamer CA site. The most noticeable change will be the addition of a 10-14m aluminum pole. The pole will be the home of new weather monitoring instruments donated to NPH by Honorary President Walter Klabunde.

The NPCA has also agreed to move the NPH display sign about 10m west. This is in response to our finding that in its current location the sign often gets in the way of the official counter.

HAWKS ALOFT WORLDWIDE LISTS BEAMER

Two years ago the famous Hawk Mountain Sanctuary in Pennsylvania started developing Hawks Aloft Worldwide, an international conservation network for migratory raptors.

The main purpose of Hawks Aloft Worldwide is to provide the foundation for a global conservation strategy for protecting raptor habitat along critical migratory corridors. The second goal is to try to educate people worldwide about raptor connected ecological issues.

Patterned loosely after the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN), the core of the Hawks Aloft Worldwide project is the establishment of an international registry of sites and flyways of global significance to migrating raptors.

While the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch site at Beamer CA does not get the hundreds of thousands or millions of raptors seen at other locations, it is the only site monitoring westbound spring migration on the south shore of Lake Ontario. NPH is pleased to be part of this effort and looks forward to its future development.

FALL HAWKWATCH LOCATIONS

CRANBERRY MARSH: take Hwy 401, exit south at Harwood Ave., Ajax. Turn left (east) on Bayly Rd., then right (south) on Halls Rd. to the 2nd path to the marsh. Park on the east side and take the boardwalk. Numbers are good except in strong south winds.

HAWK CLIFF: From Aylmer, take Hwy. 73 south to the lake, turn right (west) on Reg. Rd. 24 to T-intersection with Reg. Rd. 22 (look for sign), go south to end of road. From Port Stanley, take Reg. Rd. 24 east to same intersection. Numbers usually good except in strong south winds. 1994 Open House: Sept. 10/11, 17/18

HOLIDAY BEACH CA: take Hwy. 18 west from Leamington or east from Amherstburg, go south at Malden Center (follow signs). Numbers can be very high, best with northerly winds. 1994 HAWK WEEKEND: Sept. 16-18

Summary of the 1994 Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch

by Rob Dobos

The 1994 Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch (NPH) spring migration count at Beamer Memorial Conservation Area above Grimsby, Ontario, proved to be one of the best yet. A new species was added for the NPH, while record high counts were established for four species and another one was tied. The season's total of 15977 birds counted was the fourth highest to date. The total number of hours of observation (531.0), spanning March 1 to May 15, was below the 1980-94 average (this average is used throughout this report). A rather useful statistic for comparisons with other years is the number of hawks counted per hour, which was 30.1 in 1994, above the average of 26.2. The good hawk flight cannot be readily attributed to any significant weather conditions. Environment Canada summaries of meteorological statistics from St. Catharines and Hamilton Airports did indicate that the predominant wind directions ranged from the west to southwest throughout the spring, however this is normal. Total hours of sunshine for March and April was slightly higher than normal, and this may have been a factor.

The monthly total for March of 5194 hawks was a big improvement from 1993, and was the third highest March total for Beamer. April's count of 10149 was the fifth highest count for that month. However, the total for May of 634 birds was the lowest since 1985. There were four days with over 1000 hawks counted. The biggest day was April 15 when 2246 hawks were tallied. This was the highest daily count since April 25, 1991. The bird of the season appeared on this day, the spectacular American Swallow-tailed Kite. Apparently a good number of hawks passed by uncounted in its wake as the lucky but distracted observers recovered from their excitement.

A new record high was set for Turkey Vultures with 3189 counted, which was 37% higher than the previous record from 1988. The 69 Ospreys tallied was also a new record high count, topping the 64 from 1992. An early Osprey was seen on March 31, only the fourth March record for Beamer. A count of 14 on April 15 was two short of the previous daily record of 16. The total for Northern Harriers of 177 was slightly above average. The 27 recorded on March 23 was one bird short of the one day record high.

Bald Eagles had the best showing yet with a total of 40, almost double the previous high of 22 in 1992. The age breakdown for this species was 13 adults, 22 immatures and five unrecorded, perhaps suggesting a strong recruitment of offspring into the population the past few years. A new one day record high was set on March 23 when nine were counted. Bald Eagles were migrating late into the season, with five counted during May and the last one on May 13. Golden Eagles had a reasonable showing with 10 birds for the season. This is above the average of seven, and two short of the record high of 12. Seven of these occurred during the period of March 23-29. A late bird passed through on May 10.

All three accipiters had good showings. The Sharp-shin total of 4846 birds was well above average and proved to be the third highest count yet. The 263 Cooper's Hawks counted was the second best total for Beamer, the record being 311 in 1990. Northern Goshawk numbers peaked this year, with 73 counted. This ties the previous high from 1993, conforming reasonably well to the "ten year cycle" theory. Also of note were the pair of Goshawks on territory at Beamer, which were noticeable through April. Some may question whether these birds were counted repeatedly as migrants resulting in the high season's total. Undoubtedly, this may have occurred in a few instances. However, the majority of counters recorded the presence of the territorial birds separately from the count, lending some confidence that the peak observed was real.

The Red-shoulder total of 1419, the second highest yet, was marginally lower than the record high of 1440 in 1990. However, a new one day record high count was shattered when 655 were counted on March 23 (the previous record was 449)! The count for Broad-winged Hawks of 2335 birds, although higher than last year's total, was well below the average of 3903. It seems the peak flight into Ontario is rarely encountered at Beamer. Once again, two Swainson's Hawks were recorded, on April 15 and 25. Acceptance of documentation by the Ontario Bird Records Committee is required for these provincial rarities. The Red-tailed Hawk total of 2890 birds was below average, as was the tally of 62 Rough-legged Hawks.

The American Kestrel total of 122 birds was about average. Remarkable was the new record high count of 23 Merlins, almost doubling the previous high of 12 in both 1987 and 1992. One was record early for Beamer on March 1. With an apparent increase in numbers wintering at more northerly latitudes, earlier migrants may be expected now. A total of four Peregrine Falcons were recorded between April 10 and 25. The average count is three birds, and the record high is six (1990 and 1992).

The NPH Committee would like to thank the following volunteers for their help as official hawk counters during 1994: Roy Baker, John Barker, Gordon Bellerby, Bouwe Bergsma, Barry Cherriere, Jim Coey, Dave Copeland, Rob Dobos, Bruce Duncan, Chris Escott, Denys Gardiner, Mary Ellen Hebb, Walter Klabunde, Kevin McLaughlin, George Meyers, George Naylor, Jack Ryan, John Stevens, Mike Street, Paul Summerskill.

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Counts – March 1994

Date –>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Totals
Black Vulture																																0
Turkey Vulture									1		1				5		2		5	43		17	261	356	5	203		93	6	398	64	1458
Osprey																															1	1
Am. Swallow–tailed Kite																																0
Bald Eagle												2		1						4			9			5			1	1		23
Northern Harrier											1			1						3	1	1	27	16		14		2	1	8	3	78
Sharp–shinned Hawk					1															3		8	42	27	1	47		8		28	22	187
Cooper's Hawk			1		2			1				1			3				2	2		1	12	5		34		6		11	12	93
Northern Goshawk	1			1																5			1			8		7		2	2	27
Red–shouldered Hawk									18		3			1	2		3		3	46		21	655	22	6	375		21	3	55	12	1246
Broad–winged Hawk																																0
Swainson's Hawk																																0
Red–tailed Hawk	13	8	5		9			11	97	11	91	16	20	15	14		34		9	200	2	20	380	30	19	497		85	3	103	50	1742
Ferrughous Hawk																																0
Rough–legged Hawk					2				2		4			1						8		2	5	2		9		1		2		38
Golden Eagle																							2		1	3			1			7
American Kestrel	1											1							1				3	11		5				1	6	29
Merlin	1																			1												2
Peregrine Falcon																																0
Gyrfalcon																																0
Unid. Accipiter																				4			2			3				2	1	12
Unid. Buteo								1							1		1			33			55			122		2		5	3	223
Unid. Eagle																										1			1			2
Unid. Falcon																													1			1
Unid. Raptor									1				1							13					1	4		1		4		25
Total Raptors	16	8	6	1	14	0	0	13	119	11	100	20	21	19	25	0	40	0	20	365	3	70	1454	469	33	1330	0	226	17	618	176	5194
Hours Counted	7	7	5.6	7	8	6	5	7	7.1	6	8.25	7.5	7	6	7.5	1	6.4	4	9.25	8.5	3.25	7.3	9.5	8	6.5	8.5	0	6.5	4.5	8	8.6	201.75
Wind Direction	NE	NE	N	VAR	NW	S	SW	WSW	VAR	NW	NE	SSW	NNE	SW	SW	SNOW	NW	SNOW	W	VAR	N	SW	SW	SW	NW	VAR	RAIN	VAR	ENE	VAR	SW	

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Counts – April 1994

Date –>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		Totals
Black Vulture																																0
Turkey Vulture	161	260	57	108	99		12	102	23	53	57		56	163	124	21	7	65	58	22	23	37	39	16	14	10	15	3	12	12		1629
Osprey		4		1	1		1	5	1	1			4	9	14			2	4	4	5	3	1			3	1	4				68
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite															1																	1
Bald Eagle	1	1		6	1			1														1					1					12
Northern Harrier	3	9		4	3			3	2		3		5	4	16		1	1	2	3	1		4	2	2	14	2			4		88
Sharp-shinned Hawk	23	213	7	109	112			44	35	24	50	12	137	136	1285	20	36	194	83	30	50	60	161	101	212	857	217	27	63	45		4343
Cooper's Hawk	9	8	1	15	6		2	8	1	1	2		1	3	38		1	11	4	1	4	9	7	1	2	13	2			3		153
Northern Goshawk	6	1		2	5			5		1	3				5			2	1						1	5	1	4				42
Red-shouldered Hawk	12	14		32	26		1	46		2	4		15	3	7		1	1			1	1		1		2	1	1				171
Broad-winged Hawk														2	634	38	4	172	194	11	96	246	17	36	81	428	115	120	14	48		2256
Swainson's Hawk															1										1							2
Red-tailed Hawk	120	70	5	99	33		4	113	13	57	102		87	37	49	13	9	77	28	6	19	19	9	7	7	11	7	43	12	22		1078
Ferruginous Hawk																																0
Rough-legged Hawk	1			1	2		1	3		1	2				8	1					1							2		1		24
Golden Eagle																									1			1				2
American Kestrel	6	14	1	2	5		1	3	1	1	3		4	5	25		1	2				2	2	3		5						86
Merlin										1	1		1	2	3			1		4		1		1	2	1	1	1				20
Peregrine Falcon										1			1												2							4
Gyrfalcon																																0
Unid. Accipiter	1	1			3			1	1	1	2				4			7	2		1		2									26
Unid. Buteo				1	2		1	3		17				1	12	2		17	8	3		4	2	1		1		7				82
Unid. Eagle																																0
Unid. Falcon														2	1							2				2						7
Unid. Raptor								3		2			1	1	19			11	7	2	4		1	1				2	1			55
Total Raptors	343	595	71	380	298	0	23	340	77	163	229	12	312	368	2246	95	60	563	391	86	205	385	245	170	325	1352	363	215	102	135		10149
Hours Counted	8.75	9	7	9	7.2	0	8.25	9	8	11	7.25	4	6.5	10	9.25	6	10.15	8.5	9.5	6.5	8.3	7.5	8	9	6.5	9.5	7.5	7.1	8.25	6.85		233.35
Wind Direction	VAR	SW	NW	SW	VAR	SNOW	NW	SW	SW	N	NE	NE	VAR	SW	VAR	SSW	W	SW	WNW	VAR	NW	N	SW	WSW	SW	VAR	SW	NE	VAR	NE		

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Counts – May 1994

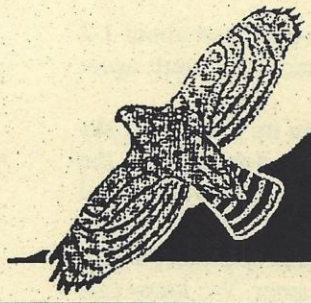
Date -->	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Totals
Black Vulture																																0
Turkey Vulture	2	10	23	7	2	4	3	3	10	9	12	2	15																			102
Osprey																																0
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite																																0
Bald Eagle			1				1				2	1																				5
Northern Harrier		1	4	3			1			1	1																					11
Sharp-shinned Hawk	2	20	52	49	9	3	25	31	23	17	56	18	6	5																		316
Cooper's Hawk			2	6		2			1	1			3	2																		17
Northern Goshawk			2	2																												4
Red-shouldered Hawk									1		1																					2
Broad-winged Hawk		2	25				36	9	1	2	1	1	1	1																		79
Swainson's Hawk																																0
Red-tailed Hawk		2	29	6	3		3	4	6	4	2	1	5	5																		70
Ferrughous Hawk																																0
Rough-legged Hawk																																0
Golden Eagle										1																						1
American Kestrel		1	2						3		1																					7
Merlin											1																					1
Peregrine Falcon																																0
Gyrfalcon																																0
Unid. Accipiter				1			1						1																			3
Unid. Buteo			3				1	1		1																						6
Unid. Eagle																																0
Unid. Falcon																																0
Unid. Raptor			2	5			1			1			1																			10
Total Raptors	4	36	145	79	14	9	72	48	45	37	77	23	32	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	634
Hours Counted	3.5	7	8.5	5.5	7.5	5.5	7	5	7.75	8	6	8	6.5	6	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	95.75
Wind Direction	W	VAR	NE	VAR	VAR	W	N	NW	SW	WNW	SSW	WNW	N	WSW	N	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	

Annual Summaries 1975–1994

	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	TOTALS	1975–92 Mean	1980–92 Mean	Highest Total & Date	Earliest Date
Black Vulture																		1			1	0.5	1.0	1 – Apr 4/92	Apr 4/92
Turkey Vulture	53	127	450	293	294	620	671	521	895	616	948	837	977	2331	1406	1463	1785	1990	1852	3189	21318	1065.9	1340.1	748 – Mar 26/88	Feb 23/84
Osprey	7	6	10	6	18	24	19	27	20	38	36	33	30	41	36	40	46	64	45	69	615	30.8	37.9	16 – Apr 12/92	Mar 26/77
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite																				1	1	1.0	1.0	1 – Apr 15/94	Apr 15/94
Bald Eagle	1	2	2	1	2	8	1	7	7	5	10	14	7	16	17	15	17	22	14	40	208	10.4	13.3	9 – Mar 23/94	Feb 26/86
Northern Harrier	20	42	78	53	54	72	102	131	125	127	113	143	217	162	175	194	219	209	126	177	2539	127.0	152.8	28 – Apr20/92;Apr5/93	Feb 19/84
Sharp-shinned Hawk	844	4162	4342	1874	4007	4614	4095	4880	3931	4683	4480	3549	2831	3108	3576	7005	3767	3418	3475	4846	77487	3874.4	4150.5	1556 – Apr 18/76	Feb 11/87
Cooper's Hawk	36	48	113	67	62	135	179	121	160	190	152	196	199	229	180	311	220	199	209	263	3269	163.5	196.2	50 – Apr 5/93	Feb 11/87
Northern Goshawk	12	8	9	3	2	3	8	51	73	67	25	21	31	27	14	24	20	34	28	73	533	26.7	33.3	11 – Mar 24/84	Feb 28/88
Red-shouldered Hawk	220	438	643	324	624	684	528	638	624	838	764	901	876	861	1102	1440	761	1187	1030	1419	15902	795.1	910.2	655 – Mar 23/94	Feb 23/84
Broad-winged Hawk	968	431	1513	1185	5145	4914	6904	2305	4118	7844	8239	3823	1628	2910	2304	4434	2063	2761	1963	2335	67787	3389.4	3903.0	6007 – Apr 21/85	Apr 4/85
Swainson's Hawk											1			1	1				2	2	7	1.4	1.4	7 dates with 1 bird	Apr 15/94
Red-tailed Hawk	1129	1003	2502	2735	2409	2848	2604	2607	3150	3105	3410	2852	3265	3567	2615	3467	3023	3861	2684	2890	55726	2786.3	3063.2	706 – Apr 8/87	Feb 11/87
Ferruginous Hawk																		1			1	0.5	1.0	1 – Apr 13/92	Apr 13/92
Rough-legged Hawk	46	26	57	65	78	37	41	131	59	85	48	45	77	87	45	87	145	128	35	62	1384	69.2	74.1	24 – Apr 2/82	Feb 11/87
Golden Eagle		2	1	3	2	3	4	4	8	6	12	7	6	3	7	10	8	12	6	10	114	5.7	7.1	4 – Apr 29/83	Feb 24/84
American Kestrel	32	49	96	60	40	101	114	102	71	56	150	126	85	148	132	207	180	92	93	122	2056	102.8	118.6	44 – Mar 14/90	Feb 25/87
Merlin	2	1	2		1	1	2	5	2	2	5	5	12	5	4	9	11	12	9	23	113	5.9	7.1	4 – Apr 13/92;Apr 20/94	Mar 1/94
Peregrine Falcon		1		1	1	1	3	3			2	1	1	4	2	6	5	6	2	4	43	2.7	3.1	3 dates with 2 birds	Mar 12/88
Gyrfalcon			1																		1	1.0	0.0	1 – Apr 20/77	Apr 20/77
Unid. Raptors	53	373	197	622	132	509	647	435	467	640	880	1504	266	634	592	582	2681	681	534	452	12881	644.1	766.9		
Total Raptors	3423	6719	10016	7292	12871	14574	15922	11968	13710	18302	19275	14057	10508	14134	12208	19294	14951	14678	12107	15977	261986	13099.3	14777.7		
Hours Counted	89.25	112	--	--	310	529	562.6	583.1	565	564.6	608.5	576.2	681.5	608	499.3	574.5	548.3	541.5	538.5	531.0	9022.8	451.1	567.4		
Birds per Hour	38.4	60.0	--	--	41.5	27.6	28.3	20.5	24.3	32.4	31.7	24.4	15.4	23.2	24.5	33.6	27.3	27.1	22.5	30.1		26.6	26.2		

MONTHLY SUMMARIES 1975–1994

Years	February			March			April			May			Year Total		
	# Birds	Hours	#/Hr	# Birds	Hours	#/Hr	# Birds	Hours	#/Hr	# Birds	Hours	#/Hr	# Birds	Hours	#/Hr
1975	0	0	0.0	821	27.5	29.9	2285	55.75	41.0	317	6	52.8	3423	89.25	38.4
1976	80	5	16.0	1543	36	42.9	4954	64	77.4	142	7	20.3	6719	112	60.0
1977	0	0	0.0	2546	--	--	6543	--	--	927	--	--	10016	--	--
1978	0	0	0.0	2565	--	--	2613	--	--	2114	--	--	7292	--	--
1979	0	0	0.0	2266	--	--	8873	--	--	1732	--	--	12871	310	41.5
1980	0	0	0.0	2681	--	--	9208	--	--	2685	--	--	14574	529	27.6
1981	22	4.5	4.9	2980	186.4	16.0	11185	202.5	55.2	1758	173.7	10.1	15945	567.1	28.1
1982	40	8	5.0	2699	179	15.1	7259	223.7	32.4	1970	172.4	11.4	11968	583.1	20.5
1983	49	10.3	4.8	2301	164.8	14.0	8991	210	42.8	2369	179.9	13.2	13710	565	24.3
1984	258	10.4	24.8	1674	151	11.1	15012	232.8	64.5	1358	170.4	8.0	18302	564.6	32.4
1985	0	0	0.0	4059	202	20.1	14817	242.2	61.2	398	164.3	2.4	19274	608.5	31.7
1986	19	8	2.4	5361	210.3	25.5	7894	207.4	38.1	783	150.5	5.2	14057	576.2	24.4
1987	81	23	3.5	3943	213.4	18.5	4719	233	20.3	1765	212.1	8.3	10508	681.5	15.4
1988	6	2	3.0	5670	216.9	26.1	6344	205.4	30.9	2114	183.9	11.5	14134	608.2	23.2
1989	0	0	0.0	2951	179.3	16.5	6699	241.8	27.7	2558	78.25	32.7	12208	499.3	24.5
1990	0	0	0.0	5065	220	23.0	12761	234.5	54.4	1377	120	11.5	19203	574.5	33.4
1991	0	0	0.0	4308	215.8	20.0	9291	223.2	41.6	1352	109.5	12.3	14951	548.5	27.3
1992	0	0	0.0	3480	193.5	18.0	9710	236	41.1	1488	112	13.3	14678	541.5	27.1
1993	0	0	0.0	2014	176	11.4	8836	227	38.9	1257	135.5	9.3	12107	538.5	22.5
1994	0	0	0.0	5194	201.8	25.7	10149	233.4	43.5	634	95.8	6.6	15977	531.0	30.1
Total	555	71.2	7.8	64121	2774	23.1	168143	3273	51.4	29098	2071.2	14.0	261917	9027.7	29.0
Mean	27.8	3.6		3206.1	138.7		8407.2	163.6		1454.9	103.6		13095.9	451.4	



Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Newsletter

Newsletter No. 10, February 1995

BILL CLARK TO SPEAK IN HAMILTON APRIL 21-22

The Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch and the Hamilton Naturalist's Club are co-sponsoring a visit to Hamilton by Bill Clark, author of the Peterson *Field Guide to the Hawks*, on Friday, April 21 and Saturday, April 22. Bill will give a slide presentation each evening at 7:30PM in the auditorium of the Canada Centre for Inland Waters (CCIW). During the day Saturday he will watch the hawk migration at Beamer Memorial Conservation Area.

Friday night's talk will be devoted to the fine points of Hawk identification. On Saturday night the subject will be 'Eagles of the World', based on Bill's extensive travels studying raptors in their natural haunts.

Bill Clark is a renowned speaker, tour leader and author. Recognized as North America's top expert on hawk identification, he leads hawk watching tours around the world through his own company, Raptours.

Tickets for Bill's talks are $10 for members of either organization, and $15 for non-members. One ticket covers both evenings. They may be obtained from:

- John Barker, 35 Elmsthorpe Ave., Toronto, ON M5P 2L5. (416) 483-8118
- Bruce Duncan, 1049 Kirkwall Road, RR 1, Dundas, ON L9H 5E1. (519) 622-4709
- Roslynne Price, Townhouse 83, 5045 Pinedale Avenue, Burlington, ON L7L 5J6. (905) 681-2276
- Mike Street, 73 Hatton Drive, Ancaster, ON L9G 2H5. (905) 648-3737

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH ANNUAL BANQUET

SATURDAY, APRIL 1, 1995

The 1994 annual banquet was most enjoyable. This year's will be just as good or better. Stoney Ridge Winery's Puddicombe Farm in Winona is the location. Highlight of the evening will be a talk by Pud Hunter, of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, on the progress being made by Bald Eagles in the Lake Erie region.

Socializing and the bucket raffle begin at 3PM. (PLEASE NOTE the earlier time.) The before supper wine tasting starts at 3:15, and dinner is at 5:00. There will be a an opportunity to buy some of the wine if you wish, and we will also have our traditional slide quiz and bucket raffle.

This will be an enjoyable evening so get your tickets now. The room can accommodate 42 people, and 30 tickets are still available, priced at $25 for members and $30 for non-members. Call Mike Street at (416) 648-3737 to make arrangements.

WHAT'S INSIDE?

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NPH Migration Calendar P. 6

COUNTERS WANTED - PLEASE HELP

Gordon Bellerby has taken over the duties of organizing Hawk Counters from Mary Ellen Hebb, who is taking a break from the post after many years. Counters are asked to call Gordon Bellerby at (905) 468-3961 to schedule hawkwatching day(s) for 1995.

Your help is needed, especially in early March and the first half of May. While early March can be slow and the natural inclination in May is to head for the woods for warblers, our work needs attention too. If enough people offer to help, it should be easy to fill in all the dates.

If you are interested in learning to become a counter, be sure to let Gordon know. Many of our observers are glad to share the work and help newcomers, and we will also have a Learner's Corner on weekends from March 25 through April 29.

In addition to the normal count at the Beamer CA parking lot, this year the NPH will again do some research on the flight patterns of raptors in the wider Grimsby area, from the shore of Lake Ontario to about 10km inland (see 'Intercept Line' below) so additional observers are needed. We know that people "Don't want to miss the main action at Beamer", but the information produced by the special count could lead to better sighting days in the future.

FIFTH ANNUAL OPEN HOUSE FRIDAY, APRIL 14

The hawks will again be on public view on April 14 when NPH holds its fifth Open House. Last year's raptor activity was fair, and we are about due for a warm day, so let's hope for the right weather and a good flight. In case of bad weather, however, events will be postponed a day to Saturday, April 15.

Members of the Hawkwatch stationed in the center of the circle and at the tip will help learners to see and identify raptors passing over Beamer. (Volunteers needed.) If all goes well a rehabilitated raptor, possibly a Peregrine Falcon, will be released around 1PM.

The very welcome coffee truck will once again be parked in the circle. A special program for kids, developed by Carla Carlson, will be given at 11AM and again at noon. Short 'Hawk Talks' will be held on the hour from 11AM-2PM, and the raffle draw will take place at 3PM. There will also be displays from conservation areas and organizations.

Be sure to invite your family and friends; it will be a good day for them and for the birds too.

INTERCEPT LINE TO OPERATE APRIL 23

Following up last year's work the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch will again conduct an Intercept Line on Sunday, April 23. Volunteers are needed.

From 10:00 am to 1:00 pm, NPH will set up a 'line' of hawk counters stretching from the lakeshore to about 10 km inland. Groups of counters will be stationed about 1-2 km apart from the lake south to Beamer and south again to Highway 20.

Each group will count hawks in its part of the sky (and we hope there will be many Broad-wings) for the three hours. All counts will be collected, overlaps noted and a final tally drawn up.

The intent is to assess how much of the day's total raptor flight is actually sampled at Beamer. We know that on some days birds migrate to the north or south, instead of coming over the parking lot. As more Intercept Line data is obtained we may be able to establish a better picture of the Niagara Peninsula flight during different weather conditions.

Please contact Bruce Duncan at Beamer or at 519-622-4709 (evenings) if you would like to participate.

TEMPORARY TOWER TO BE INSTALLED

One of the long-standing issues about our hawkwatch has been whether or not a tower would help in the count. This year we will start to get an answer to the question.

With the help of the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, NPH will set up a small two level scaffold on the west side of the circle as soon as snow cover permits.

Why a tower? Improving the view is the short answer. Since the NPH started 20+ years ago, the trees all around the circle have grown significantly, blocking out possible sightings of low flying birds paralleling the ravine or going past on the edge of the escarpment.

The added height should also give counters extra time to judge what is coming in and make their calls. As we all know, even an extra second can sometimes make the difference between naming a bird or chalking up another 'Unidentified Raptor'.

Are we missing significant numbers of raptors? We don't know; the temporary tower may help us find out.

SITE CHANGES AT BEAMER

Members and visitors will notice a few changes to the hawkwatch site at Beamer Memorial CA this year. With the cooperation of the NPCA, the daily count sign has been moved about 15 feet to the west so it won't obscure the counters' view, the hawthorn at the right side has been removed for safety reasons - too many people were bumping into it while trying to follow the action, and some of the bushes close to the north side of the circle have been trimmed.

The NPCA has also installed a base for a NPH supplied flagpole which will host our new weather station, a temperature and wind monitoring station graciously donated by Honorary President Walter Klabunde.

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by Mike Street

THEY'RE BAAAACK - ALMOST!

It's -14°C with the wind chill out of sight and the weatherman is calling for "brutally cold" temperatures tomorrow, but I don't care. The Hawkwatch starts in three weeks and all these petty annoyances will be forgotten - unless it snows on our migrant parade, of course!

Don't ask me where the fall and winter have gone - I just don't know. We met with those most cooperative folks at the Niagara Penisula Conservation Authority (NPCA) on a couple of occasions and the changes to the site outlined on Page 2 happened! We meet with them again next week to go over plans for this year's Open House on April 14. Open House is becoming more and more popular, so it takes more work.

NPH PEOPLE NEWS

On the people side we first want to express our condolences to Honourary President Walter Klabunde on the passsing of his wife Harriet last October. Walter spent much of the winter with his daughter in New Jersey, but at last account was busily shovelling snow off his driveway in Lewiston and getting ready to tally raptors at Beamer at the beginning of March.

Mary Ellen Hebb, who in addition to a more than full time job helps out with more organizations than most people I know, has passed on to Gordon Bellerby the task of organizing counters to cover all the days from March 1 to May 15. Our sincere thanks to Mary Ellen for all her efforts on NPH's behalf over the years.

At the NPCA awards evening in December both George Meyers and Walter Klabunde received individual recognition for their efforts on behalf of conservation in the Niagara Region. The NPH was similarly honoured for its activities as an organization.

ONE MORE FOR THE PEREGRINES

For the last year I have been helping on a voluntary basis to take a natural history inventory of the Ontario Hydro property at the Nanticoke Generating Station near Port Dover, where I work. (So far I'm up to 145 species of birds seen on or over the site or just offshore in the waters of Lake Erie.) The work is part of a Sustainable Energy Development initiative begun by Hydro Chairman Maurice Strong. This has resulted in my hearing about other things the company is doing, and I thought NPH members would be interested to know that this spring all of Hydro's fossil and nuclear generating stations will be erecting nest boxes for Peregrine Falcons. The program is being coordinated with the Canadian Wildlife Service, who are trying to see if a similar program which has had success in the United States will work here.

LEARNER'S CORNER TO RUN MARCH 25-APRIL 30

Another question asked by and of your executive has been "How do we pass on our knowledge to others?" The Open House helps a bit, and so does the fact that the site is open to the public at all times during the count. But what about individuals learning to identify raptors?

With the decreases in funding - not to mention the uncertainty of having to plan trips months ahead - school groups seldom come to Beamer. However when visitors do come, unless they ask specifically for information they are normally left to their own devices.

To help remedy the situation, this year we will have a Learner's Corner on Saturdays and Sundays from March 25 through April 30. Anyone who wants to learn about identifying raprtors is welcome; just look for the sign. Experienced people willing to help the learners are needed. Please contact me.

DO WE REALLY COUNT?

On several occasions since taking over from Bruce Duncan last year, I've found myself wondering if the data NPH contributes is really of value. The navel gazing was prompted by watching 10,000 Broad Wings go over Hawk Cliff one morning, later hearing that Holiday Beach and Erie Metro Park had close to 400,000 birds on a weekend, and then reading about the million plus raptors at Veracruz (see the article on Page 4) in a month.

I was asking myself, more or less, "Compared to these numbers, do the 16,000 raptors counted at Beamer in 1994 matter?" Then I read that after 58 years of operation the world renowned Hawk Mountain site in Pennsylvania had counted it's one millionth bird. A quick flick of the calculator (Yes, I've finally traded in my slide rule!) says that Hawk Cliff's average is 17,250 birds per year. That's only 8% more than we saw last year!

With its history of being the first formal hawk watching site in the world and the focus for a long but ultimately successful legal and political battle to stop the slaughter of millions of raptors, Hawk Mountain is a shrine. The NPH site at Beamer will never be its equal on that measuring stick, but since our totals are so close, there's no doubt that the numbers matter. We really do count.

See you at Beamer and the HMANA conference.

IN SEARCH OF FALCONS

Gordon Bellerby

For two years I have tried to organize a group visit to Cape May in late September. In 1993 John Stevens was there pre-World-Serious-time and wrote an excellent report. Once again though, NPH member interest was underwhelming. Regretfully, I returned the lease for a beautifully equipped modern house, sleeping 10, located just off the beach and five minutes from the lighthouse. Instead, I went down to Hawk Cliff and Holiday Beach in mid-September. Lots of Buteos, Harriers and Sharpies with an occasional falcon flash, but even though I got 125 Kestrels it just didn't cut it.

In 1994, facing 3 months off birding (at gull season too!), I decided to try a third-time-lucky visit to Cape May at the end of September. This time I would be prepared to wait for those magical northwest winds that bring the big flights. Anxious consultations with the weatherman at Niagara Airport led me to believe that September 28-30 would be *the* time.

Unfortunately, Diana and I could only start on the 850 km drive (9 hours on divided highway all the way) after lunch on the 28th, so we spent a night in the Poconos and arrived at the Cape before noon on the 29th. The wind was firmly NW, so we went straightaway to the lighthouse and joined the gang on the platform.

Sure enough, hawks were streaming down the Cape. Kettles of Broadwings were milling about high, high above, pondering the expanse of Delaware Bay. It was the falcons, though, that fascinated us. They were barrelling through low down along the beach or directly over our heads at the lookout. As the afternoon wore on the stream became a river and then a flood. Final count at dusk was an impressive 8000+ raptors including 304 ospreys and 3 Black Vultures, but it was the falcons that made the day famous. How about: 142 Peregrines, 558 Merlins, and 3234 Kestrels? That's 3931 falcons!

Suprisingly, the house we had planned on renting the year before had been taken by friends and we were invited to stay with them. Located just off the Cement Boat beach there was a raised wrap-around balcony from which each morning at breakfast we watched sharpies and falcons hunting before challenging Delaware Bay. They swooped low overhead, chasing dicky-birds, and when successful had their breakfasts perched on small stubby trees back of the beach or on telephone poles beside the house.

The wind was still NW on the 30th and another fine flight ensued: 9710 raptors, including 5257 Broad Wings. Subsequently, southerly winds prevailed and the flights slowed, but on only one day was the raptor total below 1000. Higbee Beach had lots of warblers, as well as accipiters and falcons quartering the fields.

After a hard day's birding, Cape May Point offers gustatorial delights too. Daily we visited the Lobster Pound and picked out our dinners which were then broiled at the house. Our hostess had thoughtfully laid in a supply of baguettes from Di Camillo in Lewiston and our host introduced us to a fragrant Californian sauvignon blanc.

So there you have it. A fabulous flight of falcons, lots of luscious lobsters with butter and baguettes, and a case of sauvignon. Now aren't you sorry you didn't sign on?

NPH VERACRUZ PROJECT

The Hamilton Naturalists' Club has agreed to act as sponsoring organization for the NPH in our bid to help ECOSFERA, the Mexican group counting migrant hawks near Veracruz. An eligibility application to the Canadian International Development Agency to start the funding process is being prepared.

ECOSFERA educates local children and adults about the value of hawks and their place in the natural scheme of things. They have also worked with Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association to assess roosting and wintering habitat (or lack of it). The funding we are trying to arrange will help in some or all of these projects.

There is an excellent article on the Veracruz migration in the November - December 1994 issue of International Wildlife. Some experts feel this flight is the biggest in the world. Just to give you some idea of the size of the migration, here are the numbers for Autumn 1994.

Turkey Vulture	1,229,916	Br.-winged Hawk	1,485,480
Osprey	493	Red-tailed Hawk	33
Swallow-tailed Kite	1	Swainson's Hawk	448,000
Hook-billed Kite	67	Harris Hawk	4
Mississippi Kite	118	American Kestrel	10,136
Plumbeous Kite	1	Merlin	17
Golden Eagle	1	Peregrine Falcon	177
Northern Harrier	120	Unid. Accipiter	3
Sh.-shinned Hawk	1534	Unid. Buteo	68,052
Cooper's Hawk	424	Unid. Raptor	65,205
Zone-tailed Hawk	4		
Red Should. Hawk	2	Total Raptors	3,309,790

Note: Due to lack of funds the count was conducted for one month at one site with one observer, thus missing the peak for Mississippi Kite and other early or late migrants.

WHY ARE THERE MORE SHARP-SHINNED HAWKS THAN MERLINS?

by Bruce Duncan

Why has the Merlin never been as common as the Sharp-shinned Hawk? Tom Cade of Cornell's Laboratory of Ornithology also wondered that of "the small Holarctic diurnal raptors, its overall numbers rank far below those of congenors such as American Kestrel and European Kestrel and sympatric, bird-eating hawks such as European Sparrowhawk and Sharp-shinned Hawk. It is not at all clear why this should be so (p.116, *Falcons of the World*)."

Breeding ranges are similar, although Merlins nest further north and on the prairies, while Sharp-shins occupy more area to the south but not on the prairies; their food is similar (small birds) and they migrate with their prey.

Wintering ranges are dissimilar, with Merlins generally seen further south in the United States, in northern South America and on Caribbean islands, the latter two not used in winter North American Sharp-shins.

I would speculate that the hunting techniques employed by the two species differ sufficiently to permit Sharp-shins to use nesting habitat that is more plentiful than habitat used by Merlins and, therefore, Sharp-shinned Hawks are commoner. Other than the Richardson's race of the Merlin, both species nest in forest near open areas such as burns, lakes, rivers, or other gaps in trees. Because of edge effect such areas tend to be more productive of small birds than unbroken boreal forest.

Merlins chase birds over or into open areas and depend on speed to catch them, usually in a surprise attack from a low approach using cover, a "tail chase" or a "ringing flight" (i.e. circling upward). The small bird may escape if it gets to cover in which the Merlin has difficulty flying, or if it exhausts the Merlin by flying higher more quickly.

Sharp-shinned Hawks use surprise attacks from cover and brief tail chases but do not have the stamina for lengthy chases or ringing flights. However, they are willing to dash into cover after small birds and frequently kill in this manner. This tactic means that Sharp-shins are able to hunt in areas with much smaller openings than are Merlins. Small openings in the forest such as streams, beaver ponds and tree falls are far more abundant in the nesting range than areas with large open spaces.

In addition, such areas, because they provide varied habitat, will have more small birds, both in terms of species and individuals. This speculation is supported by the sexual size dimorphism of Merlins and Sharp-shinned Hawks.

Ian Newton in the bible of raptor ecology, a book titled *Population Ecology of Raptors*, pointed out that the faster and more agile the prey, the greater will be the difference in size of the sexes of their avian predators. He explained this as follows:

"In the gradation from hunting slow-moving to fast-moving prey, the numbers of competitors from other species declines. Carrion and insects, for example, are eaten by many different kinds of animals, from other insects to birds and mammals; so through competition, each such predator is likely to be restricted to a fairly narrow niche. But fast-moving prey, such as birds, are exploited by very few predators (mostly other birds), so that each such predator has a wider niche, and more scope for diet division within the species. In other words, I suggest that it is the progressive reduction in competition from other animals, as one moves from exploiting slow- moving to fast-moving prey, that allows progressively greater food partitioning within species, the small sex taking the smaller items from the total prey spectrum and the large sex the larger items (p.24)."

The mean weights for each sex of both Merlins and Sharp-shins have been published as follows:

Merlin:	males	(14 birds)	57 g
	females	(15 birds)	213 g
Sh.-shin:	males	(98 birds)	102 g
	females	(92 birds)	179 g

There is no overlap in size between males and females of each species. As in all hawks, the male is smaller. The male Merlin is approximately 73% of the weight of the female while the male Sharp-shin is only 57% of the female. There is a greater difference in size between male and female Sharp-shins than Merlins. Merlins are also larger than Sharp-shins for each sex.

I would speculate that there are two reasons for this difference:

First, there are more small prey, i.e. of kinglet, warbler and chickadee size (4 - 15 g) that male Sharp-shins in particular and females to a certain extent, prey on. Scientists studying these species reported that male Sharp-shins usually select prey under 25g while females take birds heavier and lighter than 25g. These small woodland species generally do not fly into large, open areas and hence are unavailable to Merlins.

Second, Merlins require more food per day because they are larger. It is not worthwhile energetically for them to hunt very small species. Much of their extra weight is in flight muscles which are larger than those of Sharp-shins. They use these muscles to develop the speed and stamina necessary for long tail chases or ringing flight.

In spite of taiga Merlins increasing in numbers and Sharp-shinned Hawks perhaps decreasing in recent years (although opinions vary), I do not think that there will ever be more breeding Merlins than Sharp-shins because of these differing adaptations to bird hunting. The Sharp-shinned Hawk has a considerably larger niche.

HMANA CONFERENCE VII IN WINDSOR, ONTARIO MAY 4-7

The Holiday Beach Migration Observatory (HBMO) will host the Hawk Migration Association of North America's seventh biennial conference at the Ramada Inn in Windsor, Ontario from Thursday, May 4 through Sunday, May 7. The program is exciting and the package price is surprisingly low.

HMANA VII opens Thursday evening with a buffet dinner and Keynote address by Dr. David Bird of McGill University's Avian Science and Conservation Centre. Dr. Bird has done considerable research on the population of Golden Eagles in eastern Canada.

On Friday morning there will be informative talk and discussion sessions or optional trips to check out the state of spring migration at nearby Point Pelee and other spots. Following a buffet lunch, more sessions will be held in the afternoon. Friday evening's activity is a Bar-B-Que and social at the Ojibway Nature Centre.

More talks are scheduled for Saturday morning and early afternoon, to be followed by a Vendor and Exhibitor session. The speaker at Saturday's banquet will be Peter Sherrington, who played a major role in the discovery and documentation of the major Golden Eagle migration through Mt. Lorrette, Alberta.

Sunday morning will see additional talks and the final wrapup session before people start for home at noon. Poster displays will be on view throughout the conference, with specific times set to meet poster authors and investigators. A pre-conference trip to the Whitefish Point Bird Observatory can be arranged through Mike Kielb (313-995-4357).

How much? For RAPID RAPTORS (read Early Birds) who register and pay before April 1, the costs for the sessions, banquets, transportation to events and even lunches is only $135US or $175 CDN. After April 1 the cost is $175US or $230CDN. For people not wishing to take the package, there will be a daily attendance fee of $50 which does not include meals. There will also be a Conference VII pin, patch and T-shirt for sale.

Cheques should be payable to HBMO and sent to Robert C. Pettit, HMANA Conference Chairman, c/o Monroe County Community College, 155 South Rainsville Rd., Monroe, MI 48161. Rooms at the Ramada Inn are $70CDN plus taxes and should be booked directly with the hotel (1-800-228-9898).

NOTES FROM THE GREAT LAKES RAPTOR MIGRATION CONFERENCE

by Mike Street

On August 27, 1994 John Barker and I attended the second Great Lakes Raptor Migration Conference held at Lake Erie Metro Park south of Detroit. The session was chaired by Brett Ewald of Braddock Bay Raptor Research. Representatives of eleven Great Lakes area Hawkwatches were present. What follows are notes made as each group described their operation and/or current year. (For locations of these hawkwatches and 1994 data summaries, see the separate article by John on P. 9 of this newsletter.)

SITE SUMMARIES

Holiday Beach Migration Observatory - Fall count; Essex County Conservation Authority is taking a larger role, but some conflict still exists; 5-10,000 people attended the 1993 Hawk Festival; hawkwatch is mentioned specifically in public service ads on CBC radio; HBMO counts all species - over 1 million birds in 1993. HBMO Banding - 1989: 17 hawks, 1993: 2365 hawks, 115 owls. Predominant is Sharp-

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NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH EXECUTIVE 1995

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EDITOR: Mike Street (see above)

shin. Recaught Peregrines from Toledo and near Toronto. Banding on Grosse Isle and at Holiday Beach. Crossing winds are very important.

Niagara Penisula Hawkwatch - Spring count; 1994 a good year; NPH enjoys excellent relationship with Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority; hoping to put up a temporary platform in 1995; trying to do a bit more with data.

Cranberry Marsh - Fall count; numbers of birds seen dropped over 1992-1993 counts; without strong north wind numbers really fall, so count hours drop when winds don't co-operate.

Cove Island - Spring count; 1994 a difficult year, lots of ice and wind shifts 3 or 4 times a day, despite a big increase in observers and hours, bird numbers down 66%; added banding, retrapped Cooper's Hawk from Cape May and 2 Sharp-shins from Windsor area.

Ottawa, Ohio - Spring count; multiple sites used depending on conditions; in 1994 ran 13 sites of 30; base site always operates; trying to find importance of marshes to raptors; looking at other species too; big surprise - many birds head north across Lake Erie, island hopping!; virtually no fall count.

Ripley Picket Line - Spring count; Established 1984, full time in 1991, one site lost to natural growth; counts start at Site 1, go to sites A, B, C, and 2 or 3, depending on winds, shut down if weather is bad down wind; Site 3 on top of escarpment - go only 5% to Site 3; only 5 people due to small population to draw from; regularly see Eagles and Rough Legs going across lake; start Feb. 15.

Lake Erie Metropark - Fall count; 167,000 birds in 1993 even with 30 days uncovered; multiple sites sometimes used, according to the winds; 3 Swainson's Hawks in 1993, 2 on one day; lots of TV's; 100,000 Broad Wings over one 3 day period.

Braddock Bay - Spring count; 50,000 birds in 1994, 3,500 Broad Wings on big day, other species good; record Harriers - 403 in one day; using CB radios on FM frequency for banding, education; owls are down - stopped using caller and concentrating on habitat preferences; doing fall hawk count - July to Labour Day - many birds, mostly young Red-tails, going *east*, apparently in post-breeding dispersal.

Whitefish Bay - Spring count; 1994 was a bad year, only 8266 counted, ice did not leave bay until mid-May; Sharp-shins down 59% but had 3 Mississippi kites.

Port Huron - *Southbound* spring migration, birds go north then come back and cross into Canada; 4500-5000 birds mid March through mid May; banding, 75% are already banded Hawk Cliff birds, some Holiday Beach birds; Started in late 1980's.

RAPTOR BANDING

Braddock Bay, Holiday Beach, Port Huron, Hawk Ridge and Hawk Cliff have full banding programs. Braddock Bay has four stations, bands both hawks and owls; Cove Island bands hawks and owls, Ottawa does a little banding. Holiday Beach does a limited amount of banding in spring, need strong SW winds.

Banding helps with species details, size diferences between populations, etc; weight loss/gain on short term recaptures can help with measuring usage/ quality of habitat, etc. Banding contributes to education programs. Some sites allow visits.

COMPUTERS AND HAWKS

HMANA database: HMANA is now scanning in old records, heading for computerization. It will take work to get all data computerized but this will make a difference to total records. The BIRDCHAT forum on Internet carries some Raptor information, mainly statistics.

POST BREEDING DISPERSAL

Large numbers on immature Red-tailed Hawks and some American Kestrels are seen going east at Braddock Bay in August. August flight lines are different - the birds not inclined to try going over water at all. Have had 2000 in one day. Birds learn a lot from July to September. They fall into traps more easily, miss targets while hunting, etc. The theory is that these hawks may go north to ease the strain on parent birds, who are moulting. It is possible that they go right around Lake Ontario and then south through Hawk Cliff, Holiday Beach and Erie Metro Park.

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

- Sharp-shinned Hawk decline: definite in east, not being seen in central Great Lakes.
- Non raptors at Hawk Watch sites - Holiday Beach has counted as many as 480,000 blue jays, 240,000 crows, flocking chickadees, and many hummingbirds.
- The condition birds are in when arriving at breeding grounds in spring translates into eggs. If birds have a bad time (weather, etc.) getting north it may mean poor breeding can be predicted for that year.
- Several sites have noticed that Peregrines seem to follow Northern Flickers on migration.

RED-SHOULDERED HAWK SURVEY

Volunteers are needed for roadside suveys to determine Red-shouldered Hawk population data. Contact Lisa Enright, Long Point Bird Observatory, PO Box 160, Port Rowan, ON N0E 1M0 or phone (519) 586-3531.

NON-RAPTOR SIGHTINGS AT NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH

SANDHILL CRANES AT BEAMER

by Rob Dobos

Beside being a great place to view migrating raptors, Beamer C.A. is also a fine spot to see other spring migrants moving along the Niagara Escarpment. In particular, one spectacular species which has been sighted there a number of times over the past 20 or so years is the Sandhill Crane.

Following is a summary of Sandhill Crane occurrences at Beamer, the information taken from the "Noteworthy Bird Records" in the Hamilton Naturalists' Club publication *The Wood Duck*:

Date	No. Seen
16 April 1976	1
19 April 1980	1
29 March 1990	1
5 May 1993	5
2 April 1994	1
24 April 1994	1

In addition to sightings from Beamer, following are other Sandhill Crane records from areas in close proximity to Beamer along the Escarpment:

Date	No. Seen	Location
23 April 1975	1	Casablanca Blvd., Grimsby
4 April 1980	4	Flying west over Grimsby
24 March 1981	1	Flying east over Grimsby
21 April 1983	6	Over Vinemount
2 April 1989	1	Oakes Rd, Grimsby

The range of dates stretches from late March through to the end of April. This certainly coincides with the main migration period for Sandhill Cranes through southern Ontario. Their main breeding range in the province is through the boreal region of northern Ontario. However, Sandhills have undergone a rapid expansion and increase into central and parts of southern Ontario over the past few decades. In recent years, breeding has occurred in Waterloo Region and at Long Point.

The species is being recorded much more frequently throughout southern Ontario as a migrant (as well as a rare summer and even winter resident). This increase seems to be reflected in the greater number of Sandhill Crane records at and near Beamer in the past five years (five records), as opposed to the number during the previous 15 years (six records).

Hawkwatchers should be alert for Sandhills at Beamer. Their distinctive profile is unmistakable even at long distances or great heights (at which they often travel). They fly with their long necks extended (rather than folded as Great Blue Herons do) and their legs trailing. Their wingbeats are strong and rather quick, and the sense one may get at first when seeing an approaching crane is of a large goose rather than a heron. They may also be encountered in flocks (as some of the above records have been). Their bugling calls can be heard from a great distance as well.

For me, it is a thrilling sight to see these majestic birds in our area.

BEAMER HOSTS WILD TURKEY AND SNAKE-EATING AMERICAN CROW

by Mike Street

On a rather quiet raptor day in mid-April 1990 I decided to see if I could find any of the Eastern Bluebirds reported in the vineyard during the previous week. After spending about fifteen minutes fruitlessly searching fencepost tops and the rows between the vines, I lowered my binoculars and started toward the trail to the point. At that moment there was some movement in the dip below the parking area - a Wild Turkey! Needless to say, I let out a yell and ran back toward the counting area to let the others know what had happened. By the time we got back to the other side of the circle the Turkey was nowhere in sight! It had obviously run into the woods on the west side and gone to ground. We decided not to try to flush it, so I was the only person to see the Turkey that day.

Saturday, May 1, 1993 was clear and mild, with about 175 Broad-wings and 75 other raptors, plus a few warblers and other small migrants, to keep us interested but not terribly busy. As usual, we had not paid much attention to the comings and goings of the local American Crows, except when they popped up in the corner as 'Black Hawks'. Then one Crow came from the south past the counting area carrying a small and still wriggling snake in its beak. Exciting enough, but it happened three times more! George Meyers was pretty sure that the reptiles were 'Little Brown' or 'Decay' snakes. To top it all off, toward the end of the afternoon a Crow, presumably the same one, flew past us carrying a mouse! There's no doubt that some pretty hungry young Crows were in the vicinity.

THE 1994 SPRING HAWK MIGRATION IN THE GREAT LAKES REGION

by John J. Barker

Introduction

The purpose of this article is to organize data in a way which might allow us to see if there were any links - along the lines of patterns, sequences, fluctuations, etc. - in the spring 1994 Hawk migration. Data is for the period February 15 through June 10, from nine established watch sites in Ontario, New York, Ohio, and Michigan.

Sites

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch (NPH): Beamer Memorial Conservation Area [43* 11'N, 79*34'W] near Grimsby, Ontario. Two counters covered all weekdays from March 1 to May 15. Different counters looked after one or more days on weekends. Mary-Ellen Hebb organized the counters and sent the daily reports forms to HMANA. Rob Dobos did the primary tabulation.

Braddock Bay Raptor Watch (BBRW): Braddock Bay State Park [43* 35'N, 77* 58'W], northwest of Rochester, New York. Jerry Ligore was the main counter for the spring season. Jeff and Joan Dodge kept the data in order.

Derby Hill (DHBO): [43* 54'N, 76* 30'W], northwest of Syracuse, New York. Brian Sullivan was the new counter taking Gerry Smith's position.

Ripley Picket Line (RPL): [42* 30'N, 79*57'W], near Ripley, New York. J. DeFrancsico and Larry Pline formed the mobile part of the watch team, doing a 60 mile round trip each time they went out. They were helped by John and Nancy Luensman (John is the Team Leader), Charles Hanks and Harley Northrop.

Ottawa N.W.R. (ONWR): [41* 16'N, 83*25'W], twenty-nine sites between Sandusky and Toledo are used. Mark and Julie Shielcastle and Joe Komorowski are the leaders.

Port Huron (PHHW): [43* 10'N, 83* 30'W], on the Michigan side of the St. Clair River across from Sarnia, Ontario. Dan Miller bands and counts the Hawks as they fly by this site.

Port Crescent State Park (PCSP): [44*00'N, 83* 11'W], Port Austin, Michigan is the town nearest this site just East of Saginaw Bay. Monica Essenmacher is Leader and counter.

Whitefish Point Bird Observatory (WPBO): [46* 68'N, 85*00'W], this well-known hawkwatch is located in Upper Michigan, not far from Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. Pete Reaman is the site Director and Jim Granlund is Chairmane of the Board of Directors. Mary Teesdale is responsible for running the watch and preparing the Hawk report.

Cove Island Hawk Watch (CIHW): [45* 21'N, 81* 36'W], the island is in Lake Huron just north of Tobermory, Ontario at the tip of Bruce Peninsula. Tim O'Day of Buffalo, New York is Site Leader. (This site is on the northern part of the same Niagara Escarpment used by as The Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch at Beamer CA.)

Early 1994 Weather

How can I start to describe the Winter of 1993-94? I could just say it was bitterly cold, with a fair amount of foul weather for good measure, but that would just scratch the surface. The coldest winter in 40 or so years also caused a lot of ice to form at considerable distances from Great Lakes shorelines. Each Hawkwatch site has its own tale to tell about the conditions.

There seems little doubt that the low 1994 counts at WPBO and CIHW were largely due to the huge ice sheets forcing the birds away from those sites. In 1994 the Bald Eagle count (40) at NPH almost doubled the previous season count of 22 in 1992. One theory advanced to explan this was that the extreme cold forced more eagles than usual south for the winter, causing more to be seen when the conditions eased and the birds returned home.

For the main migration period, Environment Canada airport summaries for Hamilton and St. Catharine's and Weather data from Whitefish Point provide some information. It would appear in the Niagara area at least that the main wind direction in March which produced a good hawk movement was WSW. In April St. Catharine's recorded three days with record high temperatures, Apr. 2 (19°C), Apr. 15 (28°C), and Apr. 24 when the so called morning low was actually a record high temperature of 11°C. Even Whitefish Point in upper Michigan recorded a morning temperature of 13°C that day. The month of May was a different story with St. Catharine's two record low temperature dates (May 3, 0°C and May 14, 1°C) providing some of the picture.

Acknowledgments

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the observers who helped at each site, and the following people

who supplied the information which formed the foundation for this article.

NPH - Mary-Ellen Hebb, Rob Dobos, Mike Street; ONWR - Mark and Julie Shielcastle; BBRR - Jeffery & Joan Dodge, and Jerry Ligore; PHHW - Dan Miller; DHBO - Brian Sullivan and the Onondaga Audubon Society; PCSP - Monica Essenmacher; RPL - John R. Luensman; WPBO - Bill Grigg, Jim Granlund, Peter Reaman, Mary Teesdale; CIHW - Tim O'Day.

Tables:
1) Weather patterns from three weather stations
2) 1994 spring season totals
3) Peak and Big Days

John Barker, 35 Elmsthorpe Ave, Toronto, ON, Canada, M5P 2L5, 416-483-8118

WEATHER DATA FROM THE GREAT LAKES REGION FOR SELECTED DATES RELATED TO SPRING 1994 PEAKS FOR MIGRATING HAWKS

	HAMILTON AIRPORT, ONTARIO			ST. CATHARINES, ONTARIO			WHITEFISH POINT, MICHIGAN		
	TEMP °C L/H	WIND FROM	WIND KM/H	TEMP °C L/H	WIND FROM	WIND KM/H	TEMP °C L/H	WIND FROM	WIND KM/H
MARCH 12	-11 TO 4	S	17	-10TO 5	S	14	NA	NA	NA
14	-5 TO 1	SSW	13	-4 TO 2	S	11	NA	NA	NA
22	0 TO 10	WSW	24	1 TO 11	SW	20	0 TO 10	S-SW	1 TO 11
23	2 TO 14	WSW	15	2 TO 14	SW	12	-3 TO 2	N-NW	11 TO 28
24	0 TO 16	W	27	2 TO 17	W	18	NC	NC	NC
26	-5 TO 3	ENE	11	-4 TO 5	E	9	-9 TO 2	E-ESE	1 TO 19
30	-3 TO 4	W	17	0 TO 6	WNW	16	-4 TO 4	W	12 TO 28
31	-2 TO 6	SW	22	0 TO 7	SW	20	-1 TO 0	W - NW	6 TO 19
APRIL 2	0 TO 18	SW	24	0 TO 19	SSW	17	2 TO 6	NE-SE	39 TO 61
4	-3 TO 9	SW	18	-2 TO 9	SSW	16	3 TO 4	W-S	6 TO 19
9	0 TO 15	SW	28	1 TO 16	SSW	23	4 TO 8	VAR.	12 TO 49
14	6 TO 15	SW	24	6 TO 16	SW	19	4 TO 11	S-SSE	1 TO 11
15	4 TO 25	SSW	22	5 TO 28	SW	19	5 TO 7	SSE - SE	1 TO 19
16	2 TO 10	SW	36	4 TO 13	SW	28	-1 TO 2	NW	50 TO 61
17	0 TO 9	W	32	3 TO 11	W	22	2 TO 5	NW	39 TO 61
18	0 TO 14	WSW	18	1 TO 16	SW	16	2 TO 10	S-SE	12 TO 28
19	3 TO 16	WNW	23	4 TO 19	W	19	4 TO 6	NW - W	6 TO 28
20	0 TO 9	W	20	1 TO 10	W	15	2 TO 6	WNW	1 TO 19
22	-3 TO 11	WNW	13	-1 TO 11	SW	12	3 TO 6	W - WSW	VAR.
24	8 TO 21	SW	31	11 TO 22	SW	22	13 TO 8	VAR.	1 TO 19
25	6 TO 22	NE	15	6 TO 23	S	10	4 TO 10	E	1 TO 19
26	7 TO 25	SSW	17	6 TO 27	SSW	11	5 TO 6	S	12 TO 19
27	2 TO 21	W	29	4 TO 24	SW	20	0 TO 3	N	12 TO 49
29	1 TO 17	ENE	22	3 TO 18	WNW	12	3 TO 5	S - WNW	1 TO 38
30	2 TO 7	ENE	18	3 TO 8	ENE	12	0 TO 5	VAR.	VAR.
MAY 1	0 TO 6	W	24	1 TO 9	W	15	2 TO 7	VAR.	12 TO 28
2	0 TO 12	W	15	0 TO 12	SW	11	3 TO 10	W	VAR.
3	0 TO 14	ENE	9	0.2 TO 14	NE	7	2 TO 16	S - E	VAR.
8	6 TO 18	NW	17	5 TO 19	N	14	0 TO 16	VAR.	20 TO 49
9	4 TO 15	SW	17	6 TO 16	SW	16	7 TO 10	W	20 TO 38
14	2 TO 19	SSE	9	1.5 TO 16	ENE	8	9 TO 17	SW -S	12 TO 19
18	4 TO 14	NNE	16	5 TO 13	N	10	6 TO 11	VAR.	6 TO 49
21	7 TO 25	W	10	9 TO 25	S	8	10 TO 27	SSE - S	0 TO 19
29	6 TO 22	SW	16	8 TO 22	SW	14	11 TO 16	S	20 TO 49
31	13 TO 26	SW	22	14 TO 27	SSW	24	11 TO 17	VAR.	29 TO 49

SPRING 1994 GREAT LAKES HAWK MIGRATION SEASON TOTALS

SPECIES SITES>	NPH	BBRW	DHBO	RPL	ONWR*	PHHW	PCSP	WPBO **	CIHW	TOTAL
Black Vulture	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Turkey Vulture	3189	8430	7385	3900	1883	520	1768	157	176	27408
Osprey	69	313	500	97	21	6	28	95	15	1144
Swallow-tail Kite	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Mississippi Kite	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	6
Bald Eagle	40	132	69	21	47	1	20	158	3	491
Northern Harrier	177	2094	1043	113	94	30	69	223	32	3875
Sharp-shinned Hawk	4846	7295	5973	951	552	802	839	3790	159	25207
Cooper's Hawk	263	1031	822	27	186	124	213	43	20	2729
Northern Goshawk	73	99	126	5	3	2	16	69	5	398
Red-sh. Hawk	1419	1133	1316	294	198	24	210	26	8	4628
Broad-wing Hawk	2335	19467	17104	2443	352	1206	1394	2492	521	47314
Swainson's Hawk	2	0	0	1	0	0	18	0	0	21
Red-tailed Hawk	2890	6226	10008	1309	628	402	950	573	151	23137
Ferruginous Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Rough-legged Hawk	62	541	518	14	26	7	42	213	10	1433
Golden Eagle	10	31	19	1	1	0	11	26	0	99
American Kestrel	122	1376	734	162	42	24	53	278	10	2801
Merlin	23	35	29	12	7	4	4	75	12	201
Peregrine Falcon	4	22	12	2	4	0	3	16	1	64
Gyrfalcon	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Unidentified	452	1	1	87	617	10	122	27	5	1322
Total	15977	48227	45660	9439	4662	3162	5761	8266	1128	142282
Hours Covered	527	661	616	346	390	200	127	577	88	3531
Days Covered	74	104	72	82	72	33	42	76	16	571
Start Date	MAR.1	FEB.17	FEB.15	FEB.15	MAR.1	MAR.12	FEB.28	MAR.15	APR.1	
Finish Date	MAY.15	JUN.10	MAY.31	JUN.6	MAY.13	MAY.14	MAY.30	MAY.31	MAY.28	
Species out of 21	17	16	17	16	16	13	17	15	14	

Notes: * For ONWR highest number of a species seen at any site is shown
** a) This site is within HMANA Western Great Lakes Region.
** b) The "Migrant", Vol.# 12, Number 4, has the season total as 8,239

THE SPRING 1994 GREAT LAKES REGION HAWK MIGRATION, PEAK DAYS AND BIG DAYS

SITES> / SPECIES	NPH # – DATE	BBRW # – DATE	DHBO # – DATE	RPL # – DATE	ONWR # – DATE	PHHW # – DATE	PCSP # – DATE	WPBO # – DATE	CIHW # – DATE
Black Vulture	0	0	0	0	1 APR.29	0	0	0	0
Turkey Vulture	396 MAR.30	891 APR.14	1503 APR.4	689 APR.2	428 MAR.22	78 APR.17	300 APR.15	19 MAY.21	28 MAY.21
Osprey	14 APR.15	52 APR.14	156 APR.26	18 APR.25	6 APR.25	2 APR.29	13 APR.26	12 MAY. 1	4 APR.16
Swallow–tail Kite	1 APR.15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mississippi Kite	0	1 MAY.31	0	0	0	0	0	2, MAY 21,22/MAY 23–	0
Bald Eagle	9 MAR.23	11 MAR.24,APR.14	8 MAY.29	2 APR.18, MAY.14	10 MAR. 22	1 APR.26	2 MAR.12	9 APR.2	1 APR.30; MAY.14,21
Northern Harrier	27 MAR.23	403 APR.14	235 MAR.24	11 MAR.23	17 APR.2	6 APR.17	8 MAR.22; APR.26	45 APR.15	6 APR.17
Sharp–shinned Hav	1285 APR.15	1531 APR.14	1294 APR.15	116 APR.9	99 APR.26	134 APR.17	247 APR.18	475 MAY 14	60 APR.30
Cooper's Hawk	38 APR.15	210 APR.14	117 MAR.24	5 MAR.23	38 MAR.23	24 APR.17	41 APR.18	3 APR.18; MAY.12,13	7 APR.30
Northern Goshawk	8 MAR.26	8 MAR.14	10 APR.14	1 MAR.15;APR.2,15,18,23	2 APR.19	1 MAR.20 ; APR.29	5 APR.18	6 MAR.31; MAY.14	1 APR.1,2,30; MAY.7,14
Red–shouldered Ha	655 MAR.23	288 MAR.24	481 MAR.24	164 MAR.22	70 MAR.23	4 MAR.12,19; APR.2	47 APR.18	3 MAR.31; MAY.31	2 MAY.8,14
Broad–wing Hawk	634 APR.15	3727 APR.26	4364 APR.27	1056 APR.25	226 APR.26	334 APR.27	4108 APR.26	430 MAY.3	128 APR.22
Swainson's Hawk	1 APR.15 & 25	0	0	0	0	0	18 APR.19	0	0
Red–tailed Hawk	497 MAR.26	1409 APR.14	1382 APR.4	224 MAR.22	105 APR 2	115 APR. 17	310 APR.18	100 APR.9	25 MAY.8
Ferruginous Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	1 APR.17	0	0
Rough–legged Hav	9 MAR.26	81 APR.14	85 MAR.21	4 MAR.12	3 MAR.23	3 APR.16	8 MAR.12	53 APR.14	4 APR.16
Golden Eagle	3 MAR.26	3 APR.16	4 APR.4	1 MAY. 21	1 MAR.20	0	3 APR.18	4 MAR.23	0
American Kestrel	25 APR.15	161 APR.15	151 MAR.24	26 APR.15	5 MAR.23; APR.2	7 APR.16	11 APR.24	54 APR.15	2 APR.17,22
Merlin	4 APR.20	5 APR.29	4 APR.15	3 APR.15	2 MAR.28; APR.15	1 APR.19,24,25; MAY.6	3 APR.29	7 MAY.18	6 APR.22
Peregrine Falcon	2 APR.25	3 MAY.9	3 APR.26	1 APR.24; MAY.5	3 APR.29	0	0	2 APR.22,28; MAY.9,19	0
Gyrfalcon	0	0	1 FEB.16	0	0	0	0	0	0
BIG DAYS	2246 APR.15	4840 APR.14	4548 APR.15	1162 APR.25	730 MAR.23	563 APR.17	4366 APR.26	551 MAY 14	188 APR.22

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH MIGRATION CALENDAR
FOR BEAMER CONSERVATION AREA

OTES:

1) Species initials and Right (->) or Left (<-) arrow:

This combination indicates the start or end of the normal (at Beamer) migration period for that species. The same in **bold** type indicates the start or end of a noticeable peak period for that species. The box in which this combination is located indicates the day and month on which the period is likely to start.

2) A number, followed by species initials, followed by a slash (/) and a two-digit number:

In this combination the largest number of that species ever seen in one day is given first; the two digit number following the / indicates the year in which this occurred. The box in which this combination is located indicates the day and month on which the event occurred. Example: 655 RS /94 in the March 23 box indicates that the highest number of Red-shouldered Hawks recorded in one day was 655, seen on March 23, 1994.

TV - Turkey Vulture
BV - Black Vulture
OS - Osprey
SK - American Swallow-tailed Kite
BE - Bald Eagle
GE - Golden Eagle
NH - Northern Harrier
SS - Sharp-shinned Hawk
CH - Cooper's Hawk
NG - Northern Goshawk
RS - Red-shouldered Hawk
BW - Broad-winged Hawk
RT - Red-tailed Hawk
SW - Swainson's Hawk
RL - Rough-legged Hawk
FH - Ferruginous Hawk
AK - American Kestrel
ME - Merlin
PF - Peregrine Falcon
GF - Gyrfalcon

The following information, based on 20 years of data from the Beamer Hawkwatch, has been updated to show significant 1994 events:

Largest number of raptors in one season: 19,724 in 1985

MARCH

1 RT-> RL-> CH-> NG-> BE-> GE->	2 NH-> RS-> AK-> TV->	3	4	5	6	7
8 **RL->**	9 **RT->**	10 **AK->**	11	12	13	14 **RS-> NG->** 44 AK /90
15 **CH-> SS->**	16	17	18 **BE->** 7 GE /86	19	20 **TV->**	21
22	23 9 BE/94 655 RS/94	24 11 NG /84	25	26 2 PF /91 7 GE /88 748 TV /88	27 NH-> OS->	28 2 PF /90
29	30	31				

Largest # of raptors in month: 5670 in March 1988; Largest # of raptors in one day in month: 2080 on March 26, 1988

APRIL

1	2 <-RS	3 2 PF /91	4 1 BV /92	5 ME-> PF-> 50 CH /93 28 NH /93	6	7
8 706 RT /87	9	10 <-RT SS-> BW->	11	12 OS-> 22 RL /91 16 OS /92	13 4 ME /92 1 FH /92	14 28 NH /91
15 <-TV 1 SK /94* 1 SW /94*	16 <-BE 2 PF /90	17	18 1556 SS /76	19 BW->	20 1 GF /77 28 NH /92 1 SW /93	21 1 SW /85 6007 BW /85
22 1 SW /88	23	24 <-NG	25 2 PF /94 1 SW /94*	26	27 1 SW /93*	28 <-AK
29 4 GE /83	30 <-CH <-RL					

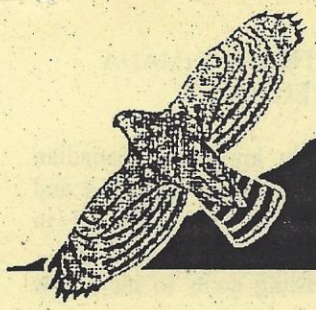
* Subject to acceptance by Ontario Bird Records Comittee

Largest # of raptors in month: 15,012 in April 1984; Largest # of raptors in one day in month: 7007 on April 21, 1985

MAY

1	2	3	4	5 1 SW /89	6 <-NH <-BW <-PF	7
8	9	10 <-OS	11 <-SS	12	13 <-BE	14
15 <-RL <-ME	16	17	18 <-NG	19	20	21
22	23	24 <-OS <-GE	25 <-RS	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Largest # of raptors in month: 2695 in May 1980; Largest # of raptors in one day in month: 1492 on May 4, 1989



Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Newsletter

Newsletter No. 11, October 1995

SORRY WE'RE LATE!

Unexpected technical problems have delayed this newsletter. The February 1996 issue will be on time.

Your Executive

NPH PRODUCES HAWK BIBLIOGRAPHY

As part of our participation in HMANA VII, Paul Summerskill came up with the idea of trying to put together a list of books, videos and other media on the subject of North American raptors.

By good fortune, Tina Summerskill's sister, Betty Braaksma, is a senior librarian at the Thunder Bay public library. Using on-line and other sources, Betty spent a lot of time putting together the bibliography. Among other things, she found that there are not as many books on the subject as she expected, but that there are more children's books than she thought might exist. As a gift from Betty, the library and the NPH, the work was offered to HMANA VII attendees at cost.

Anyone who would like a copy of the bibliography should write to Mike Street at the address given in the NPH executive list. A spiral bound version is available, but, in order to preserve paper, anyone who has a computer is asked to request the bibliography on disk. Three computer formats are available: WordPerfect 5.1/DOS, Microsoft Word 2.0/Windows, or Microsoft Works 2.0/DOS. There is no charge for members in good standing of the NPH.

BILL CLARK WEEKEND A SUCCESS

The Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch - Hamilton Naturalists Club joint effort to bring Bill Clark to speak to interested birders in our area was quite successful. About 140 tickets were sold, with 130 people in attendance to hear the soft-spoken raptor expert on Friday April 21 and 107 the next evening.

On Friday Bill offered some new discoveries about identifying raptors, including the fact that immature Red-tails have a clear light-dark demarcation line on the upper wing, that is possible (with experience, of course) to identify Merlins in flight by gender, and that the 'necklace' is not always a sure way to attach gender to Osprey. On Saturday we were treated to the panorama of Eagles of the World. Many of the terrific slides Bill showed in his talks are included in his new book, the *Photographic Guide to Hawks of North America*, recently off the press. Bill also got out to Beamer on both days; unfortunately not many birds did.

John Barker, Roslynne Price, Wolfgang Luft, Gordon Bellerby, Bruce Duncan, Kayo Roy and Mike Street all helped with ticket sales; John Struger of the HNC made the arrangements for us to hold the event at the Canada Centre for Inland waters. Kayo, Barry Cherriere, Bruce and Janet Snaith looked after Bill's transportation and accomodation.

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1995 Daily NPH Migration Statistics P. 9

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NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND BANQUET

This year's general meeting and banquet was held on Saturday April 1, 1995 at Stoney Ridge Winery's Puddicombe Farm in Winona. The evening consisted of 99.99% banquet and .01% annual general meeting.

The meeting was held at the traditional location, with traditional wine tasting, traditional good food by Pierre's Catering, an excellent talk by Pud Hunter of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources on the progress being made by Bald Eagles in the Lake Erie region, and we had the traditional bucket raffle run by Roslynne Price and Wolfgang Luft.

It was a very interesting and enjoyable evening.

NPH 1995 OPEN HOUSE

by Roslynne Price

This year, the Open House was postponed for one day because Good Friday weather reports were predicting heavy rains. So, the big day happened instead on Saturday, April 15, 1995.

A good-sized crowd of about 600 people gathered to see Turkey Vultures and Red-tailed Hawks. We had hoped for a larger Broad-winged Hawk migration, but it didn't happen.

This year we tried something different, which was quite well received. We invited local naturalists clubs and other interested groups to bring their displays to Beamer. This colourful addition to the parking lot generated much interest on a somewhat slow day and all groups felt it was interesting to be at Beamer for our special day.

Our temporary 'tower' (really just a small scaffold) was used by a few daring individuals to gain a different vantage point.

We also offered our usual bucket raffle, but this year we had many more wonderful prizes donated, including a one-night stay at a nearby B&B, a print of a Great Gray Owl (by the Owl Foundation), as well as a sweatshirt and mug depicting the bird of the year - a Swallow-tailed Kite, by NPH *artiste extraordinaire*, Barry Cherriere. Thanks, Barry! The sweatshirt was won by none other than our other famous NPH *artiste extraordinaire* Laurie Mackenzie - a small payback for all those beautiful shirts she has painted and donated to NPH in the past.

Of course, one couldn't forget the highlight of the show - the live release of a Peregrine Falcon, rehabilitated by the Owl Foundation, which, when released, flew around the area in a beautiful display for all to enjoy.

Who knows, perhaps one day this bird, or one of the others we have released, will come back to nest at Beamer? We can always dream! See you next year at the Open House - Good Friday - weather permitting.

NPH MEMBER APPOINTED TO HMANA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

John Barker was recently appointed Canadian Liaison Officer on the Board of Directors of HMANA and attended his first board sessions at HMANA VII in Windsor in May.

John submitted the following goals to his fellow directors:

1. Make Canadians aware of the benefits of HMANA membership.
2. Encourage and advise Canadian nature clubs in the formation of new hawkwatches.
3. Advise on how to compile and collect data for HMANA.
4. Arrange and promote publicity on raptor migration.
5. Keep HMANA informed on all activities and programmes related to birds of prey in Canada.
6. Be open to suggestions and requests to carry out duties from HMANA executive.

John is very much interested in input from as many members of the 'raptor community' as possible in Canada and you are urged to contact him at any time.

WOULD YOU COUNT HAWKS IN AUGUST?

An article in the last newsletter mentioned that the Braddock Bay people have noticed a significant eastward migration of Red-tailed Hawks through their area near Rochester, NY in August. As many as 2500 Red-tails have been counted at Braddock Bay in a single day in August! It would be very interesting to see if such a flight is happening at Beamer, either simultaneously or perhaps the day before it occurs at Rochester.

It's obviously too late for this year but anyone interested in helping out is asked to contact Mike Street. We could have people go out if conditions seem right locally, or possibly have the Braddock Bay people call when they see the right conditions and expect a good flight. Any volunteers? You've got a whole year to think about it!

CAUTION URGED WHEN PARKING AT BEAMER

After receiving complaints of cars parked in the Beamer CA parking lot on Quarry Road being broken into and robbed, Niagara Region Police set a trap by parking a car in the lot and stationing two officers in a van nearby. Shortly thereafter, a man drove up, got out of his car, and proceeded to break into - the van containing the police officers! Oops!

Although this is a funny 'bungling burglar' story, members will see that caution is required. If there's room, you are probably better off parking on the circle inside the gate.

A SPECTATOR'S VIEW OF HMANA VII

by John R. Stevens

This year's HMANA Conference was hosted by the Holiday Beach Migration Observatory (HBMO), the Essex Region Conservation Authority and the Windsor Department of Parks and Recreation at the Ramada Inn in Windsor, Ontario. Members of HMBO are mainly residents of Michigan, so this was an international affair, a fact that was confirmed when three hawkwatchers from Mexico decided at the last minute to attend.

Reaching Windsor from Canada is relatively easy, if expensive, since there are connecting flights from Toronto to the Windsor airport. U.S. residents could reach the Detroit airport both easily and reasonably but getting from there to the Ramada Inn was very inconvenient. A shuttle service would be against the interests of the Windsor airport and those of Detroit hotels and restaurants. I suspect that this situation may have had some impact on the attendance.

The conference began for me when I arrived in the middle of an excellent buffet dinner at the host hotel on Thursday evening. This was part of the conference package and the room was buzzing with reaction to a paper that Bill Clark had just presented on the Vera Cruz, Mexico migration last fall. Bill's talk and the copious quantity of good food had certainly gotten the conference off to a great start.

David Bird, a young associate professor at McGill University is a media magnet. He is the Director of the Avian Science and Conservation Centre as well as President of an International Raptor Organization. His keynote address on Thursday evening looked into ways that modern technology is assisting with the study of raptors. I got the impression during his talk and particularly in the questions following it that he was somewhat out of his element and that he would have been more at home in conventional biology.

One of the programs discussed involved attaching radio transmitters to Golden Eagles in northern Quebec and tracking their movements by satellite telemetry. Limited funding prevented continuous monitoring of their positions (each request for a fix on each bird costs over $50.00) but positions were obtained every couple of days during the migration period.

Five of the six birds in the study took similar routes south around the eastern end of Lake Ontario to their wintering grounds in the southern Appalachians. The sixth bird started off on a more westerly route and, although a fix was not obtained over Lake Ontario, there was little doubt from actual locations both north and south of the lake that it flew across near the midpoint.

Dr. Bird was interviewed by the local papers and two different television stations. No one else at the conference seemed to matter. The following day, when along with the other participants he had gone to Point Pelee, a reporter from Radio Canada, the French CBC network, finally caught up to him at the lunch break. His French isn't great but it was better than anyone else's so he agreed to an interview that must have taken thirty minutes.

The original schedule had offered a choice of a visit to Pelee or presentation of papers on Friday. Nearly everyone opted for Pelee and the organizers squeezed all the talks into Saturday and Sunday so that everyone could go birdwatching. The buses left the Ramada Inn at 0700 but it must have been after 0830 before we assembled near the interpretive centre to be led by Paul Pratt and Tom Hince, the park naturalists. These two would form part of the team that would win the World Birding Competition the next weekend but it was a very quiet woods that they led us through to the tip. This was pretty disappointing to several of the hawkwatchers who had heard of the wonders of Pelee in May and were making their first visit. Several good species were sighted to indicate the area's potential but the low volume of migrants was alarming to me. Perhaps I've always been lucky on previous trips.

After a visit to the Hillman Marsh Conservation Area we returned to the Ramada Inn to hear Bill Clark give his talk on Field Identification. I enjoyed it the second time almost as much as the first, probably because of having forgotten much of what I'd heard earlier. Some people seemed dubious about the Osprey necklace, maybe disappointed because of now questionable data on record.

Next, it was back on the buses for a short trip to the Ojibway Bar-b-que. This event was held at a native centre in a wonderful wooded park near the Detroit River. Right in the middle of dinner, a brief thunderstorm arrived which ended as quickly as it had started after about fifteen minutes. Thanks to a large pavillion and a tent, this storm didn't ruin the evening or the grilled meats that were being prepared for us.

Bob Pettit, the conference chairman, had promised us there would be raptors at the bar-b-que and he delivered. Four tethered birds consisting of a night hawk, (aka a Great Horned Owl), a Turkey Vulture, a Kestrel and a Ferruginous Hawk were patiently standing on posts for all to examine. It was satisfying to examine a healthy Turkey Vulture from about three feet away but it was exhilarating to see the Ferruginous Hawk that close or even

to see one at all. HMANA President Paul Mackenzie couldn't get over how magnificent a bird it was. It truly deserves its scientific name, *Buteo regalis.*

The serious business began at 0700 on Saturday morning. Laurie Goodrich of Hawk Mountain Sanctuary began with a discussion of the decline of Sharp-shinnd Hawk migration counts at eastern North America watches. She postulated that some of the decrease may be the result of short-stopping wherein birds are wintering farther north; thus fewer are passing the monitoring sites. This was supported by data from Christmas Bird Counts for areas north of the watch sites.

Allen Chartier of HBMO then compared the sharpie flight at Cape May to that of Holiday Beach. The decline observed at Cape May had not been echoed at this inland site. Chartier attributed this fact to a healthier ratio of adult to immature birds at Holiday Beach. Although the dates of passage are different for the two age groups, the ratio is 50:50 at Holiday Beach and 70:30, adults to immatures, at Cape May.

For me the most interesting paper was given by Angus Hull from the Golden Gate Raptor Observatory. There is a banding station upstream of the watch site that is visible on clear days by the watchers. In 1994, a study was conducted in which the banding station, after completing their measurements on Sharp-shins and Cooper's, notified the lookout that a bird was about to be released. The watch team was then to try and see, identify and sex the released birds of known type. Individual identifications were recorded after the team conferred and reached a group identification. No comparisons were made until the end of the season.

In the west, Cooper's Hawks are smaller than their eastern counterparts and there is some overlap in size between male Cooper's and female Sharpshins. While this makes their problem more difficult than ours, size is a very unreliable guide to identification, particularly for an individual bird. Results of their study indicated that male sharpies were never misidentified, either as to sex or species. By contrast, male Cooper's Hawks were misidentified more often than not. Female Sharpshins were sometimes mistaken for males but not for Cooper's. Female Cooper's were occasionally called males, but only infrequently called sharpies. The findings suggest that at this watch the Cooper's Hawks are being undercounted and the Sharp-shinned Hawks overcounted. This might be something to try at Hawk Cliff to see how good we are with eastern birds. It also points out that some watches collect more information than we do. Imagine trying to sex all our sharpies!

Generally, I thought the talks were varied, focussed and stimulating. Most speakers had some points to make and I thought they succeeded. Far more dealt with fall migrations than spring, perhaps because the spring watchers were out doing it. Several speakers wandered away from migration studies of raptors, even into the field of educational theory.

The participants included a core of about forty seasoned HMANA members, a good complement of local people and about forty others from various points. While many of those attending were beyond middle age and may have given up the chase for the more sedentary pastime of waiting for the hawks to come to them, there was also an encouraging number of young people present. HMANA is approaching twenty-five years of age and needs some new participants.

The conference was a distinct success, due in large measure to Bob Pettit who, as general factotum, imparted a congenial, relaxed and positive attitude to every aspect. He had a large committee to assist in organizing so that events ran smoothly and generally on time.

The Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch was represented by five people as illness had forced Mary Ellen Hebb to cancel at the last minute. It is too bad that more of our members and non-member associates were unable to attend this very fine conference.

CWS *BIRD TRENDS* AVAILABLE TO NPH MEMBERS

Each year the Canadian Wildlife Service prints a newsletter called *Bird Trends*. Their practice is to devote the whole issue to one type of bird, and this year the subject is raptors. Among the different articles is one which compares NPH hawk migration data with data from Minnesota. At our request, the CWS obligingly sent along copies for NHP members. Any NPH member who has not already received a copy can get one by dropping a note to Mike Street at the address given in the list of NPH executives.

EPITAPH FOR AN EASTERN MEADOWLARK

Meadowlark
Awaiting nuptials
Only to become
Prairie Falcon
Soup de jour

a haiku by George Meyers

THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

by Mike Street

When we took down the weather pole at beamer on May 15 it seemed as though only a day or so had passed since we put it up on March 1. Take the hawkwatch itself, the open house and annual dinner, then add the Bill Clark weekend and HMANA VII conference, and it's amazing how quickly ten or eleven weeks can go by.

Although the weather didn't cooperate much, except in mid-March, and hawk numbers were down, the NPH had a good year. Our membership has grown by almost 25% and we added a new species to the NPH list, Prairie Falcon, although we'll have to wait to see what the Ontario Bird Records Committee will say about that one.

Gordon Bellerby, assisted by Paul Summerskill, had almost all the days staffed well before the season even began. George Meyers looked after Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays again this year, and Walter Klabunde was out on Tuesdays and Thursdays to tally the birds seen by other members acting as his 'eyes.' Rob Dobos has been busy putting the data into the computer for the report tables you see in this newsletter.

The April 1 dinner was good as always and our speaker, Pud Hunter, had everyone interested from start to finish. Roslynne Price and Wolfgang Luft again looked after the bucket raffle. (One of these days I'm going to win one of Laurie Mackenzie's beautifully hand-painted sweatshirts!) Late on April 13 the weather foecast - wet all day April 14 - caused us to invoke the rain day for Open House; naturally the weather shifted and it didn't rain on the 14th, so we wound up with two partial days. Mary Ellen Hebb, John Stevens, John Barker, Glenn Barnett and Roslynne price helped out on one or both days. Special thanks to Carla Carlson for again looking after the kids' program, and to George Coker for donating proceeds from the sale of the Bluebird boxes to the NPH.

The Bill Clark lecture weekend was a great success, with many compliments coming the NPH's way for having organized the event. A good time was had by all, and the treasurer was happy because we broke even. Thanks to Bill for finding the time to pay us a visit, to John Struger for making arrangements for the terrific CCIW facility, and to Kayo Roy, Barry Cherriere, Bruce Duncan and Janet Snaith for looking after Bill's transportation and accommodation.

In March the NPCA's Marjorie Adkin-Wilson prepared and sent out press releases about the hawkwatch and the hawk ID sessions we were going to have on weekends. Most newspapers printed something, and Shelley Dunn of the NPCA told us that she had never had as many calls about an activity as she did this spring about the NPH. The common refrain was, "I (we) didn't know that the hawks came over our area!"

After Glen Barnett got the Hawk Education School sign made up, all we had to do was wait for our customers. Within five minutes of putting out our 'shingle', the first person showed up. Paul Summerskill also visited a few schools this spring. There's no doubt people want to learn about the birds and the migration, and that the NPH can do something in this area.

The temporary tower, a double level scaffold put up for us by the NPCA's Gord Harry, Mich Dumais and their crews, was really temporary due to insurance concerns. For most of the period it was up we didn't have many birds so a solid evaluation wasn't possible, but the time I spent on it convinced me that the extra height gives an observer a better field of view and, especially, more time to make an identification. If anyone has a suggestion for a temporary facility which might not carry the same liability concerns, please get in touch with me so that we can look more closely at a tower.

There's a separate report on HMANA VII in this newsletter, so I'll limit my comments. The conference itself was great and congratulations are due to the Holiday Beach Migration Observatory people for a job well done. One of the things that really impressed me was the dedication of the people involved in hawkwatching, from the many volunteers to the people who earn their living in the field. Public awareness of and intertest in raptor migration is growing and should help in conservation efforts. Organizations like the NPH can help in this process.

As you will see from the executive list, Gordon Bellerby is coordinating counters, John Stevens has taken over as Treasurer and Glen Barnett will add membership as part of his duties. I would also like to introduce you to two new members of the executive: Steve Oneschuk, who designed, built and installed the terrific enclosure for the count sign at Beamer, will help look after facilities and equipment. Steve is already making a carrier/battery unit to make it easier to use the weather station donated by Walter Klabunde. Dave Gascoigne, a new member from Woodville, will assist the President by taking over as Editor of the Newsletter, effective with this issue. My sincere thanks to all members of the executive for their help in the past and particularly this spring.

Through a goof on the part of yours truly, the NPH did not hold elections this year. We will hold them for sure at next year's annual dinner, but if anyone has a concern over this matter, please write to me.

That's it for this time. See you at one or more of the fall hawkwatch sites as we bide our time until next spring.

HAWKWATCHING

by Bruce Duncan

Hawk watching is one of those addictive pastimes that can get you out of the house, out of work and out in the fresh air. Most people just enjoy seeing the migrant hawks and keeping a tally of them. That this information is passed on and becomes part of a season-long count is simply a bonus to many of us.

Then there are the hawk watchers who take the tally in their teeth and work at it. What can we learn from this? Are there trends in the data we collect? What is happening to each of the species that we see?

Those people are often particularly interested in the changes in hawk populations. They, like most of us I believe, want to know if another DDT comes along.

They are also asking, "Are there other ways of counting hawks or of telling us to what populations 'our' hawks belong?" Good questions to which there are old and new answers. I'll discuss some of them.

As long as birds have been banded, hawks have been included. In North America, standard-sized aluminum or aluminum alloy bands are placed on one leg of each hawk caught. Each band has a different 8 or 9 digit number engraved on it. To read the number, however, almost always requires catching the bird again. A few band numbers are collected by telescope views of perched birds. This is a remote possibility at hawk watches.

Some researchers not only band hawks, they also add a colour band or tag. During the Bald Eagle hacks of the 1980s in Ontario, grey patagial tags with black letter-number combinations were put on each bird. In the United States, each state used a different colour. Thus seeing a green tag on an eagle would indicate its state of origin.

I have thought that this technique could be used on nestlings of many species in northern Ontario and Quebec followed up with a request to all hawk watches to note any colour tags seen. Reports of tagged birds would help us to determine where migrants are raised. If we gain an understanding of the breeding areas from which our migrants come, then our hawk watch numbers become all the more useful.

I have long thought that instead of patagial tags, 'imping' of white feathers could be used. Imping is a falconer's method of replacing damaged flight feathers (wing or tail) with new bits.

The damaged part is cut off clean, leaving part of the quill. A trimmed bit of new pigeon feather is then inserted into the cut quill as a replacement. It's a hawk prosthesis you might say.

Imping with one or two white feathers that would be seen as the hawk flies would make it stand out from others. The white feathers would moult out the following summer. This technique could be used on nestlings from a different area of northern Quebec or Ontario annually since only that year's young would retain the imped feathers. They would be easily spotted by hawk watchers and again the records of sightings would help to define the breeding areas of hawks seen at various lookouts.

Technology has produced some ways of tracking hawks that are expanding our knowledge of migration. Radar has been used in many areas including Toronto to determine among other things if the hawks being seen from the ground are all the ones flying over. Broad-winged and Swainson's Hawks that travel in large flocks are often the target of studies in the east and west of the continent.

In Texas, comparisons of ground sightings with radar screens has shown that huge numbers of some species fly by at great height and out of sight. Radar is useful to determine what is happening in a small area but does not have the mobility to track the birds over long distances or determine where they originate.

Tying a small radio transmitter to the back or tail of a hawk is a fairly new technique that has proven useful to locate hacked Bald Eagles and Peregrines that wander away from the hack site. A few studies have been done of migrants trapped en route and followed by car or plane. There is the difficulty. Until recently, transmitters were bulky and unsuitable for small hawks and had a fairly weak signal that required close following with an antenna.

Nowadays, with the right amount of money, transmitters that are followed by satellite can be used. Students at McDonald College of McGill University tracked Golden Eagles using this technique from northern Quebec to their wintering areas in the United States. I think there is a lot of promise for this sort of study to add to our knowledge of where our migrants are being raised and where they winter. The difficulties to date are cost and size of transmitters.

There is an even newer technique being developed that could be helped out by banders on migration routes. This method looks at different ratios of stable isotopes of chemical elements found in feathers collected from hawks. The first step is to collect a few feathers from many individuals with known hatching areas. These may be obtained from museum bird collections and from nestlings being banded.

Each feather is treated chemically to separate certain elements (e.g. deuterium, carbon and nitrogen in a recent proposal I read from a student in Alberta looking at Peregrine populations). The ratios of these isotopes often differ because of the foods the birds eat in different parts of North America. For example, terrestrial and marine

plants utilize different photosynthetic pathways with differing carbon-12/carbon-13 ratios. This difference will be reflected in the animals that eat those plants and finally in the hawks that eat the animals.

Once the differences in isotope ratios are known for different parts of North America for each type of hawk, banders may be able to simply take a feather from a hawk, have it analyzed and receive data about the probable area where that bird was raised. It may not be as exact as satellite tracking but advances in technology may soon eliminate some of that imprecision.

Does all of this mean that hawk counts will become obsolete? I think the opposite. If we can determine where our migrant hawks are breeding and wintering, our counts will be all the more valuable because they may help to track changes in numbers of the breeding and wintering populations. In addition, we will know where our birds are coming from, a question that has often nagged me.

Keep on counting.

MORE ABOUT THE PRAIRIE FALCON

Jerry Guild, a veteran birder of credibility and experience, was one of the hawk watchers present who observed the Prairie Falcon at Beamer on April 19 and documented its unique identifying characteristics. In diligent fashion, he did considerable research upon returning home and offers the following observations.

Jerry contacted a falconer who flew birds without jesses. Given the unlikely probability of a wild Prairie Falcon being in Grimsby, Jerry felt almost certain that he would be advised that the bird was either an escape or a falconer's bird.

However, as soon as Jerry mentioned that the bird in question had captured a meadowlark, the falconer stated without hesitation that the bird was probably a wild bird and not a captive, released or trained bird.

The falconer is a member of the Ontario Hawking Club (approx. 75 members). Their birds are bred for hawking since the taking of of wild birds of prey is neither permitted nor desired. Their birds are trained to hunt game birds and the hunting of protected birds in Ontario is forbidden. Captive birds of prey must be trained specifically to hunt a given prey species and no other. Loss of a bird is rare and a great deal of caution is used to protect the substantial investment in each bird. No Prairie Falcon was known to be lost at the time of the sighting.

Furthermore, the falconer emphasised that even if one of their birds were in the area at the time, it would not target a meadowlark. Jerry was left with the distinct impression that the falconer believed without question that they had seen a wild bird. Furthermore, most hawkers have their birds equipped with radio transmitters; thus, when a bird occasionally wanders, it is usually tracked and recovered quickly.

Of course, this report is under consideration by the Ontario Bird Records Committee. Acceptance is required before this sighting is officially added to the NPH data record. However, we offer congratulations to those who saw and reported this bird, and to Jerry Guild for the tenacious follow-up. If Beamer Prairie Falcon is accepted a large part of the credit will be due to his hard work.

The Truth is UP there!

Anonymous

Keep Looking UP!

Bob Pettit

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH EXECUTIVE 1995

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Summary of the 1995 Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch

by Rob Dobos

The 1995 Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch (NPH) spring migration count at Beamer Memorial Conservation Area above Grimsby, Ontario, was rather less than spectacular. Other than a new species being added for the NPH, there were few highlights. The season's total of 10808 birds counted was the lowest since 1987. However, for perhaps the first time, there was coverage every day from March 1 to May 15 resulting in a total of 556 hours of observation (no days were missed due to bad weather), which was close to the 1980-95 average (this average is used throughout this report). A telling statistic was the number of hawks counted per hour of 19.4, which was the second lowest ever!

A few species had higher than average counts including: Turkey Vulture (2151), third best count; Osprey (47), third highest count; Bald Eagle (24), second highest; Cooper's Hawk (256), third highest; and Merlin (14), second best. Counts for Northern Harrier (177) and Rough-legged Hawk (87) were slightly above average.

The species which normally occur in greatest numbers at Beamer had counts much lower than average, including: Sharp-shinned Hawk (2136), third lowest count ever; Red-shouldered Hawk (705), lowest since 1983; Broad-winged Hawk (1779), lowest since 1987; and Red-tailed Hawk (2861), slightly below average. Also being counted in low numbers were: Northern Goshawk (15), lowest since 1989; Golden Eagle (4), lowest since 1988; American Kestrel (70), lowest since 1984; and only one Peregrine Falcon!

The number of unidentified buteos during March (372) was fairly high, and on a few days in particular, many of these were passing too far to the south to be identified. It has been postulated by some that a good number of these may have been Red-shouldered Hawks, explaining the lower numbers of that species seen at Beamer this year. The low count in general at Beamer in 1995 is likely a result of many hawks passing to the south or north out of sight from the count vantage point. However, this is one of the vagaries of the Beamer hawkwatch which is merely a sampling of which hawks migrate along the escarpment through the Niagara Peninsula.

The biggest excitement in 1995 at Beamer occurred on April 19, when about eight lucky hawkwatchers observed a Prairie Falcon fly in from the vineyard to the south carrying a meadowlark in its talons and land briefly nearby before disappearing to the east! There are no previously accepted records of this species for Ontario [although there are a number of historical reports which have not yet been reviewed by the Ontario Bird Records Committee (OBRC)]. The question which seems to come up with occurrences of Prairie Falcons in eastern North America is one of origin, as some may be escaped falconers' birds. We will await the outcome of deliberations by the OBRC on the documentation submitted for this sighting.

1995 NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH MONTHLY COUNTS

	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	TOTALS
Black Vulture	0	0	0	0
Turkey Vulture	734	1365	52	2151
Osprey	0	47 ~~41~~	0	47 ~~41~~
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite	0	0	0 ~~8~~	0 ~~8~~
Bald Eagle	11	5	8	24
Northern Harrier	39	111	27	177
Sharp-shinned Hawk	175	1577	384	2136
Cooper's Hawk	129	108	19	256
Northern Goshawk	9	6	0	15
Red-shouldered Hawk	658	46	1	705
Broad-winged Hawk	0	1656	123	1779
Swainson's Hawk	0	0	0	0
Red-tailed Hawk	1981	746	134	2861
Ferruginous Hawk	0	0	0	0
Rough-legged Hawk	63	24	0	87
Golden Eagle	4	0	0	4
American Kestrel	19	42	9	70
Merlin	1	9	4	14
Peregrine Falcon	0	1	0	1
Gyrfalcon	0	0	0	0
Prairie Falcon	0	1	0	1
Unid. Accipiter	23	7	1	31
Unid. Buteo	372	37	3	412
Unid. Eagle	2	0	0	2
Unid. Falcon	0	3	1	4
Unid. Raptor	11	16	4	31
Total Raptors	4231	5801	776	10808
Hours Counted	214.55	230.75	110.3	555.6
Raptors/Hour	19.7	25.1	7.0	19.5

The NPH Committee would like to thank organizers Gordon Bellerby and Paul Summerskill, and all the following volunteers for their help as official hawk counters during 1995: John Barker, Bouwe Bergsma, Barry Cherriere, Jim Coey, Dave Copeland, Bob Curry, Rob Dobos, Denys Gardiner, Jerry Guild, Walter Klabunde, Richard Knapton, Kevin McLaughlin, George Meyers, George Naylor, Steve Oneschuk, Terry Osborne, Tom Reavley, Paul Rose, Jack Ryan, Bill Smith, John Stevens, Mike Street.

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Counts – March 1995

Date –>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Totals
Black Vulture																																0
Turkey Vulture												4	2	6	5	6	12	5		102	1	6	19	20	189	164	24	30	97	13	29	734
Osprey																																0
Am. Swallow–tailed Kite																																
Bald Eagle												1	2		1		1	1		1		1				1	2					11
Northern Harrier				1			3				4	5	4		1	1		1		3			1	1	3	2	2	3	3		1	39
Sharp–shinned Hawk	1	1	1		1		1				5	5	7	6	5	5		16	6	44			4		7	18	6	6	25	5		175
Cooper's Hawk			1	1	1	1					3	3	7	4	4	4		2	2	30		2	4	11	13	20	5		8	1	2	129
Northern Goshawk	1	1	2		1						1											1				1	1					9
Red–shouldered Hawk											5	8	122	51	32	28	1	126	5	107	3	4	61	2	18	57	11	1	15		1	658
Broad–winged Hawk																																0
Swainson's Hawk																																0
Red–tailed Hawk	6	21	4	25	68	3	7		7		84	134	428	78	69	59	4	226	15	67	10	11	146	52	109	156	71	42	75	1	3	1981
Ferruginous Hawk																																0
Rough–legged Hawk	1	1		1	4				1		5	14	12		1	2		3	2	4			1			4	1	1	5			63
Golden Eagle													2			1			1												4
American Kestrel			1				1			1		1	1	1	2	1				6					2				2			19
Merlin																															1	1
Peregrine Falcon																																0
Gyrfalcon																																0
Prairie Falcon																																0
Unid. Accipiter				2							1		1	2	1	1		6		1						5		1	2			23
Unid. Buteo				1							2	8	2	55	18	115		121		6					5	20	14		5			372
Unid. Eagle																											1				1	2
Unid. Falcon																																0
Unid. Raptor														5									1	1			4					11
Total Raptors	9	24	9	31	75	4	12	0	8	1	110	183	590	208	139	223	18	507	31	371	14	25	237	87	346	448	142	84	237	20	38	4231
Hours Counted	6	7	5.5	7.75	6.7	6.5	4.35	3	7	5	8	7.7	8.75	8.6	7	8.5	4.5	8.25	7.5	7.5	6.25	7	8	7.5	8	8.5	7.5	6.7	6.5	7	6.5	215
Wind Direction	SW	NNE	SW	SW	SE	SW	SSE	N	NNW	SW	WSW	SSW	SW	VAR	VAR	VAR	NW	N	NE	S	W	VAR	N	N	NNE	VAR	NE	NE	VAR	W	VAR	

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Counts – April 1995

Date –>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		Totals
Black Vulture																																0
Turkey Vulture	198	200	95	5	19	8	85	172	11	14	35	7	17	78	99	126	22	4	33	36	8	14	35	12	3			4	11	14		1365
Osprey											12					3	5	1	4	2	2	4	2	2		1	2		1			41
Am. Swallow–tailed Kite																																
Bald Eagle		2			2		1																									5
Northern Harrier	3	2	6			1	3	1			18	1	5		5	9	4	1	11	2	3	3	7	8	4		4	1	1	8		111
Sharp–shinned Hawk	18	9	11		1	18	15	21	3	7	235	89	13	18	37	76	122	10	89	79	54	21	69	78	71	75	118	55	72	93		1577
Cooper's Hawk	11	8	4			3	6	4	3	2	13	3		1	6	10	2		2	8	5	3	2	2		2	2	1	1	4		108
Northern Goshawk	1	2								1									1	1												6
Red–shouldered Hawk	15	3	2				2	2	1		6	3		1	1	1	3			1		1	1	2		1						46
Broad–winged Hawk																1	7	4	31	442	5	1	314	525	12	21	130	25	19	119		1656
Swainson's Hawk																																0
Red–tailed Hawk	143	66	15	1	4	2	82	33	4	16	43		11	30	32	54	30	10	13	25	1	6	49	17	19	1	5	5	12	17		746
Ferruginous Hawk																																0
Rough–legged Hawk	2	3									2			1	1	2			3	1			6			1		1		1		24
Golden Eagle																																0
American Kestrel	1	1	4		1					1	12					2	1	1	3	1	4		2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1		42
Merlin											1				1						2	1	1		1		1		1			9
Peregrine Falcon																												1				1
Gyrfalcon																																0
Prairie Falcon																			1													1
Unid. Accipiter	2	3										1			1																	7
Unid. Buteo	8	7											1				3		1	6				7	2		1			1		37
Unid. Eagle																																0
Unid. Falcon	1																1					1										3
Unid. Raptor					1					4							1	1	1	2				4	2							16
Total Raptors	403	306	137	6	28	32	194	233	22	45	377	104	47	129	183	284	201	32	193	606	84	55	488	658	115	103	264	95	119	258		5801
Hours Counted	8	8	6	7	6.5	7	7	9.6	8	7	9	7.5	6.5	9.5	11	10	8	6.2	8.5	8.1	8.5	9	7	7.25	7.1	7	6	4.5	8	8		231
Wind Direction	NE	S	SW	W	W	VAR	NE	NE	NE	ENE	E	SW	WSW	NW	NW	NW	E	E	SW	NE	VAR	NW	N	NE	SW	SW	N	SW	NW	NE		

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Counts – May 1995

Date –>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Totals
Black Vulture																																0
Turkey Vulture			1	8	4	14	9		10		2		4																			52
Osprey																																0
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite				1	1	2	2																									6
Bald Eagle				2				2			2	1	1																			8
Northern Harrier			1	8		1		5		2	3		3	2	2																	27
Sharp-shinned Hawk	30	27	19	9	10	27	12	14	6	100	16	3	74	35	2																	384
Cooper's Hawk	1	1					3	2	1	3		1	6		1																	19
Northern Goshawk																																0
Red-shouldered Hawk						1																										1
Broad-winged Hawk	8	2	2	10	2	34	10	9	6	5	9	1	21	4																		123
Swainson's Hawk																																0
Red-tailed Hawk	9	7	9	13	1	17	23	14	3		1	7	21	3	6																	134
Ferruginous Hawk																																0
Rough-legged Hawk																																0
Golden Eagle																																0
American Kestrel		1	1	1						1				4	1																	9
Merlin			1		1					2																						4
Peregrine Falcon																																0
Gyrfalcon																																0
Prairie Falcon																																0
Unid. Accipiter														1																		1
Unid. Buteo				3																												3
Unid. Eagle																																0
Unid. Falcon													1																			1
Unid. Raptor				1				2						1																		4
Total Raptors	48	38	34	56	19	96	59	48	26	113	33	13	131	50	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	776
Hours Counted	7.5	8	7,5	7	6	9	6.2	7	7.9	7	7.9	6.5	7	8.3	7.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	110
Wind Direction	VAR	NNE	VAR	VAR	NW	N	VAR	NE	NE	N	WSW	N	VAR	S	NW				--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	

Annual Summaries 1980–1995

	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	TOTALS	1980–95 Mean	Highest Total & Date	Earliest Date
Black Vulture													1			0	1	0.5	1 – Apr 4/92	Apr 4/92
Turkey Vulture	620	671	521	895	616	948	837	977	2331	1406	1463	1785	1990	1852	3189	2151	23469	1390.8	748 – Mar 26/88	Feb 23/84
Osprey	24	19	27	20	38	36	33	30	41	36	40	46	64	45	69	47/41	656	38.1	16 – Apr 12/92	Mar 26/77
Am. Swallow–tailed Kite															1	0/0	7	3.5	1 – Apr 15/94	Apr 15/94
Bald Eagle	8	1	7	7	5	10	14	7	16	17	15	17	22	14	40	24	232	14.0	9 – Mar 23/94	Feb 26/86
Northern Harrier	72	102	131	125	127	113	143	217	162	175	194	219	209	126	177	177	2716	154.3	28 – Apr20/92;Apr5/93	Feb 19/84
Sharp–shinned Ha	4614	4095	4880	3931	4683	4480	3549	2831	3108	3576	7005	3767	3418	3475	4846	2136	79623	4024.6	1556 – Apr 18/76	Feb 11/87
Cooper's Hawk	135	179	121	160	190	152	196	199	229	180	311	220	199	209	263	256	3525	199.9	50 – Apr 5/93	Feb 11/87
Northern Goshawk	3	8	51	73	67	25	21	31	27	14	24	20	34	28	73	15	548	32.1	11 – Mar 24/84	Feb 28/88
Red–shouldered H	684	528	638	624	838	764	901	876	861	1102	1440	761	1187	1030	1419	705	16607	897.4	655 – Mar 23/94	Feb 23/84
Broad–winged Ha	4914	6904	2305	4118	7844	8239	3823	1628	2910	2304	4434	2063	2761	1963	2335	1779	69566	3770.3	6007 – Apr 21/85	Apr 4/85
Swainson's Hawk						1			1	1				2	2	0	7	1.2	7 dates with 1 bird	Apr 15/94
Red–tailed Hawk	2848	2604	2607	3150	3105	3410	2852	3265	3567	2615	3467	3023	3861	2684	2890	2861	58587	3050.6	706 – Apr 8/87	Feb 11/87
Ferruginous Hawk													1			0	1	0.5	1 – Apr 13/92	Apr 13/92
Rough–legged Ha	37	41	131	59	85	48	45	77	87	45	87	145	128	35	62	87	1471	74.9	24 – Apr 2/82	Feb 11/87
Golden Eagle	3	4	4	8	6	12	7	6	3	7	10	8	12	6	10	4	118	6.9	4 – Apr 29/83	Feb 24/84
American Kestrel	101	114	102	71	56	150	126	85	148	132	207	180	92	93	122	70	2126	115.6	44 – Mar 14/90	Feb 25/87
Merlin	1	2	5	2	2	5	5	12	5	4	9	11	12	9	23	14	127	7.6	4 – Apr 13/92;Apr 20/94	Mar 1/94
Peregrine Falcon	1	3	3			2	1	1	4	2	6	5	6	2	4	1	44	2.9	3 dates with 2 birds	Mar 12/88
Gyrfalcon																0	1	0.0	1 – Apr 20/77	Apr 20/77
Prairie Falcon																1				
Unid. Raptors	509	647	435	467	640	880	1504	266	634	592	582	2681	681	534	452	480/31	12912	720.9		
Total Raptors	14574	15922	11968	13710	18302	19275	14057	10508	14134	12208	19294	14951	14678	12107	15977	10808/412	262398	13879.8		
Hours Counted	529	562.6	583.1	565	564.6	608.5	576.2	681.5	608	499.3	574.5	548.3	541.5	538.5	531.0	556/2	9024.8	532.1		
Birds per Hour	27.6	28.3	20.5	24.3	32.4	31.7	24.4	15.4	23.2	24.5	33.6	27.3	27.1	22.5	30.1	19.5/4		24.8		



Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Newsletter

Newsletter No. 12, February 1996

ANOTHER BUSY SEASON FOR THE NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH!

SIXTH ANNUAL OPEN HOUSE FRIDAY, APRIL 5

NPH will again invite the public to view the migrating hawks on April 5 when we hold our sixth annual Open House. The night before last year's the executive initiated a postponement due to the predicted weather - which never materialized, although not too many birds were seen either. We are due for a better day, so let's hope for the right weather and a good flight. In case of really bad weather, however, events will be postponed to Saturday, April 6.

Members of the Hawkwatch stationed in the center of the circle and at the point will help visitors to see and identify raptors passing over Beamer. (Volunteers are needed - please contact Mike Street.) A highlight of Open House day for the past few years has been the release of a rehabilitated raptor. This year we hope to see a Red-tailed Hawk released around 1PM.

The very welcome coffee truck will be parked in the circle and the special kids program with Carla Carlson of Niagara Nature Tours will run at 11AM and noon. There will be short 'Hawk Talks' for visitors on the hour from 11AM-2PM and displays from birding and nature organizations, including our hosts, the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, and the Ontario Field Naturalists.

Be sure to invite your family and friends; it should be a good day for them and for the birds too.

INTERCEPT LINE TO OPERATE APRIL 23

For the third year the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch will conduct an Intercept Line on Sunday, April 20. For a look at last year's results see Bruce Duncan's article on P. 7 of this issue.

From 10:00 am to 1:00 pm, members of NPH will set up a 'line' of hawk counters, stationed about 1-2 km apart, from the lake south to Beamer, and then south again. More volunteers are needed this year as we would like to try to cover a larger area by extending the Intercept Line as far as Highway 20.

Each group will count hawks in its part of the sky (and we hope there will be many Broad-wings) for the three hours. All counts will be collected, overlaps noted and a final tally drawn up.

The purpose of this work is to learn more about the migration by assessing how much of the day's total raptor flight is actually sampled at Beamer. We know that on some days birds migrate to the north or south, instead of coming over the parking lot. As more Intercept Line data is obtained we may be able to establish a better picture of the Niagara Peninsula flight during different weather conditions.

Please contact Bruce Duncan at Beamer or at 519-622-4709 (evenings) if you would like to help out again or participate for the first time.

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CADMAN TO SPEAK AT APRIL 27 BANQUET

Once again our annual banquet and general meeting will be held at Stoney Ridge Winery's Puddicombe Farm on Hwy. 8 in Winona. Changes this year include a later starting time and a different format for the wine tasting. The evening's Guest Speaker will be Mike Cadman of the Canadian Wildlife Service, who will tell us a little bit about what's behind the new Wildlife Watcher's Program, and the role of hawkwatching in it.

Socializing and the bucket raffle begin at 5PM. (PLEASE NOTE the later time than last year.) The before supper wine tasting starts at 5:15. This year members of the NPH will select the wines for the evening in advance, allowing us to make sure they are chilled properly if required. Dinner will start around 6:15. As always there will be a an opportunity to buy some of the wine if you wish, and we will also have our bucket raffle.

This will be an enjoyable evening so get your tickets now. The room can accommodate 42 people; 30 tickets are still available, priced at $20 for members and $25 for non-members. Call Gordon Bellerby, Bruce Duncan, Wolfgang Luft, Roslynne Price or Mike Street to make arrangements.

NPH COUNTERS WANTED - PLEASE HELP

This year Gordon Bellerby will again organize Hawk Counters, with assistance from Paul Summerskill. Counters are asked to call Gordon at (905) 468-3961 to schedule hawkwatching day(s) for 1995.

Your help is needed, especially at the beginning and end of the season. While early March can be slow, and the natural inclination in May is to head to the woods for warblers, our work needs attention too. If enough people offer to help, it should be easy to fill in all the dates.

If you are interested in learning to become a counter, be sure to let Gordon know. Many of our observers are glad to share the work and help newcomers, and we will also have a Hawk ID Corner on weekends from March 23 through April 28.

In addition to the normal count at the Beamer CA parking lot, this year the NPH will again do some research on the flight patterns of raptors in the wider Grimsby area, from the shore of Lake Ontario to about 10km inland (see 'Intercept Line', P. 7) so additional observers are needed. We know that people "Don't want to miss the main action at Beamer", but the information produced by the special count could lead to better sighting days in the future.

CHANGING THE GUARD

Both Rob Dobos and Gordon Bellerby have advised that they would like to step down from executive level activity with the NPH. On behalf of the members of the NPH President Mike Street would like to thank both Rob and Gordon for the time and effort thay have put into helping the Hawkwatch grow and prosper. Wolfgang Luft has agreed to take over Rob's statistical duties, and Paul Summerskill is helping Gordon with organizing counters.

An organization like the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch always needs people who are willing to work and help out a bit. If you are interested in making a contribution, please speak to any member of the Executive or get in touch directly with Mike Street. Addresses and phone numbers are in the NPH Executive list below.

NEW HAWK SITE ORGANIZING

There will be a hawk count taken from the top of the old Kings Forest Ski Hill in the Red Hill Valley of Hamilton during the spring of 1996. This count will depend on volunteers.

If you would like to help out by taking a day, please call Bruce Duncan at 519-622-4709 (evenings) or 905-546-2995 (days).

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH EXECUTIVE 1995

HON. PRESIDENT: Walter Klabunde
PRESIDENT: Mike Street, 73 Hatton Drive, Ancaster, ON L9G 2H5 (905) 648-3737
VICE-PRESIDENT: Mary Ellen Hebb, 32 Maplewood St, St. Catharines, ON L2M 3P1 (905) 937-7671
SECRETARY/MEMBERSHIP: Glenn Barnett, 87 Highland Park Dr., Dundas, ON L9H 6G5 (905) 628-2093
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STATISTICS: Rob Dobos, 178 Cedarbrae Avenue, Waterloo, ON N2L 4S3 (519) 888-0553

BOOK REVIEWS

by John Barker

A Photographic Guide to North American Raptors; B.K. Wheeler and W.S. Clark, 1995. $40Cdn (approx.)

I was first made aware of this book in Texas during the spring of 1993 when Bill Clark showed his Raptour group a file of sixty 8x10" colour photographs of every possible pose of a Bald Eagle. The scope of detail was what got my attention. A few days later, at the HMANA Conference at Corpus Christi, Brian Wheeler give us a preview of all the work that was going into producing their photographic essay, which now sets the standard for this type of field guide.

To say the least, as a Hawk Watcher I love this guide. Although there have been a few negative comments about it in other reviews, I feel the points raised are relatively minor. In the fall of 1995 I used *A Photographic Guide to North American Raptors* constantly to confirm my own feelings about specific identifications, and to show fellow hawkwatchers and beginners what it was they just saw go by.

One of the real advantages of having this book is that the birds stay put - unlike migrating birds, which sometimes seem to be gone in an instant, the ones in the photos will still be there a few minutes from now!! Another strength of the work is that it offers a lot of help in identifying perched raptors, especially juveniles, which can be really tough.

So yes, if you do not own this book and are interested in learning more about raptors, go out and get a copy.

Raptor Migration Watch-site Manual; Bildstein, K.L. and J.I. Zalles, editors; Hawk Mountain Sanctuary; 1995. $20US from Hawk Aloft Worldwide, Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, RR 2, Kempton, PA 19529 USA.

This book consists of thirteen chapters and more than 100 pages of information valuable to both established and new raptor observatories. In addition to raptor migration and conservation biology and ecology, subjects covered include monitoring abundance and distribution, managing data, environmental education, ecotourism, membership programs and volunteers.

Last November I was helping set up a new raptor group, The Greater Toronto Raptor Watch. My first reaction to the manual was that the timing of its arrival was great, because here in its pages is step by step advice by the experts on how to organize and effectively progress into a better hawk observatory.

Publication of the *Raptor Migration Watch-site Manual* ends the first phase of a project of Hawk Mountain Sanctuary called 'Hawks Aloft Worldwide', the whole object of which is to create a better way for people around the world to work together to retain and protect raptors. Phase Two will be production of a World Hawk Watch Site Guide.

This manual, and the yet to be published site atlas, will widen your knowlege of how important it is to help with and conserve the areas we enjoy time and again to view the wonder that is Hawk Migration.

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by Mike Street

IT'S THAT TIME AGAIN!!

We spent the coldest winter of the year in the Kingston and Ottawa area. After getting lucky with northern owls, what did we see? Several pairs of absolutely crisp and smart looking Red-tails doing courtship flights! It was -20+°C for Pete's sake! Anyway it was nice to watch and brought home the fact that our season is once again upon us. Doesn't March 1 come quickly?

Once again we will be trying to pass on our knowledge to others through the **Hawk ID Corner**. Coupled with the great publicity we received throught the efforts of the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, this 1995 innovation was quite successful.

Many people would like to learn to identify raptors but are a bit intimidated by the weekend scrum around the official counter. Having a free service in the middle of the circle proved popular, so we will repat it again in 1996 Saturdays and Sundays from March 23 through April 28. Anyone who wants to learn about identifying raprtors is welcome; just look for the sign. Experienced people willing to help the learners are needed. Please contact me.

"What's happening on the **Viewing Tower**?", you ask. Well, a lot, let me tell you. Last spring we used a small scaffold to try to get a handle on what the extra height could do for us. The experiment showed two things - an observer can see low flying birds farther away, and, more important, has more time, between 1 and 3 minutes, to make the identification.

Then member Bill Wilson sent me some photos of a tower which had been built and installed for the Grand River Conservation Authority at two of their sites. The tower is about 15 feet high, about 12-14 feet square, inside stairs and made of STEEL (this is important, given the pyromaniac tendencies of some of the locals)!

We have started the ball rolling by asking the NPCA for permission to have a tower. If this goes well, and we also get an OK from the Niagara Escarpment Commission, we will start fund raising. Stay tuned.

See you at Beamer.

ANOTHER PIECE OF THE MIGRATION PUZZLE
A LOOK AT AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE WIND DRIFT THEORY

by Mike Street

- **Hawk Cliff**, Sep. 18, 1994 - light northerly winds, scattered clouds, moderate on-shore breezes, 10,000 Broad-wings go through before the flight shuts down around noon; Holiday Beach has 67,000 BWs, Erie Metropark a gazillion!!
- **Beamer CA**, Apr. 20, 1995 - light northwest to northeast winds, partly cloudy, about 600 birds before noon, then zip. Between 11:30 and 15:30 Dave Copeland works toward Hwy 20 and spots 800 hawks not seen from Beamer.
- **Hamilton**, Sep. 18, 1995 - crystal clear skies, light northwest winds, and not a BW in sight. Holiday Beach has 10,000 BWs that day. Erie Metropark has 110,000 BWs.

Why, on the same day with favourable conditions, were there lots of hawks at one place and not another? Most hawkwatchers would say, "The wind shifted them, or they were in the ozone." That's what I thought too, until the lack of birds at Hamilton last September got me thinking.

On that day the temperature was warm, not a cloud in sight, not much of a wind - perfect conditions for a great Broad-wing flight past Hamilton. If the birds didn't come this way, yet there were tons near Windsor, what route did they take?

It was obvious the hawks were travelling at a relatively high altitude. This got me thinking about the first time I went up in a small airplane from Brantford airport. We were hardly off the ground and yet I could easily see Lake Erie off to the south. What if, what if....?

If I was at 2-3000 feet in a small plane at the bottom of Georgian Bay, what would I see if the skies were clear and visibility very good? The south shore of Lake Huron, of course. Toronto and the west end of Lake Ontario would seem like they were next door. Lake Erie would be shimmering in the distance.

And then it hit me - if visibility was good and the thermals such that the hawks were able to get up to 2-3000 feet hawks, they would see what a human sees - literally for miles! Broad-wings coming around the corner of Georgian Bay wouldn't head for Toronto or Hamilton, they'd set a course for Kitchener or London!

That seemed to explain why Hamilton got nothing on Sep. 18, 1995, but what about Holiday Beach? Why did they get just 10,000 BWs when Erie Metropark, only 8 miles away, had ten times that many? Again something clicked. Around London and Chatham the thermals would still be pretty good and the birds would still be fairly high. It seems logical that, once in sight of Windsor and Detroit, they would more or less set the best course to skirt Lake St. Clair and cross the Detroit River before turning and heading south. The hawks were travelling roughly parallel to Hwy. 401 - far enough away for most to go by unseen from Holiday Beach. If they bottomed out close to Windsor or Detroit, and started south, Erie Metropark would see them because they would be both rising and gathering.

In other words, on Sep. 18, 1995, the flight direction had less to do with the wind than with the general conditions that day - a high ceiling and good visibility. The birds simply picked the most economic route to get them to their destination, and the Erie Metropark counters were in the right place to catch it.

I then tried to apply this reasoning to the other two days - a year earlier at Hawk Cliff and the previous April at Beamer. Did the hawks shift to a different route part way through the day? Again, things started to add up. If ceiling and/or visibility are low, or thermals are light as in the morning, it makes sense that the birds will travel as far as they can in the main direction they want to go, north in spring and south in fall, and then turn when they hit obstructions such as the lakes.

As the day warms up, thermals form and the ceiling will rise as the warm air does. A Broad-wing heading south toward Hawk Cliff, seeing that things were improving, would not go as close to Lake Erie but would keep more inland, and the flight at Hawk Cliff would fold.

The same thing applies at Beamer. As the day goes on the ground will warm up inland from the lake, allowing the birds to get higher. Given the right height hawks coming around the corner of Lake Erie at Buffalo and Fort Erie would set a course, not for Beamer, but for the west end of Lake Ontario, i.e. Hamilton. This would take them south of Beamer and out of sight of our counters.

In developing this article I read much of Thomas Allerstam's *Bird Migration* and all of Paul Kerlinger's *Flight Strategies of Migrating Hawks*. In his section on raptors Allerstam concentrates on overall routes and timing of the migration, and didn't supply much insight to the specific question I was trying to resolve. Kerlinger's book, on the other hand, provided fascinating details of many aspects of what we hawk watchers see but may not always understand.

The wind drift theory of hawk migration says that flight direction on a given day is determined by the prevailing wind. In several places Kerlinger says clearly that the data in his studies do not seem to support this theory. He specifically mentions radar studies in southern Ontario which seem to confirm the Hwy. 401 idea mentioned above.

Does the route picking theory apply at all times? No, of course not. Very strong winds, or low clouds, or haze from heat or industry can eaily obscure things, but from now on I'm going to watch ceiling and visibility.

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH MIGRATION CALENDAR
FOR BEAMER CONSERVATION AREA

NOTES:

1) Species initials and Right (->) or Left (<-) arrow:

This combination indicates the start or end of the normal (at Beamer) migration period for that species. The same in **bold** type indicates the start or end of a noticeable peak period for that species. The box in which this combination is located indicates the day and month on which the period is likely to start.

2) A number, followed by species initials, followed by a slash (/) and a two-digit number:

In this combination the largest number of that species ever seen in one day is given first; the two digit number following the / indicates the year in which this occurred. The box in which this combination is located indicates the day and month on which the event occurred. Example: 655 RS /94 in the March 23 box indicates that the highest number of Red-shouldered Hawks recorded in one day was 655, seen on March 23, 1994.

TV - Turkey Vulture
BV - Black Vulture
OS - Osprey
SK - American Swallow-tailed Kite
BE - Bald Eagle
GE - Golden Eagle
NH - Northern Harrier
SS - Sharp-shinned Hawk
CH - Cooper's Hawk
NG - Northern Goshawk
RS - Red-shouldered Hawk
BW - Broad-winged Hawk
RT - Red-tailed Hawk
SW - Swainson's Hawk
RL - Rough-legged Hawk
FH - Ferruginous Hawk
AK - American Kestrel
ME - Merlin
PF - Peregrine Falcon
GF - Gyrfalcon
PR - Prairie Falcon

The following information, based on 21 years of data from the Beamer Hawkwatch, has been updated to show significant 1995 events:

Largest number of raptors in one season: 19,724 in 1985

MARCH

1 RT-> RL->** CH-> NG->** BE-> GE->	2 NH-> RS->** AK-> TV->	3	4	5	6	7
8 **RL->**	9 **RT->**	10 **AK->**	11	12	13	14 **RS-> NG->** 44 AK /90
15 **CH->** SS->	16	17	18 **BE->** 7 GE /86	19	20 **TV->**	21
22	23 9 BE/94 655 RS/94	24 11 NG /84	25	26 2 PF /91 7 GE /88 748 TV /88	27 **NH->** OS->	28 2 PF /90
29	30	31				

Largest # of raptors in month: 5670 in March 1988; Largest # of raptors in one day in month: 2080 on March 26, 1988

APRIL

1	2 **<-RS**	3 2 PF /91	4 1 BV /92	5 ME-> PF-> 50 CH /93 28 NH /93	6	7
8 706 RT /87	9	10 **<-RT SS->** **BW->**	11	12 **OS->** 22 RL /91 16 OS /92	13 4 ME /92 1 FH /92	14 28 NH /91
15 **<-TV** 1 SK /94 1 SW /94*	16 **<-BE** 2 PF /90	17	18 1556 SS /76	19 **BW->** 1 PR/95*	20 1 GF /77 28 NH /92 1 SW /93	21 1 SW /85 6007 BW /85
22 1 SW /88	23	24 **<-NG**	25 2 PF /94 1 SW /94*	26	27 1 SW /93*	28 **<-AK**
29 4 GE /83	30 **<-CH <-RL**					

* Subject to acceptance by Ontario Bird Records Comittee

Largest # of raptors in month: 15,012 in April 1984; Largest # of raptors in one day in month: 7007 on April 21, 1985

MAY

1	2	3	4	5 1 SW /89	6 **<-NH <-BW** **<-PF**	7
8	9	10 **<-OS**	11 **<-SS**	12	13 **<-BE**	14
15 <-RL <-ME	16	17	18 <-NG	19	20	21
22	23	24 <-OS <-GE	25 <-RS	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Largest # of raptors in month: 2695 in May 1980; Largest # of raptors in one day in month: 1492 on May 4, 1989

1995 INTERCEPTOR LINE COUNT RESULTS

by Bruce Duncan

INTRODUCTION

On April 23, 1995, nine members of the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch spent three hours recording migrant hawks on a broad north to south front from Lake Ontario to Grimsby Air Park, a distance of 6.5 km. This was a repeat of the 1994 interceptor line count reported in the August 1994 newsletter. That article provides background information about interceptor lines in general. The intent was to record all raptors migrating west and compare results to the Beamer count for the same three hours to see what sort of broader flight is occurring.

METHODS

The 1995 methods were the same as those of 1994, and are repeated here. Our interceptor line had six locations including the Beamer parking lot, as shown on the accompanying map. Distances between count sites from the lake inland (numbers 1 - 6) are as follows:

1 - 2	1.2 km	2 - 3	1.0 km	3 - 4	1.5 km
4 - 5	1.2 km	5 - 6	2.0 km		

Counters at each site were asked to record hawks flying by during each 5 minute interval and to note whether or not they were north or south of their particular site. Each site count is tallied in Tables 1 - 6. In addition, comments by observers about distances, ages of birds, unusual marks, etc. added detail to the counts.

I have totalled results by species for all sites and listed them in Table 7. In addition, I have indicated what I considered to be hawks seen at two or more sites as "Overlap". It was possible to pick these birds out from the counts since each group of observers provided details noted above. I have been generous in assigning birds to this overlap category in order to obtain a conservative figure of the total count from the six sites.

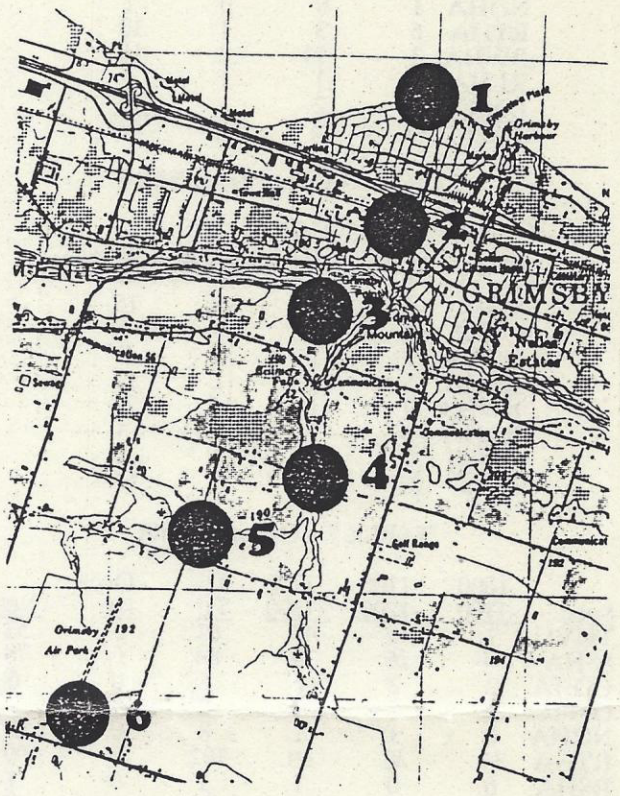


TABLE 1 - Count From Site 1

Spec	1000 -1100	1100 -1200	1200 -1300	Total
TUVU	1	2	8	11
SSHA	1	0	0	1
RTHA	0	1	2	3
BWHA	0	0	0	0
UNID	0	1	16	17
Total	2	4	26	32

TABLE 2 - Count From Site 2

Spec	1000 -1100	1100 -1200	1200 -1300	Total
TUVU	1	2	12	15
SSHA	3	2	5	10
COHA	0	1	0	1
NOHA	1	0	1	2
RTHA	9	8	4	21
BWHA	8	48	70	126
RLHA	1	0	0	1
MERL	1	0	1	2
UNID	0	3	1	4
Total	24	64	94	182

TABLE 3 - Count From Site 3

Spec	1000 -1100	1100 -1200	1200 -1300	Total
TUVU	3	4	16	23
SSHA	20	12	7	39
COHA	1	0	1	2
NOHA	2	0	0	2
RTHA	13	7	7	27
BWHA	20	47	98	165
RSHA	0	0	1	1
RLHA	3	0	1	4
UNID	1	1	0	2
Total	63	71	131	265

TABLE 4 - Count From Site 4

Spec	1000 -1100	1100 -1200	1200 -1300	Total
TUVU	0	0	4	4
SSHA	0	2	8	10
COHA	0	0	1	1
NOHA	1	0	0	1
RTHA	1	3	25	29
BWHA	1	0	23	24
UNID	7	2	15	24
Total	10	7	76	93

TABLE 5 - Count From Site 5

Spec	1000 -1100	1100 -1200	1200 -1300	Total
TUVU	1	1	2	4
SSHA	7	5	5	17
COHA	0	0	2	2
OSPR	1	0	0	1
NOHA	1	0	0	1
RTHA	6	3	1	10
BWHA	3	11	2	16
RLHA	2	1	1	4
UNID	11	2	1	14
Total	33	24	12	69

TABLE 6 - Count From Site 6

Spec	1000 -1100	1100 -1200	1200 -1300	Total
TUVU	1	1	2	4
SSHA	4	5	6	15
OSPR	0	1	0	1
NOHA	1	1	0	2
RTHA	5	6	1	12
BWHA	9	1	11	21
RLHA	3	1	0	4
UNID	0	0	1	1
Total	23	16	21	60

TABLE 7 - Overall Count

Spec	1000 -1100	1100 -1200	1200 -1300	Ttl Ttl	Over- lap	Net
TUVU	7	10	44	61	8	53
SSHA	34	26	24	84	6	78
COHA	2	2	2	6	0	6
OSPR	1	1	0	2	0	2
NOHA	6	1	1	8	0	8
RTHA	34	28	40	102	3	99
RSHA	0	0	1	1	0	1
RLHA	9	2	2	13	0	13
BWHA	41	107	204	352	22	330
MERL	1	0	1	2	0	2
UNID	18	8	34	60	0	60
Total	153	185	353	691	39	652

OVERLAP

Overlap was spread between sites as follows:

1 - 2	0	
2 - 3	24	(TUVU 4; SSHA 1; RTHA 1; BWHA 18)
3 - 4	8	(TUVU 4; SSHA 1; BWHA 3)
4 - 5	0	
5 - 6	7	(RTHA 2; BWHA 1; SSHA 4)

DISCUSSION

There were substantially more hawks seen during the 1995 interceptor line count than in 1994: 652 vs. 271. The big difference was in the number of the species we most hoped to see. Broad-winged Hawks: 330 vs. 25. Although 330 Broad-wings is not the biggest of flights, it does, nevertheless, give us some idea of how far inland these birds fly and that was the purpose of the interceptor line.

The two sites closest to the Niagara Escarpment, Beamer and downtown Grimsby, recorded the largest numbers of Broad-wings (165 and 126). Inland, there was a total of 61, spread fairly evenly among the three sites. The lakeshore had none and, in fact, had the lowest count of all species.

In 1994, the lakeshore count was higher than Site 2, next to it. The wind was from the southwest. This was quite different in 1995 on a north wind. Site 2 had many more hawks (182 vs. 32 at Site 1) with virtually all of them flying south of the observer (i.e. well away from the lakeshore).

Although in 1994 the majority of Sharp-shinned Hawks were along the escarpment, in 1995 there were 39 Sharp-shins counted at the Beamer parking lot (a good flight) while an additional 42 were flying over the inland sites, including 6 at the Air Park, farthest from the escarpment.

In 1994, the highest overall count was at Beamer and this was the case in 1995. However, in 1994, the lowest count was from town while this year it was the second highest, recording a good flight in the direction of the escarpment.

The overlap this year was a bit different. There were still good numbers of the largest, soaring species that I counted as overlap between sites (TUVU - 8 and RTHA - 3) but there were more Broad-wings flying and considered overlapping (22 in total). There were again a few Sharp-shins - 6 - as in 1994.

Dave Copeland counted from some inland sites on April 20 and 24, 1995 and his data round out this report. On April 24, Dave counted from Allan Road at Kemp Road North, north of the Air Park. The winds were ENE and strong. In five hours, he saw 425 Broad-winged Hawks and 52 others, including 25 Sharp-shins. None of these birds were seen at Beamer.

On April 20, he moved from site to site in a southerly direction, starting about 1 km south of Beamer and ending at Highway 20 and Wolverton Road, which is almost 8 km south of Beamer. Dave tallied 843 hawks in total, with 730 Broad-wings and 60 Sharp-shins being the highest two species counts. The largest Broad-wing kettle was 50+.

What can we conclude from all of this information? First, it's not news, but the results confirm that there is a widespread flight both north and particularly south of Beamer. Beamer, however, continues to prove to be a very good site, with the escarpment attracting a large movement of birds.

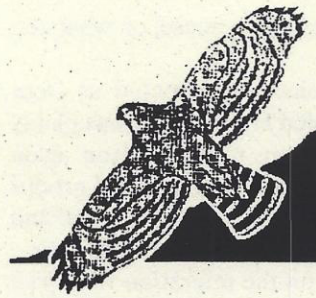
In 1994, Beamer had 108 out of the total of 271 hawks seen along the interceptor line (40%). In 1995, Beamer accounted for 233 out of the total 652 (36%). I have taken overlaps out of these totals to give an overall "net" result.

I don't think we should generalize too much from these percentages since they represent only two days in April and birds may behave quite differently in other months and on other winds. However, it is evident that there are hawks flying on quite a broad front on at least some days.

The Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch will be expanding our count significantly in 1996, using several satellites sites to try to see some of these birds. In addition, the 1996 interceptor line will spread further south (I hope at least as far as Highway 20) in order to sample an even broader section of the flight. Please help out and volunteer to spend three hours on April 20. Call me at 519-622-4709.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to John Barker, Mary Ellen Hebb, Ursula Kolster, Stuart Mackenzie, Matt Mills, Ian Rabenda, John Stevens, Mike Street, Bill Wilson and Heather Wilson for helping with the 1995 count.



Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Newsletter

Newsletter No. 13, August 1996

EDITOR NEEDED!

Dave Gascoigne has had to give up Editorship of our newsletter due to the pressures of his business. A new Editor with some Computer and Word Processing experience is required. Please contact Mike Street at 905-648-3737 if you woould like to help.

Thank You

1996 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND DINNER

On Saturday April 27, 1995, the 1996 Annual General Meeting and Dinner was again held at Stoney Ridge Winery's Puddicombe Farm in Winona. The evening consisted of 99% banquet and 1% annual general meeting.

In a break from tradition, this year's wine tasting was organized and conducted by members of the Hawkwatch. With an Executive directive of 'More wine, less talk!' ringing in their ears, Gordon Bellerby and John Stevens first set about choosing the wines to be offered to members for tasting. (Rumour has it that this vital step entailed several visits to the winery when John was in the area and/or the hawks were quiet.) Their efforts were not in vain - in a straw poll conducted at the end of the evening members were unanimous in praising this year's wine tasting as the 'Best Ever!'. It was followed by another excellent meal served by Pierre's Catering.

In the short business meeting which followed, Treasurer John Stevens outlined out the NPH's financial position and President Mike Street gave a brief 'State of the Hawkwatch' address. The slate of Officers nominated for the coming year was presented and all were elected by acclamation.

The evening's guest speaker, Mike Cadman of the Canadian Wildlife Service, then gave a most interesting talk, accompanied by excellent slides, on the purpose and range of activity involved in the Wildlife Watcher's Program, touching on the place of hawkwatching in it. With governments actively doing what they can to downplay environmental issues and move them out of the spotlight, the role of volunteers is becoming increasingly important.

The traditional bucket raffle run by Roslynne Price and Wolfgang Luft featured many nice prizes, including a painting by Dave Copeland depicting the arrival of the American Swallow-tailed Kite at Beamer in 1994, a beautiful hand painted sweatshirt by Laurie Mackenzie, and two superb carvings by Steve Oneschuk who, sadly, had passed away just 10 days before.

A very interesting and enjoyable evening was had by all who attended.

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NPH 1996 OPEN HOUSE BIGGEST EVER

The previous evening's weather forecast for this year's Open House on Good Friday, April 5, was doubtful at best. On that morning dark low clouds covered most of the Toronto area, but at Grimsby there was not a cloud in the sky for almost the whole day! This was a major factor as close to 1000 people, the largest number ever, turned out at Beamer Memorial Conservation Area.

We didn't get an Open House eagle this time, but the first Osprey of the year turned up about 9:30AM, to be followed by five more before the end of the day! More than 500 Turkey Vultures and 125 Red-tailed Hawks made up 95% of the day's flight and were spaced well enough apart that most visitors were able to get a sense of what the migration is all about.

While the weather elsehwere prevented us from releasing a rehabilitated Red-tailed Hawk, there was plenty to do when the birds slowed down. Carla Carlson again presented her chidren's program to two good sized groups of mostly attentive kids, and area naturalists' clubs and other interested groups brought their displays to Beamer. As usual, Bruce Duncan's talks on the migration were well attended. Once again we sold out of George Coker's bluebird boxes (all proceeds to NPH) and many visitors made donations as well.

See you next year at the Open House - Good Friday - weather permitting.

THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

by Mike Street

Again this year the hawkwatch was over almost as soon as it had begin. Did 75 days really go by? As you will see in Wolfgang Luft's summary of the season, the NPH had a pretty good year. Hawk numbers were average but we had some excitement. Our membership is holding well and we are reaching people with our message about the birds; more and more people are coming out to enjoy the raptor migration.

As in 1995 Gordon Bellerby, assisted by Paul Summerskill, had most days covered before the season even began. George Meyers looked after Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays again this year, and Walter Klabunde was out on Tuesdays and Thursdays to tally the birds seen by other members acting as his 'eyes.'

The 1996 Open House went very well. Glenn Barnett, Bruce Duncan, Mary Ellen Hebb, Wolfgang Luft, John Stevens, and Roslynne Price all helped out. Special thanks to Carla Carlson for again looking after the kids' program, and to George Coker for donating proceeds from the sale of the bluebird boxes to the NPH.

Our annual dinner was excellent, with an outstanding winetasting arranged by Gordon Bellerby and John Stevens. I hope that these two will repeat their work as our collective '*Sommelier*' next year. Guest Speaker Mike Cadman's talk was well received by all - birders and non-birders alike. Thanks also to Roslynne and Wolfgang who again looked after the bucket raffle.

The Hawk Education 'School' operated once more this season on weekends from the end of March to the end of April and was appreciated by those who took advantage of it. People want to learn about the birds and the migration, and the NPH has something to offer. Next year we hope to have a one or two evening indoor session on raptor identification before the season begins, with a follow-up at Beamer once the flight gets underway.

A separate report on the HMANA Eastern Great Lakes Conference 1996 is elsewhere in this newsletter. I urge you to read it to get an idea of some of the many aspects of hawkwatching which exist beyond merely watching and counting birds. I remain impressed with the dedication of the people involved in hawkwatching, especially those who earn their living in the field. Public

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NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH EXECUTIVE 1996

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PRESIDENT: Mike Street, 73 Hatton Drive, Ancaster, ON L9G 2H5 (905) 648-3737
VICE-PRESIDENT: Mary Ellen Hebb, 32 Maplewood St, St. Catharines, ON L2M 3P1 (905) 937-7671
SECRETARY/MEMBERSHIP: Glenn Barnett, 87 Highland Park Dr., Dundas, ON L9H 6G5 (905) 628-2093
TREASURER: John Stevens, 1365 Bayview Ave; Unit 3, Toronto, ON M4G 3A5 (416) 484-4079
COUNTERS/EDUCATION: Paul Summerskill, 37 Ann Street, St. Catharines, ON L2N 5E9 (905) 934-7887
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EDITOR: (vacant)
FACILITIES: (vacant)

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awareness of and interest in raptor migration is growing and should help in conservation efforts, and groups like the NPH can help in this process.

As you will see from the list, several members of the executive have retired. My sincere thanks to Gordon Bellerby, John Barker, Rob Dobos and Dave Gascoigne for the work they have done for all of us in the NPH. Welcome to Wolfgang Luft who signed on as our statistician and has been busy putting the data into the computer for the report tables you see in this newsletter. We are in need of an Editor of the Newsletter. Anyone with some computer skills and word processing knowledge may be able to help. The job is not onerous and a certain President will be grateful!

STEVE ONESCHUK

One of the vacancies on the executive list was left by the sudden passing of Steve Oneschuk. Many people knew Steve by reputation - Teacher, Professional Football Player, Champion Wood Carver. Not as many knew him as we did, as someone who really enjoyed birds - all birds - and as 'Volunteer Extraordinary'. There was a poignant moment at our annual dinner when it came time to draw for the beautiful carved head of a Golden Eagle Steve had donated.

I got to the point where I watched what I said when Steve was around - simply a mention of NPH needing something and it would magically appear. "A sign for the Education effort?" How about two, each with a different painting? "A sign for the donation box?" Ditto. "The weather station is broken? Not any more, and by the way, the two-piece wire is now a single line." "Mike, we need a shelf for the store room to keep things from getting wet. It'll be up next week." It was, and he was gone two days later. We will miss him for all this, but especially as a friend.

A TOWER FOR BEAMER?

For some years now the NPH has debated the need for a tower at Beamer. Some people simply don't want to mess with tradition. Some were concerned that a tower would cause our set of statistics to become skewed. Others pointed out that the trees had grown a lot in the last 20 years and that in itself could have done a job on the numbers. In the end a consensus was reached - more or less - that a tower would certainly give our counters more time to make good identifications, and that although a 'blip' may result in the numbers, it would even out over time.

Last year member Bill Wilson brought to our attention a tower designed for and installed by the Grand River Conservation Authority at two of its properties. This tower had several advantages. First, it was steel - meaning the nasties who visit Beamer once in a while would have difficulty destroying it. Second, it was a proven design acceptable to an area Conservation Authority.

With this in hand we asked for and received permission from the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority to build a tower in the scrub area north of the circle at Beamer. This was granted by the NPCA's Board. The next step was for our primary contacts at NPCA, Gord Harry and Shelley Dunn, to formally request a go-ahead for the tower from the Niagara Escarpment Commission. After public notices were posted at the site and mailed to neighbours, this approval was also received.

So what do we have to do now? Well, find $10-15,000 for one thing. Determine if we want any changes and have the design reviewed by an engineering firm. Find out what the steel will cost. Obtain quotes for construction. Get a building permit. Prepare footings. There's more, but I won't bore you - because I want to ask for your help. Anyone who can assist us in getting one or more of these items at cost or by way of a partial or whole donation (tax receipts may be available), is asked to help. If anyone would like to take on the task of organizing this whole operation, that too would be appreciated.

ONE FOR THE GOOD GUYS!

Sometimes - especially in the face of governments which don't seem to care about the environment or, worse, seem to be actively trying to take a shot at it - we wonder if we're accomplishing anything. Well, here's a bit of really good news.

In Newsletter No. 11 Roslynne Price, reporting on the 1995 Open house, mentioned the Peregrine Falcon which had been released that day and wrote, "... Who knows, perhaps one day this bird, or one of the others we have released, will come back to nest at Beamer? We can always dream!"

Little did she know!!!

This summer the adult male Peregrine Falcon at Toronto's King Edward Hotel, known as 'Kingsley', got close enough to a questar scope that Ted Armstrong of the Ministry of Natural Resources was able to get enough of the band number to identify the bird. It had been hacked from Akron, Ohio in early September 1992, having come originally from South Dakota Raptor Trust. Found injured in November 1992 in Windsor, ON, he was rehabilitated by Dr. Bruce Hunter at the University of Guelph and the Owl Rehabilitation Centre at Vineland, and re-released at - you guessed it! - Beamer Memorial Conservation Area in Grimsby on Good Friday 1993.

The Peregrine's original name, being from US stock, was "Pounce de Leon". At press time it was uncertain if Kingsley would get his original name back. Apparently he is a pretty good hunter!

That's it for this time. See you at one or more of the fall hawkwatch sites as we kill time until next spring.

NPH HOSTS EASTERN GREAT LAKES HMANA MEETING

by Mike Street

The fourth bi-annual meeting of the Eastern Great Lakes group of the Hawk Migration Association of North America (HMANA) was held on August 10 at Mountsberg Conservation Area just north of Hamilton in Campbellville, Ontario.

Hosted by the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch, the get-together was attended by representatives of most of the hawkwatches on Lake Erie, Lake Huron and Lake Ontario including Braddock Bay, Hawk Cliff, Holiday Beach, Greater Toronto, Niagara Peninsula, Port Huron, Ottawa (Ohio), Southeastern Michigan (formerly Erie MetroPark) and Tobermory.

The Eastern Great Lakes meeting is an informal gathering held to allow hawkwatchers in the region to get together and compare notes. This year's discussion was as wide-ranging as it was at the previous three. What follows is Part 1 of an edited version of the notes I made during the day. Part 2 will be in the next newsletter.

COLLECT OTHER DATA?

The first topic raised was the perennial question of whether or not hawkwatches should try to gather data other than what is on the HMANA form, and if so, what data and how?

If extra data is to be gathered, standardized sheets are necessary. The HMANA sheets are for whole continent which makes this difficult for narrower studies. Special forms may be necessary - Braddock Bay, for example, has one for Rough-legged Hawks. Any hawkwatch with existing special forms was asked to send samples to Braddock Bay.

Sites with many volunteers have difficulty standardizing and/or getting people to take extra data. If new data is to be obtained, it may be better to focus clearly on one subject for a season or two. It is important to state clearly the questions being asked and the reasons for them, as this will give people more incentive to gather the data. We must also keep in mind that some people don't want to get deeply into data - they just want to enjoy the hawks.

Out of this came a proposal to develop a small project to look more closely at the apparent drop in numbers of Sharp-shinned Hawks. The ratio of adults to immatures and gender will be important. Bruce Duncan, Bob Pettit and Mark Shieldcastle will consult some of the population study people (Kerlinger, Goodrich, etc.) and try to work up something for next year.

PLUMAGE VARIATIONS

A difficulty we all experience is that people sometimes use different terms for the same plumages, for example in describing the various stages of the Bald Eagle (well covered in a 1989 *Wilson Bulletin*). This can also happen with colour morphs.

Standardized illustrations of raptor plumages are needed. The New Jersey silhouette sheet is terrific, but the plumage patterns are mainly for fall birds and many Great Lakes counts are in the spring. A project for the Eastern Great Lakes group might be to develop a silhouette diagram for spring hawkwatches.

It was agreed that the best place to disseminate this kind of information would be to to put plumage pattern guides is in new editions of existing handbooks such as the *Peterson Guide to Hawks* and *Hawks in Flight*. The latter is being revised now.

STATISTICS

The old saw that there are "Lies, damned Lies, and Statistics!" comes up in hawkwatching too, but there is agreement on the main points.

Statistical significance and biological significance are not the same and may not have the same meaning. The former deals with whether or not the data set really provides information, while the latter deals with whether or not the information provided is valuable to the study.

The important part of statistics is good sample design. First comes the question, then the sample design, then gathering the data, and finally the analyis. If the design is wrong, the data won't be useful in answereing the question

Part of the discussion focussed on whether or not the data we are now gathering was really useful. The consensus seemed to be that, although there are flaws, all hawkwatch data is or will be useful if applied properly. It appears there is no doubt the existing data provides good information on migration patterns and trends, but it probably won't help with population studies because the studies weren't designed for that question.

The number of birds counted per hour of coverage seem to have the most value. If coverage goes up and so do counts it may or may not be significant, but if coverages goes up and counts drop it may be important. Maintaining or improving the amount and quality of coverage is key.

An excellent suggestion was to look for a local or area university which may have a student who could use our databases for a project. Both parties may get valuable information from such a study.

(To be continued)

Summary of the 1996 Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch

by Wolfgang Luft

This was the year of the tenuous spring. We had soft gentle hints, delayed but still detectableable, only to be pounded by a late and an even later winter blast. The birds reacted by delaying their overall flight almost to the last moment. When all was said and written the year turned out quite well with a tally of 13,103 birds - right on our average, so nothing to moan about.

Moaning did go on though for some dedicated counters who came from far and wide only to have zero counts for 8 hours watching. Others gave up when rain or worse weather was already apparent when they got out of bed. In all we had 10 zero days, as well as 11 further days of fewer than 10 birds. Because of the zero days the total number of count hours, 454, was well below average, but the overall birds per hour figure was 28.8, above the average of 26.2.

There was only one day where the count was over 1000 birds (April 28) and a further 2 days at close to 950 (March 16, April 18). The highest May day was 238, but a total count of over 1000 for 15 days in May indicates a steady flight. The Bird of the Year was the Swainson's Hawk seen on April 18. The biggest day, April 28, was also the best with a record 16 eagles, 12 Bald and 4 Golden! The 2946 Turkey Vultures, while slightly below our record high of 3189 in 1994, still shows increasing TVs in Ontario.

Good counts were recorded for most birds without setting any records, either high or low. The Cooper's Hawk count was quite good at 295, down a bit from the record 311 in 1990 (there is always a possibility of repeatedly counting the resident pair, although we were as diligent as possible to eliminate the problem.) We did get good looks at display flights by these two.

Similarly, the good Northern Harrier tally may have been coloured a bit by a pair which may have been nesting nearby. Bald Eagles were very well represented and here we did not have a problem of over counting due to resident birds. Sharp-shinned Hawks were down to average level but were steady in their flight as well as being entertaining at buzzing the owl. In fact this was a good year for owl attacks with Broadwings, Cooper's and even Red-Tails taking part. We won't talk about tourists who were also gulled, will we?

One bird which seems to have had a bad season was the Red-shouldered Hawk; let's hope it was only an off year. This was offset, in part, by the record Golden Eagle count of 13 which surpassed our earlier high of 12. All three falcons were seen but their numbers were uninspiring, to say the least.

There was a debate among several people including the author as to who was the 'sacrificial' observer whose absence was bringing good luck to the rest. We managed to miss all the good birds (Swainson's on April 18 and all the eagles on April 28), but we shall see you all next year.

The NPH Committee would like to thank all the following volunteers who donated their time to be counters despite the sometimes not so rewarding days: Roy Baker, John Barker, Glenn Barnett, Gordon Bellerby, Bouwe Bergsma, Barry Charriere, Jim Coey, Dave Copeland, Bob Curry, Rob Dobos, Bruce Duncan, Chris Escott, Lois Evans, Denys Gardiner, Gerry Guild, Kevin Hannah, Mary Ellen Hebb, Walter Klabunde, Wolfgang Luft, Don Malena, Kevin McLaughlin, George Meyers, Matt Mills, George Naylor, Steve Oneschuk, Roslynne Price, Tom Reavley, Paul Rose, Jack Ryan, Ron Scovell, Bill Smith, John Stevens, Mike Street, Paul Summerskill and Peter Whelan.

1996 NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH MONTHLY COUNTS

	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	TOTALS
Black Vulture	0	0	0	0
Turkey Vulture	320	2583	43	2946
Osprey	0	51	5	56
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite	0	0	0	0
Bald Eagle	13	18	2	33
Northern Harrier	12	137	23	172
Sharp-shinned Hawk	109	2508	673	3290
Cooper's Hawk	98	177	20	295
Northern Goshawk	20	16	1	37
Red-shouldered Hawk	541	151	2	694
Broad-winged Hawk	0	1371	179	1550
Swainson's Hawk	0	1	0	1
Red-tailed Hawk	2102	1374	108	3584
Ferruginous Hawk	0	0	0	0
Rough-legged Hawk	49	47	2	98
Golden Eagle	6	7	0	13
American Kestrel	10	43	8	61
Merlin	2	18	2	22
Peregrine Falcon	0	1	1	2
Gyrfalcon	0	0	0	0
Prairie Falcon	0	0	0	0
Unid. Accipiter	5	18	0	23
Unid. Buteo	85	94	4	183
Unid. Eagle	0	0	0	0
Unid. Falcon	1	4	1	6
Unid. Raptor	5	31	1	37
Total Raptors	3378	8650	1075	13103
Hours Counted	182	187.1	85.4	454.5
Raptors/Hour	18.6	46.2	12.6	28.8

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Counts – March 1996

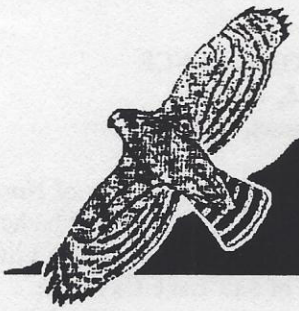
Date –>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Totals
Black Vulture																																0
Turkey Vulture																5		5	1			1	1	5	14	14	30	31	134	54	25	320
Osprey																																0
Am. Swallow–tailed Kite																																0
Bald Eagle												2	2	1		3		1	1							1	1				1	13
Northern Harrier														1			2	2										1	1	2	3	12
Sharp–shinned Hawk		2								2	3	1	1	4		5	6	5	7				1	1	6	2	11	7	4	14	27	109
Cooper's Hawk											1	1	1		3	12	4	7	3				1	6	5	1	9	10	15	10	9	98
Northern Goshawk				1								1	3	1	1	1		1						1	1		1		7	1		20
Red–shouldered Hawk											2		5	2	5	112	55	56	11					11	13		108	28	34	87	12	541
Broad–winged Hawk																																0
Swainson's Hawk																																0
Red–tailed Hawk		27		25			8			6	18	46	28	20	52	744	173	143	58		1		7	14	25	5	288	94	94	132	94	2102
Ferruginous Hawk																																0
Rough–legged Hawk			2									2	2			17	6	2	1		1		1		2		5	1		5	2	49
Golden Eagle		1											1			2	1	1														6
American Kestrel														1		2	3						1		1				1		1	10
Merlin																		1							1							2
Peregrine Falcon																																0
Gyrfalcon																																0
Prairie Falcon																																0
Unid. Accipiter																		2										1		1	1	5
Unid. Buteo										2		1		1		42	13	12	1					6			2	1		1	3	85
Unid. Eagle																																0
Unid. Falcon										1																						1
Unid. Raptor															1			2							2							5
Total Raptors	0	30	2	26	0	0	8	0	0	11	24	54	43	31	62	945	263	240	83	0	2	1	12	44	70	23	455	174	290	307	178	3378
Hours Counted	3.5	7	5	6.5	0	0	5	3	7.4	7	6.8	7	7.2	7	7.8	8	7.5	6.5	6.6	0	5	2.5	7	8.5	4	7	8.2	7	7.5	8.5	8	182
Wind Direction	SW	SSW	SW–	W	SNO	SNO	NE	WNW	W		SW	SW	L	S	N–N	N–E	E	N	NNE	ALL	NW	N	W	S–S	SW	WSW	NE	NNE	E	E	E	

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Counts – April 1996

Date –>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		Totals
Black Vulture																																0
Turkey Vulture		141			502	175	58	563	161	116	4			273	196	9	59	174	11	36	16	12		4	16	13	2	42				2583
Osprey					6	1					1			6	1	1		7		2	1			2	13	4	5	1				51
Am. Swallow–tailed Kite																																0
Bald Eagle		2				1									1			2										12				18
Northern Harrier	1	1			1	1	1	3	1	2	19			3	21	1		35	3	3	2	3		8	7	7	2	11	1			137
Sharp–shinned Hawk		6	1		7	33	7	38	49	13	27			47	165	11	19	453	258	127	104	36		180	298	377	32	218		2		2508
Cooper's Hawk		9	1		8	14	2	12	11	3	1	1		7	23	1	1	19	4	2	13			1	11	11	4	18				177
Northern Goshawk	1					2		1	12																							16
Red–shouldered Hawk		40	1		5	26	4	7		1				6	32	1	2	18	2		1			2				3				151
Broad–winged Hawk																		39	53	5	35			283	111	87	28	730				1371
Swainson's Hawk																		1														1
Red–tailed Hawk	1	108	3		127	223	7	78	58	8	6			198	193	1	15	175	25	5	12			8	30	8	9	76				1374
Ferruginous Hawk																																0
Rough–legged Hawk		3			7	3		5	3					4	6			7	1	1	1			2	1	1		2				47
Golden Eagle								2										1										4				7
American Kestrel		1						1	1		1				8	1		12	3	3	1			1	4	5		1				43
Merlin															3		1		2	3				1	6			1		1		18
Peregrine Falcon																	1															1
Gyrfalcon																																0
Prairie Falcon																																0
Unid. Accipiter		1			2	6	1	1		1						2			1	1	1			1								18
Unid. Buteo		3				41		1						15	25	1		4						1				3				94
Unid. Eagle																																0
Unid. Falcon															2				1	1												4
Unid. Raptor					3	4								1	1		1	9		2	1			1			1	7				31
Total Raptors	3	315	6	0	668	530	80	712	296	144	59	1	0	560	677	29	99	956	364	191	188	51	0	495	497	513	83	1129	1	3	0	8650
Hours Counted	4.5	7.6	3.5	3	9.5	6.5	5.8	9	7.2	5	8.5	2.2	0	9	6.8	4.6	7.2	9.2	6.5	8.2	7.5	3	2	6.3	9.5	8	7.5	8.5	3	8		187
Wind Direction	N–E	WNW	E	NE	ENE	NNE	NW	W–S	N–N	N	SW	N	RAIN	E–N	E	W	NW	WSW	SW	W	W	NE	S	SW	N	W	NW	S	NE	SW			

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Counts – May 1996

Date –>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Totals
Black Vulture																																0
Turkey Vulture		3	3		10		4	4	1					18																		43
Osprey	1	1			1			1					1																			5
Am. Swallow–tailed Kite																																0
Bald Eagle														2																		2
Northern Harrier	1	4	2		1	3	1	2	2	1		1	1	4																		23
Sharp–shinned Hawk	31	170	63	2	90	22	47	31	8	18		4	12	139	36																	673
Cooper's Hawk		10	1		2	1		1					1	3	1																	20
Northern Goshawk														1																		1
Red–shouldered Hawk					1										1																	2
Broad–winged Hawk	1	32	6		92	7	20	2				1	4	7	7																	179
Swainson's Hawk																																0
Red–tailed Hawk	6	12	3		15	25	14	12	1				2	9	9																	108
Ferruginous Hawk																																0
Rough–legged Hawk		1													1																	2
Golden Eagle																																0
American Kestrel	1	1			1		4	1																								8
Merlin							1			1																						2
Peregrine Falcon							1																									1
Gyrfalcon																																0
Prairie Falcon																																0
Unid. Accipiter																																0
Unid. Buteo		4																														4
Unid. Eagle																																0
Unid. Falcon									1																							1
Unid. Raptor					1																											1
Total Raptors	41	238	78	2	214	58	92	54	13	20	0	6	21	183	55	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1075
Hours Counted	6.5	8	4	1	5.2	6.5	7	6.5	8.7	5.5	0	7	6.3	6.7	6.5																	85.4
Wind Direction	VAR	NNE	VAR	VAR	NW	N	VAR	NE	NE	N	WSW	N	VAR	S	NW				--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	



Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Newsletter

Newsletter No. 14, February 1997

LAURIE GOODRICH TO SPEAK AT 1997 BANQUET

Our annual banquet and general meeting will be held on Saturday April 19, once again at Stoney Ridge Winery's Puddicombe Farm on Hwy. 8 in Winona, starting at 4:30PM. Our Guest Speaker for the evening will be Laurie Goodrich of the Hawk Mountain Preserve in Pennsylvania, where organized hawkwatching started over 60 years ago. Now Senior Naturalist, Laurie has worked at Hawk Mountain since 1984. In addition to some of the history of Hawk Mountain, Laurie will tell us about its activities and the various programs she is involved with currently.

Socializing and the bucket raffle begin at 4:30PM. (PLEASE NOTE - the winery shop may close at 5PM, so come on time if you want to buy wine to take home.) Wine tasting starts at 5:15. Last year's very popular format will be repeated - Gordon Bellerby and John Stevens will select the wines for the evening in advance, allowing us to make sure they are chilled properly if required. With a little luck we may even get to watch the tail end of the day's migration form the balcony while tasting. Dinner will start around 6:15, followed by bucket raffle draws and a short business meeting before Laurie's talk.

This will be an enjoyable evening so get your tickets now. The room can accommodate 42 people; 30 tickets are still available, priced at $20 for members and $25 for non-members. Call Bruce Duncan, Wolfgang Luft, Roslynne Price or Mike Street to make arrangements.

WEEKDAY COUNTERS NEEDED URGENTLY

Counters are urgently needed on weekdays this season. George Meyers, who has looked after Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays for the last few years, has had to relinquish his post for medical reasons. This means that we need additional help for the 30+ days George covered. If you can take an extra weekday or two it will be a big help.

Gordon Bellerby will again schedule Counters, assisting Paul Summerskill who is the overall coordinator of Counters. Please call Gordon at (905) 468-3961 to schedule 1997 hawkwatching day(s). Gordon will be away Feb. 14-28.

We especially need coverage at the beginning and end of the season. While early March can be slow, and in May most people want to head to the woods for warblers, our work also needs attention. If enough people offer to help, it should be easy to fill in all the dates.

If you are interested in learning to become a counter, be sure to let Gordon know. Many of our observers are glad to share the work and help newcomers, and we will also have our Hawk ID Workshop on weekends from March 22 through April 27 (and see box below).

NPH will again do some research on the flight patterns of raptors in the wider Grimsby area, from the shore of Lake Ontario to about 10km inland (see 'Intercept Line', P. 2) so additional observers are needed on that day. We know that people don't want to miss the main action at Beamer, but the information produced by the special count could lead to better sighting days in the future.

PRE-SEASON IDENTIFICATION SLIDE WORKSHOP SET FOR MARCH 2, 2PM

Come one! Come all! The Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch invites learners and veterans alike to a pre-season Hawk ID Workshop from 2-4PM on Sunday, March 2. Presented by Barry Cherriere and Bruce Duncan, slides of raptors likely to be seen at Beamer CA will be shown and discussed individually. A quiz will be held at the end. Location: Canada Centre for Inland Waters, Burlington. On the QEW from the west, take the North Shore Blvd./Eastport Drive exit, stay left on the ramp, follow Eastport to the first traffic light, turn right; from the east, take the Eastport Drive exit (just after Burlington/Woodward exits), follow Eastport over the lift bridge to the light, turn left under the Skyway, go straight ahead.

No Charge **Visitors Welcome**

SEVENTH ANNUAL OPEN HOUSE
FRIDAY, MARCH 28

NPH will again invite the public to view the migrating hawks on March 28 when we hold our seventh annual Open House. Bad weather predicted for the 1996 Open House did not materialize - although poor elsewhere the day was almost cloudless at Beamer CA - and close to 700 birds were seen, including the first 6 Osprey of the year. Let's hope for the right weather and a good flight again in 1997. In case of really bad weather, however, events will be postponed to Saturday, March 29.

Members of the Hawkwatch stationed in the center of the circle and at the point will help visitors to see and identify raptors passing over Beamer. (Volunteers are needed - please contact Mike Street.) A highlight of Open House day for the past few years has been the release of a rehabilitated raptor. This year we hope to see a Red-tailed Hawk released around 1PM.

The very welcome coffee truck will be parked in the circle and the special kids program with Carla Carlson of Niagara Nature Tours will run at 11AM and noon. There will be short 'Hawk Talks' for visitors on the hour from 11AM-2PM and displays from birding and nature organizations, including our hosts, the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, and the Ontario Field Ornithologists.

Be sure to invite your family and friends; it should be a good day for them and for the birds too.

INTERCEPT LINE TO OPERATE APRIL 20

The Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch will again conduct an Intercept Line on Sunday, April 20. From 10:00 am to 1:00 pm, members of NPH will set up a 'line' of hawk counters, stationed about 1-2 km apart, from the lake south to Beamer, and then south again. More volunteers are needed this year as we would like to cover a larger area by extending the Intercept Line as far as Highway 20.

Each group will count hawks in its part of the sky (and we hope there will be many Broad-wings) for the three hours. All counts will be collected, overlaps noted and a final tally drawn up.

The purpose of this work is to learn more about the migration by assessing how much of the day's total raptor flight is actually sampled at Beamer. We know that on some days birds migrate to the north or south, instead of coming over the parking lot. As more Intercept Line data is obtained we may be able to establish a better picture of the Niagara Peninsula flight during different weather conditions.

Please contact Bruce Duncan at Beamer or at 519-622-4709 (evenings) if you would like to help out again or participate for the first time.

HMANA VIII CONFERENCE
June 12-15, 1997
Snowbird Resort, Utah

The eighth Hawk Migration Association of North America Bi-ennial Conference, HMANA VIII, will be held from June 12-15 inclusive at the Snowbird Resort in Little Cottonwood Canyon, just east of Salt Lake City, UT.

The conference is being hosted by Hawkwatch International. Conference Coordinator Trent Lenz advises that hotel rates at Snowbird will be around $66US for up to four people in one room. While the conference registration fee has not yet been set, Trent advises that they plan to have a registration package including six meals, and another package without meals for people camping or wanting to make other arrangements.

The focus of HMANA VIII - Western Raptors - fits the location. Hawk migration will be a topic, and the conference theme will be Conservation.

Sessions organizers are trying to arrange include:

- Using Hawkwatch International data to analyze status and trends of western raptors back to 1977
- An update on the Swainson's Hawk problem in Argentina (Are chemicals still being used ?, etc.)
- Status of the Ferruginous Hawk and Northern Goshawk, two species of concern in the west
- An update on Golden Eagle migration through Alberta
- The Veracruz project
- Banding: why, what is learned, how banding and counting help support one another
- A descriptive summary of each of the 13 western sites - 10 with hawkwatches and 3 without - monitored by Hawkwatch International and what is being learned
- A general paper session

Among speakers being invited are Pete Dunne, co-author of *Hawks in Flight*, Robert Mesta of the California Condor Recovery Project in Arizona, and Peter Sherrington, discoverer of the Golden Eagle flyway in Alberta.

Field trips into the mountains and the desert will feature Golden Eagle, Ferruginous Hawk, Swainson's Hawk, Northern Goshawk, and Prairie Falcon, with Peregrine Falcon possible. One full day trip and one morning trip will be included in the conference fee. An all day pre-conference field trip on June 11 is possible if there is enough interest. Post-conference tours will be arranged if there is interest, possibly including one to Snake River, Idaho.

For reservations or more information, contact HMANA VIII at P.O. Box 660, Salt Lake City, UT 84110. Phone (801) 524-8511 or toll free (800) 726-4295. Trent Lenz can be reached by email at: trent.lenz@m.cc.utah.edu

NOTES ON RAPTOR IDENTIFICATION WITH EMPHASIS ON THE NORTHERN GOSHAWK

(Accipiter gentilis atricapilus)

by George Meyers

(In the 1950s George Meyers helped 'discover' the Niagara Peninsula raptor migration route. A mainstay of the Hawkwatch, George's outlook on life and raptors is not the same as everyone else's. In the following article some of his philosophy comes through, on the way to helping beginning and advanced hawkatchers alike learn more about identifying Northern Goshawks in the field. It is pure George. - Ed.)

In the last decade several excellent books dealing specifically with North American raptor identification have been published. (Buy them and memorize them.) Because of these recent books I hesitate to speak or write on the subject for fear of litigation for plagiarism. However, much of my knowledge has been acquired by continuous field observation since 1954 and some reading, especially Beebe. Some could say that I am probably addicted, when still doing it after 43 years. Similarly, I'm addicted to the genera Quercus in the Fagaceae, Carya in Iuglandaceae and Smilax in Liliaceae.

I am simultaneously blessed and cursed by being both hypermnesic and hyperacusic. When I tell people that I can vividly recall my first Cattle Egret at Grimsby on May 10, 1956, I am not being facetious. People hearing this stare in disbelief, their mouths agape in shock or laughter. What I don't tell them is the rest of the story. I remember the ambience, the temperature, the relative humidity, the wind speed and direction, the degree of leaf out, the flowers in bloom, the sounds, the smells, etc., etc. It is like a trip to the holodeck. It was only recently that I learned that most humans are not like this.

For me, raptor watching is a profound spiritual experience, just the opposite of the pedantic accountant/listener types counting individual feathers on a sandpiper with powerful optics.

At Beamer Park there are only 8 seconds (unless a bird circles) to see and identify a bird. *This is no time to be pedantic.* One has to use a holistic, gestalt, G.I.S.S. approach. At Beamer before leafout I often spot, identify and document a bird before it clears the trees. Later, after it clears the trees, someone yells, "Here comes another one", which can be most disconcerting, especially after repetition over hours, days and weeks.

Except for falcons, juvenile raptors' first flight feathers (primaries, secondaries and rectrices) are the longest they will ever have, and they survive one or several body molts. Thus immatures have different configurations than adults and they might as well be treated as discrete species for I.D. purposes. This is amplified by often profound plumage differences.

Generally the larger the species, the longer it takes to molt to adult plumage (this may not coincide with breeding) and to acquire an adult voice. Extreme examples in our area are American Kestrels that are fledged looking superficially like adults and Bald Eagles that take 5 to 6 years to achieve perfect adulthood. The Northern Goshawk falls between these parameters. I have seen a Goshawk with adult body, head and coverts, but juvenile flight feathers.

Adult sexual plumage differences are major in Northern Harrier, American Kestrel and Merlin, minor in others such as Rough-legged Hawk and Golden Eagle, and virtually non existent in most of the rest, eg. buzzards (buteos), vultures, Bald Eagles and kites. Sexing plumage is subtle but possible in two accipiters and two falcons in our area. Adult Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks, taiga Merlins and 'anatum' Peregrines all have subtle, blended, hard to describe mantles. It can be stated with certainty, however, that if they are brownish they are female and bluish they are male. This will only confirm what you had already decided about the sex from the G.I.S.S.

Another factor in the equation, however, is that on hawks and owls, as in humans, pigments fade with age. Therefore, an aging male Peregrine or Cooper's would have a greyish cast rather than a blue, leading to confusion with Goshawk. Additionally, adult male 'Richardsonii' Merlins and adult male 'tundrius' Peregrines have a pearl grey mantle with no hint of blue.

One cold January day 100 passerines hit my windows at once. This was my clue to look quickly outside. Going away was a large raptor. Without binoculars (which wouldn't have helped) all I got was a grey mantle and wing flap. Was it a Gyrfalcon, male Peregrine or a Goshawk? The bird had a rapid but shallow fluid wingbeat, with the body the fulcrum and the wave accelerating to the tip, resulting in a brush-like blur distally. It was the Peregrine.

Many subtleties add up to result in a determination, the least of which is colour. For example, the back lit tails of several raptors, notably Ospreys and Red-shouldered Hawks, especially non-adults, appear rusty, pinkish or even dull red, resulting in them being declared Redtails! One wag called this the red shift, as in universal expansion, as the birds were going away.

If a distant approaching buteo turns into an accipiter, it is a Goshawk. If a distant accipiter turns into a buteo, it is a Red-shoulder.

To my eyes, a Sharpy is a mourning dove, a Cooper's is a pheasant and a Goshawk is a Gyrfalcon. Another analogy, in the same ascending order, is ping-pong paddle, tennis racquet and four leaf clover.

Goshawks are powerful, robust birds, especially the females. The 'S' curve of the trailing edge of the wing (straightish fore and aft in the Cooper's) makes them look pointy winged and when gliding, coupled with a humpbacked look, remind me of a Gyrfalcon. When soaring they remind me of a buteo. To my eyes a Goshawk looks more like a giant Sharpy than a large Cooper's.

Some texts emphasize the supercilliary stripe for positive Goshawk identification. However, the other two accipiters can have the stripes as adults though to a lesser degree, and all three immature accipiters and immature Broad-winged Hawks & Red-shoulders can have buffy ones. Texts also state a white supercilliary imposed on a black head. I see a black cap and face imposed on a white head. (I'm left handed). On one occasion, an adult Northern Goshawk cleared the trees head on, coming fast. All I got were the black sides of the face and the speed. For the first nanosecond, I thought Peregrine.

The tail length of Northern Goshawk is the most variable among all our raptors, however the tail is always wide or broad, looking more like an extension of the body than a tail. The longest (relatively and maybe absolutely) raptor tail I have seen to date was on an immature Northern Goshawk fighting with two Cooper's in the southeast corner near the latrine. Immatures of these two species have tails with bicolour straight banding (Cooper's) or tricolour zig zag banding (Northern Goshawk).

Immature Goshawks also display a unique feature both perched and flying - a line on the upper wing varying from buff to off white. It is the much lighter feather edging of the greater upper wing coverts (primaries & secondaries). This is highly visible and diagnostic.

Some guides are quite misleading regarding undertail coverts. Indeed, adult Goshawks have the fluffiest and the whitest. However, immatures have heavily spotted coverts, flags, bellies and breasts, resulting in what looks to me like a keyboard but others have better described as a checkerboard. Cooper's immatures, by contrast, have immaculate undertail coverts with flags and bellies barely streaked if at all, and sparsely, narrowly and faintly streaked chest. If an immature accipiter at a distance displays dirty flanks, it is a Sharp-shin or a Goshawk. If it appears clean and crisp (as well as lanky) it is a Cooper's.

Finally, if you want to sex your adult Goshawks, first get a feel for the heft of the bird. Then, if the breast is finely barred (actually vermiculated) and minimally streaked, it is male. If it is coarsely barred and maximally streaked, it is female.

There are so many finer points to be shared, but let's leave them for another time.

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THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by Mike Street

My first birding trip of 1997 was a 15 minute jaunt for a Snowy Owl at Hamilton Arport on New Year's Day. A nice immature female and a raptor, but not a hawk or falcon. Three days later I set off to Point Abino to see a Yellow-billed Loon which had made a wrong turn somewhere around Vancouver. As I got out of my car I asked another birder if the loon was still around. He said, "Yes, but did you see the Gyrfalcon?"

Seems that some of the birders were looking at the loon when nearby ducks suddenly took flight. On looking around someone saw the Gyr. What a bonus! I had seen a Gyrfalcon only once before - north of Seattle, WA where it sat on a post for three hours and never did fly. The bird at Point Abino was obviously hungry as it made several passes at prey while we were there, and all the classic falcon features showed clearly. It then perched in a nearby tree and allowed terrific views with telescopes and binoculars. The Yellow-billed Loon came close-in too, by the way. Wow!

March 1 is a Saturday so more members may make it out for the first day of the 23rd season of counting raptors at Beamer CA, depending of course on the weather. (Naturally, my daughter's basketball team is hosting a tournament that day! Maybe I can ....)

For the third year we will be trying to pass on our knowledge to others through the **Hawk ID Workshop**. Many people want to learn to identify raptors but are a bit intimidated by the weekend scrum around the official counter. Having a free service in the middle of the circle has proven popular, so we will repeat it again in 1997 on Saturdays and Sundays from March 22 through April 27. Anyone who wants to learn about identifying raptors is welcome; just look for the sign. Experienced people willing to help the learners are needed. Please contact me.

The membership vote conducted in late December on the **Viewing Tower** was most encouraging. Not only did 70% of the members reply, but the vote was also very positive - 48 for, 1 against. As of this writing (mid-January) the corporate donor's representative has confirmed that the company will supply the steel and erect the tower at Beamer CA. The tower will be 6m to the top of the railing and have a square platform measuring 6m on a side. Because the foundation work needs to be done in relatively warm weather, construction will start sometime this summer and the tower will be ready for the 1998 season. After meeting with the company to work out details we will then work on obtaining the rest of the necessary funding.

Members will recall that last year we lost some of the people who had helped get the Hawkwatch going in 1990 and/or to keep things runing smoothly since. We were able to find replacements for a couple of key posts, but still need an Editor for the newsletter (twice a year) and someone to help maintain the NPH's 'physical plant', things like the weather station and flagpole, signs, shelves, and so on. The work is not onerous, either physically or in terms of time required, but having someone to look after these functions will relieve someone else (me) who is covering both spots and is finding time a little tight. If you can help, or would like more information, my address and phone number are on page 8. Thanks.

See you at Beamer - 1997 REALLY STARTS MARCH 1!

1996 EASTERN GREAT LAKES HMANA MEETING (cont'd)

by Mike Street

The following is the balance of edited notes made during the 1996 meeting of the Eastern Great Lakes Group of the Hawk Migration Association of North America. The meeting was held last August 10 at Mountsberg Conservation Area in Campbellville, Ontario. See NPH Newsletter #13 for Part I.

EDUCATION

Education of both hawkwatch members and the general public is considered very important. Member education tends to focus on identification skills. Public education looks more at helping people learn that raptor migration is taking place in their home area and how many different species are involved.

At Holiday Beach, Bob Pettit teaches an adult education night course - two evenings at a community college plus a day at Holiday Beach CA - for the general public. HBMO is planning a modified version of this as training for new counters or a refresher for established counters. Copies of Bob's course outline are available.

Braddock Bay has found that its Bird of Prey Week brings the general public out in surprising numbers. If the hawks are not moving it can be very boring, so other activities are required, especially for children. Braddock Bay has found that parents interested in hawks are more likely to come out if they know that they can bring their kids and that the kids will have something to keep them occupied. For youngsters, long slide shows or birds overhead may not

(continued on Page 8)

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH MIGRATION CALENDAR FOR BEAMER CONSERVATION AREA

NOTES:

1) Species initials and Right (->) or Left (<-) arrow:

This combination indicates the start or end of the normal (at Beamer) migration period for that species. The same in **bold** type indicates the start or end of a noticeable peak period for that species. The box in which this combination is located indicates the day and month on which the period is likely to start or end.

2) A number, followed by species initials, followed by a slash (/) and a two-digit number:

In this combination the largest number of that species ever seen in one day is given first; the two digit number following the / indicates the year in which this occurred. The box in which this combination is located indicates the day and month on which the event occurred. Example: 655 RS /94 in the March 23 box indicates that the highest number of Red-shouldered Hawks recorded in one day was 655, seen on March 23, 1994.

TV - Turkey Vulture
BV - Black Vulture
OS - Osprey
SK - American Swallow-tailed Kite
BE - Bald Eagle
GE - Golden Eagle
NH - Northern Harrier
SS - Sharp-shinned Hawk
CH - Cooper's Hawk
NG - Northern Goshawk
RS - Red-shouldered Hawk
BW - Broad-winged Hawk
RT - Red-tailed Hawk
SW - Swainson's Hawk
RL - Rough-legged Hawk
FH - Ferruginous Hawk
AK - American Kestrel
ME - Merlin
PF - Peregrine Falcon
GF - Gyrfalcon
PR - Prairie Falcon

The following information, based on 22 years of data from the Beamer Hawkwatch, has been updated to show significant 1996 events:

Largest number of raptors in one season: 19,724 in 1985

MARCH

1 RT-> RL-> CH-> NG-> BE-> GE->	2 NH-> RS-> AK-> TV->	3	4	5	6	7
8 **RL->**	9 **RT->**	10 **AK->**	11	12	13	14 **RS-> NG->** 44 AK /90
15 **CH->** SS->	16 744 RT /96	17	18 **BE->** 7 GE /86	19	20 **TV->**	21
22	23 9 BE /94 655 RS /94	24 11 NG /84	25	26 2 PF /91 7 GE /88 748 TV /88	27 **NH->** OS->	28 2 PF /90
29	30	31				

Largest # of raptors in month: 5670 in March 1988; Largest # of raptors in one day in month: 2080 on March 26, 1988

APRIL

1	2 **<-RS**	3 2 PF /91	4 1 BV /92	5 ME-> PF-> 50 CH /93 28 NH /93	6	7
8 706 RT /87	9	10 **<-RT SS->** BW->	11	12 **OS->** 22 RL /91 16 OS /92	13 1 FH /92	14 28 NH /91
15 **<-TV** 1 SK /94 1 SW /94*	16 **<-BE** 2 PF /90	17	18 1 SW /96* 35 NH /96 1556 SS /76	19 **BW->** 1 PR/95**	20 1 GF /77 1 SW /93	21 1 SW /85 6007 BW /85
22 1 SW /88	23	24 **<-NG**	25 6 ME /96 2 PF /94 1 SW /94*	26	27 1 SW /93*	28 **<-AK** 12BE,4GE /96
29 4 GE /83	30 **<-CH <-RL**					

* Subject to acceptance by Ontario Bird Records Comittee
** First accepted Prairie Falcon record for Ontario

Largest # of raptors in month: 15,012 in April 1984; Largest # of raptors in one day in month: 7007 on April 21, 1985

MAY

1	2	3	4	5 1 SW /89	6 **<-NH <-BW** **<-PF**	7
8	9	10 **<-OS**	11 **<-SS**	12	13 **<-BE**	14
15 <-RL <-ME	16	17	18 <-NG	19	20	21
22	23	24 <-OS <-GE	25 <-RS	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Largest # of raptors in month: 2695 in May 1980; Largest # of raptors in one day in month: 1492 on May 4, 1989

be enough to interest them in hawkwatching. Games, nature trails, easy ID classes, brief slide shows, explanations of why we go hawkwatching and making bird & owl masks are possible activities, with the hope that the hawks themselves will grab a kid's imagination and interest.

Despite potential for giving the wrong message, Braddock Bay finds that demonstrations of live birds are definitely an attraction and benefits, such as the awestruck look in a child's eye, of having live birds far outweigh disadvantages. Such demonstrations are best with birds which are obviously not releasable, and visitors should not be able to pet or pick them up. Names, which give the impression that the birds are pets, should not be used.

Holiday Beach uses birds banded at the site that day to demonstrate plumage and other features before they are released, and also let people donate money to 'adopt' banded birds they have just seen released.

The right image or identity for an event will attract visitors. The name 'Hawk Festival' has been found to be a good one. The best way to get the message out is newspapers, electronic media and flyers to schools.

BANDING RETURNS

Tim O'Day advised that Tobermory started banding in Spring 1994. They see small numbers but interesting species. They have retrapped one bird each from Cape May, Hawk Cliff and Port Huron. Much to Tim's surprise a local diver came up from Lake Huron with a Long-eared Owl leg carrying a band from Braddock Bay!

At Port Huron Dan Miller bands in spring. Most birds he captures are heading south, and most recoveries from Port Huron are made in Canada. Dan has retrapped a couple of birds from SW Ontario. In 1996 he retrapped his first bird from Whitefish Bay, and one of his birds, a Cooper's Hawk, was retrapped 3 days later at Tobermory.

Hawk Cliff has banded more than 60,000 birds, mostly Sharp-shins, with a 1.5% recovery rate, almost all recovered west of the Appalachians. They have retrapped two Golden Eagles from New Brunswick.

Ottawa, OH just started banding in 1994. One of their Red-tails was found that fall in Illinois.

FUTURE PROJECTS

There was general agreement about a need to look at other possible Great Lakes sites in areas not now covered. Is there any information to be gained? If so, what locations would be good? For example, while the tip of the Bruce Peninsula is covered, the lower end of Lake Huron between Sarnia and Owen Sound offers possibilities. Bruce Duncan and John Barker will start the ball rolling on this.

Another project suggested for the group was to investigate theories on how weather affects raptor movement, and test them in our area. The birds move with weather systems, so one area may be good and another dead, and this can apply for days or even weeks. Activity might include a 'flying squad' able to move on short notice to check out the effect (or non-effect) of a given weather system. This information may also be useful in determining whether additional hawkwatching sites are needed, and where. Some data exists, eg. on fall Broad Wing movement at Goderich (J. Miles), and power stations and weather radar get good weather data which might be useful.

A semi-annual Eastern Great Lakes newsletter with a one page summary of each group's totals, activities, unusual sightings, banding results, etc. for the season just ended, was approved. The suggested schedule is Aug. 1 for spring hawkwatches and Feb. 1 for fall groups.

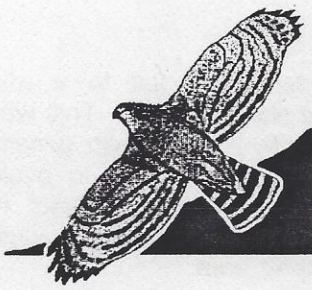
The next Eastern Great Lakes HMANA meeting will be in 1998 at a location to be determined. All present were urged to try to attend the HMANA VIII conference.

HAWKS OVER RED HILL VALLEY

There will be an afternoon outing at 1PM, Sunday, March 9 to observe the Red-tailed Hawk and Red-shouldered Hawk migration over Hamilton's Red Hill Valley. Meet at the King's Forest Ski Hill. Everyone is welcome.

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Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Newsletter

Newsletter No. 15, August 1997

1997 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND BANQUET

The 7th Annual General Meeting and Banquet was held on Saturday, April 19th, at Stoney Ridge Winery's Puddicome Farm in Winona. As in past years, the evening consisted of mostly banquet with a brief general meeting to take care of business.

Hawkwatch members/wine connoisseurs Gordon Bellerby and John Stevens organized another fine wine tasting. After reviewing the '4-S' principle for wine tasting (swirl, sniff, sip, swallow), attendees enjoyed a wide range of Stoney Ridge's award winning wines. When the bottles were empty, Pierre's Catering served an excellent meal.

The Annual Business Meeting included Treasurer John Stevens' outline of the NPH's financial position and President, Mike Street's brief 'President's Report'. Recognition was given to Walter Klabunde as the Hawkwatch's oldest counter at age 90 and Stuart Mackenzie as the youngest counter at age 15. The slate of Officers nominated for the coming year was presented and all were elected by acclamation.

The evening's guest speaker, Laurie Goodrich, Senior Naturalist at the Hawk Mountain Sanctuary in Kempton, Pennsylvania, gave a very interesting talk.

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THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

by Mike Street

On May 15th I was at a very cold Rondeau Provincial Park, looking hard for the few warblers which were about, when I realized it was the last day of the 1997 NPH season. With the hawkwatch itself, the open house and annual dinner, not to mention work, spring break, getting the house ready for summer and indulging in a little non-raptor birding, ten weeks goes very quickly. So many things to do, so little time!

The weather was strange this year. As an experiment I was monitoring the jetstream on a daily basis. This little known weather phenomenon is actually the engine that moves weather systems. You could see how the warm air which normally gets to us in late April and early May was being held back in the southern USA. Internet reports told us that migration was slow and that the bulk of the Broad-wing flight was up to two weeks late in Texas, confirming what we were seeing here. There was likely a big flight of hawks in late May, after we closed down for the year.

As you will see in the migration summary elsewhere in this newsletter, numbers were down from last year and below our 17-year average of 14,400 raptors per season, and we didn't have a single day count over 1,000 birds in 1997. That sounds bad, but the season was far from disappointing.

Good Friday saw over 1,200 human visitors and just under 1,000 raptors come to Beamer CA - both numbers were the best ever for our Open House. At the annual dinner Laurie Goodrich told us about the history and work of the first hawkwatch, Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, and in doing so placed the NPH's efforts in perspective - we are making a contribution. Two Swainson's Hawks in one afternoon was pretty neat, but then came the big event - the Mississippi Kite on May 11th a new species for the Hawkwatch!

More good news! Not only did Costeel Recycling offer to donate the material and construction for our viewing

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HMANA VIII VERY SUCCESSFUL

Anyone who likes learning about raptors would have had great difficulty not enjoying the Hawk Migration Association of North America's eighth Biennial Conference, HMANA VIII. Close to 120 members and speakers gathered from June 12th-15th at the Snowbird Resort in beautiful Little Cottonwood Canyon, just east of Salt Lake City, Utah.

Hosted by Hawkwatch International, the 43 papers and talks given at the conference focussed mainly on Western Raptors. Subjects ranged from Turkey Vulture migration across the Strait of Juan de Fuca from Vancouver Island to Washington state, to use of Hawkwatch International data to analyze trends of western raptors back to 1977; from the status of the Ferruginous Hawk and Northern Goshawk, two species of concern in the west, to problems large wind-driven electric generators in California present to Golden Eagles; from tracking raptors by radar in Texas, to monitoring a dozen pairs of Prairie Falcons in a relatively small area at Pinnacles National Monument.

The photographs shown were simply terrific. Both Bill Clark and Brian Wheeler, authors of the Peterson Guide to Hawks and the Photographic Guide to North American Raptors, gave separate presentations of some of their terrific slides of raptors in various parts of the world. Kent Keller's talk on Golden Eagles was preceded by several trays of slides showing the eagles, the beautiful mountain scenery and other animals he has encountered during 20 years of banding chicks in the nest.

Brian Woodbridge's keynote update on the Swainson's Hawk problem in Argentina was fascinating. Tracing rumours about birds being killed in large numbers to the source, and finding out they were true, was difficult enough, but the real story was in how Brian and others - including the Canadian Wildlife Service - managed to get governments and manufacturers to work together to resolve the problem - at least in Argentina.

Once again the Veracruz project took the spotlight. How could 4 million raptors counted on the east coast of Mexico in a short fall season not grab attention? An excellent video on the flight was shown. The good news is that several different tours have been organized to take people to Veracruz to see this phenomenon for themselves.

In a day when many species are struggling to survive because of human encroachment, perhaps the most uplifting talk was that given by Robert Mesta of the California Condor Recovery Project. Robert showed slides of these magnificent birds and told listeners how, after bringing the last wild Condors into captivity to try to avoid their total extinction, the initial captive breeding and wild release program in California had been expanded to a wild release site in Arizona. This was done partly to help keep genetic strains apart and also to avoid having all the birds subject to some disaster in a single geographic area.

The main conference field trip started out in pouring rain as the busses left Snowbird, but things were much better by the time they reached the Tooele and Rush Valleys only 30-40 miles southwest of Salt Lake City. Seen on the first part of the trip were Swainson's Hawks, two Golden Eagles, several Ferruginous Hawks, a Burrowing Owl and many non-raptors such as Lazuli Bunting, Long-billed Curlew and Wilson's Phalarope. The best was saved for last however. When the busses stopped to let most people get a good look at a Prairie Falcon, a major roost of more than 200 non-breeding Swainson's Hawks was discovered in a field on the other side of the road!

All in all, HMANA VIII was well worth it. Congratulations go to organizers Trent Lenz and Steve Hoffman for a job well done. The dedication of the people who spend their working lives in this field is more than admirable.

HMANA IX will take place at Hawk Mountain, Pennsylvania in the spring of the millenium year, 2000. Why not plan to attend?❖

---- *Mike Street*

☺ In reference to slow days at Beamer, President, Mike Street was quoted as saying, "Hawkwatch is where the Maytag repairman goes for training."

For comments, suggestions or articles for the NPH Newsletter, please forward them to the Editor, Bruce Harschnitz via e-mail at ***M_B_Harschnitz@msn.com*** *or via regular mail. Your input and ideas would be appreciated!!.*

NPH OPEN HOUSE GROWS AGAIN IN 1997

For the second year in a row our Good Friday Open House, on March 28th this year, was favoured with excellent weather. A steady stream of visitors came through the various entrances to Beamer Memorial Conservation Area all day. At our best estimate more than 1,200 people, the largest number ever, came to look over the Hawkwatch.



The weather brought the birds, and the 922 that came by turned into the highest single day count for our whole 1997 season. The Open House eagle returned this year - with two friends! Over 360 Turkey Vultures and 135 Red-tailed Hawks were joined by 228 Sharp-shinned Hawks - the first big day for that species this year. With birds in the air almost all the time, most visitors were able to get a real sense of what the migration is all about.

We were very fortunate to see two Red-tailed Hawks released, courtesy of the Mountsberg Centre for Birds of Prey. Visitors got a good look at the Red-tails, which had been picked up at Pearson Airport a few days before, while Mountsberg's Allison Richards prepared them. Afterwards Allison showed visitors an unreleasable American Kestrel and told them a bit about Mountsberg's work with raptors.

The newly christened ON TV - formerly Channel 11 - also paid us a visit, resulting in a nice item on the evening news later that day. Carla Carlson again presented her children's program to two good sized groups of mostly attentive kids, and area naturalists' clubs and other interested groups brought their displays to Beamer. As usual, Bruce Duncan's talks on the migration were well attended. George Coker's bluebird boxes sold fairly well (all proceeds to NPH), and many visitors made donations.

There are lots of people interested in the birds and what we are doing. A turnout like this is really gratifying. See you at next year's Open House - Good Friday - weather permitting. Until then, visit the NPH website at ***www.hwcn.org/link/niaghawk/index/html.***❖

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Accompanied by excellent slides, Laurie outlined the history and programs of the Sanctuary. Founded in 1934 by conservationist Rosalie Edge to stop the shooting of hawks migrating along an eastern ridge of the Appalachian Mountains, this 22,380-acre nature preserve is the United States' best observation point for the fall migration of birds of prey. An average of 20,000 hawks, eagles and falcons migrate over the 1,521 feet high rock promontory of North Lookout. Laurie also described the Sanctuary's most ambitious special project, *Hawks Aloft Worldwide*, an international conservation initiative that provides a strategy for strengthening local conservation action along the world's major raptor-migration corridors.

After Laurie's slide show and presentation, Kieth and Karen Dieroff ran the traditional bucket raffle, which was organized by Wolfgang Luft and Roslynne Price. It again featured many nice prizes, including a choice of beautiful hand painted sweatshirts by Laurie Mackenzie, a tour of the Owl Foundation, books and a number of items from the Hawk Mountain Bookstore brought by Laurie Goodrich.

A very interesting and enjoyable evening was had by all who attended.❖

(To visit Hawk Mountain Sanctuary without leaving home, travel via the Internet to their excellent web site at ***www.hawkmountain.org****. –Editor.)*

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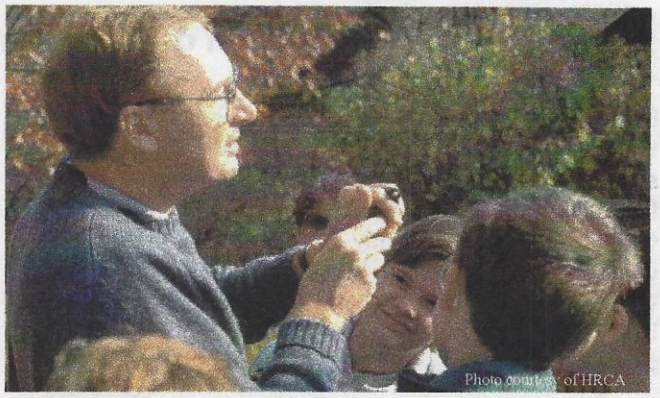
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tower, but the Grimsby Branch of Canada Trust's Friends of the Environment also provided a significant amount of money to help finish the tower project. Once again our friends at the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, though faced with major problems of their own due to the Ontario Government's cutbacks, helped out every time we asked for assistance.

But the best thing that happened this year started out as an apparent disaster. In late January George Meyers, who has been counting on three weekdays every week for the last few seasons, went down for the count with a back ailment. We were faced with the realization that George had been looking after more than 40% of our days. Taking this as an opportunity instead of a crisis, we tried to find as many counters as possible to cover the days. Once again our members came through, led by Tom Reavley and Jack Ryan, who agreed to cover two of the weekdays. Other members also helped take up the slack, while Gordon Bellerby and Paul Summerskill - who had the job of finding replacements for George - did so admirably and also filled in a few gaps themselves. Best of all, towards the end of the season George himself was well enough to visit Beamer for a few hours at a time.

In closing for this season, I'd like to thank Roslynne Price - who has left the Executive to focus on her many other volunteer activities - for her help over the years, and to welcome Keith Dieroff and Bruce Harschnitz to the Executive. Keith will take over Roslynne's Special Projects work, and as our new Editor Bruce is responsible for the newsletter you are reading.

It's August and fall migration has started. Raptors are beginning to move south, which means that soon they will be coming back! See you at Beamer.❖



CO-FOUNDER AND PAST PRESIDENT HONOURED

Co-founder and Past President of the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch, Bruce Duncan, has been honoured by HMANA with the Maurice Broun Award.

The citation on the Maurice Broun Award Plaque accepted by Mike Street, on behalf of Bruce Duncan, at the HMANA VIII Conference at Salt Lake City, UT on June 14, 1997 reads:

THE HAWK MIGRATION ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA HONORS
BRUCE DUNCAN
WITH THE MAURICE BROUN AWARD
IN MAY 1997
for deep personal commitment
and outstanding service to further
hawk migration study and conservation

The Hawk Mountain Reserve site in Pennsylvania was acquired in the 1930's as a first step in bringing to an end the practice of shooting migrating raptors for sport. Maurice Broun was the first Curator of the Hawk Mountain site and spent the rest of his career there. In addition to trying to educate persistent sport hunters, he began what has become the longest continuous hawk migration count in the world and initiated a public education program that also continues to this day.

Also honoured with a Maurice Broun award this year was Dr. Paul Kerlinger, author of *Flight Strategies of Migrating Hawks* and other works. Dr. Kerlinger is in good company.❖

SIGHTING OF THE YEAR

On May 11, 1979, Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch members Paul Summerskill, Jack Ryan and Tom Reavley were at Beamer prepared for another day of hawkwatching. At 10:50am, a bird was flying in a southwest direction at tree height in a steady glide, directly above the observers [at approximately 50 feet].

It had a falcon like appearance and binoculars revealed a light gray body with a lighter head, and dark eye patch. The wings and the tail were much darker. A fine white line was seen on the trailing edge of the wings from the body to the wrists when the bird was directly overhead. The bird continued to glide to the southwest then flapped rapidly with an irregular flight path as if feeding on airborne insects.

Observers lost sight of the bird when it went over the tree line to the southwest. The bird, visible for approximately 30 seconds, was immediately identified as a Mississippi Kite by the three experienced hawkwatchers. Paul, Jack and Tom share 18 years of hawkwatching experience at Beamer.

Tom Reavley had been cautioned by noted Ontario naturalist George Meyers of Grimsby to be alert to the possibility of a Mississippi Kite showing up for the first time in the history of the Beamer watch. Tom took George's advice and reviewed the literature on Mississippi Kites.❖

1997 Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Summary

by John Stevens

In some respects it was a typical year for the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch, with a much delayed spring retarding the hawk flight, more than a dozen days when the watchers outnumbered the hawks, and not enough falcons, eagles or goshawks to keep the mob happy. But then, on a glorious day in May, this year's three most faithful counters were rewarded with our fifth new raptor species in the last six years. Tom Reavley, Jack Ryan and Paul Summerskill were present on May 11, 1997 for the pioneer Mississippi Kite as it kited through from the general direction of the 'hempine'. This bird represented the twenty-second species of raptor that we have recorded at Grimsby since counting began in 1975.

The kite highlighted what was generally a mediocre season. The total number of raptors for the year was 12,105, seen over 508 hours of counting for an average rate of 23.8 birds per hours. The average flight since counting for HMANA began in 1981 is 14,297 raptors per season, so 1997 was about 15% below that. However, the 1997 count was close to the average for the last five years (five-year average) which stands at 12,820 birds.

The peak day for variety occurred on April 15 when 12 of the 17 species seen this year were recorded. On four days there were 11 species, including May 2 when the only two Swainson's Hawks of the season were among the day's pleasures. This was the first time in the history of the Beamer count that two of this species were seen on the same day.

Perhaps the most surprising statistic is that the greatest single day count for the 1997 season, 922, occurred on March 28 rather than in April when the bulk of the flight occurs at Beamer. 1997 marks the second year of the last three when there were no days with more than 1000 birds.

The relatively mild winter experienced in most of Ontario in 1996-97 may have contributed to the low seasonal totals for several species which can spend the winter here if conditions are reasonable. Red-tailed Hawks, Rough-legged Hawks, Bald Eagles, Northern Harriers and American Kestrels were all below both the long term and five-year averages for their species. The explanation would not, however, apply to Ospreys or Broad-winged Hawks whose counts were also substantially below their long term averages.

On the positive side, both Cooper's Hawks and Merlin were above their long term averages, although the count of the former species was below its five-year average.

Turkey Vultures, which have been steadily coming to represent an increasing portion of the total count at Beamer, finally reached the number one spot in 1997, just edging out the Sharpies as the most recorded species of the season. The 1997 total of 3092 was the second highest ever at Grimsby, and 17% above the five-year average. Vultures now represent more than one quarter of the count, and with the frequent forays of the local residents during April and May, they probably represent about one third of the raptors seen.

The count of 796 for the endangered Red-shouldered Hawk was up nicely over the count for the last two seasons, but was still below the long term average of 886 and the five-year average of 929.

The 3047 Sharp-shinned Hawks counted was the third lowest total for this species since 1981. This prolongs the declining trend in the five-year average for Sharpies which followed the aberrent peak year of 1990, when 7000 were counted. Nevertheless, the decline we have seen is not nearly as substantial as the declines recorded in recent years at counts along the east coast.

Now a few words about the count period, which since 1989 has been restricted to March 1 through May 15. To do a thorough job, we should probably be mere flexible with regard to the count period. It was suggested to me (by Paul Summerskill, I believe) that some milder days in February this year may have resulted in a significant raptor movement, especially among Red-tails. Historically, we have had counts at Beamer in February. Even three or four hours around noontime could provide some significant information. Similarly, the second half of May can be very productive. Counting at this time can be difficult because the birds are high and often moving east instead of west, but in reviewing the New York counts at Braddock Bay and the Ripley Picket Line, it is clear that there is a lot of migration occurring after we stop our count.

Finally, the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch extends heartfelt thanks to Gordon Bellerby and Paul Summerskill for organizing and coordinating the data collection, to Wolfgang Luft for compiling and computerizing the data, and to the many volunteers listed below who acted as official counters in 1997. (We hoped to make a presentation of $200 for each eight hour day but that will have to wait until another year.)

This year's counters were: Roy Baker, Glenn Barnett, Gordon Bellerby, Bouwe Bergsma, John Black, Barry Cherriere, Jim Coey, Dave Copeland, Bob Curry, Willie D'Anna, Keith Dieroff, Rob Dobos, Bruce Duncan, Denys Gardiner, Raymond Geras, Gerry Guild,

Continued...

Summary continued...
Richard Knapton, Wolfgang Luft, Bruce Mackenzie, Stuart Mackenzie, Don Malena, Kevin McLaughlin, George Meyers, Matt Mills, George Naylor, John Olmsted, Terry Osborne, Roslynne Price, Tom Reavley, Mark Rightman, John Roberts, Jack Ryan, Ron Scovell, Gerry Shemilt, Bill Smith, John Stevens, Mike Street, and Paul Summerskill. Special thanks to Laurie Mackenzie and Diane Mills for helping Stuart and Matt become two of the youngest official counters in North America.❖

1997 NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH MONTHLY COUNTS

SPECIES	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	TOTALS
Black Vulture	0	0	0	**0**
Turkey Vulture	1076	1835	181	**3092**
Osprey	0	23	5	**28**
Swallow-tail Kite	0	0	0	**0**
Mississippi Kite	0	0	1	**1**
Bald Eagle	7	8	2	**17**
Northern Harrier	33	72	20	**125**
Sharp-shinned Hawk	412	2080	555	**3047**
Cooper's Hawk	102	106	13	**221**
Northern Goshawk	7	9	0	**16**
Red-shouldered Hawk	743	52	1	**796**
Broad-winged Hawk	0	1615	234	**1849**
Swainson's Hawk	0	0	2	**2**
Red-tailed Hawk	1777	736	59	**2572**
Ferruginous Hawk	0	0	0	**0**
Rough-legged Hawk	19	24	1	**44**
Golden Eagle	0	6	0	**6**
American Kestrel	38	42	4	**84**
Merlin	1	9	4	**14**
Peregrine Falcon	1	1	0	**2**
Gyrfalcon	0	0	0	**0**
Prairie Falcon	0	0	0	**0**
Unid. Accipiter	10	32	3	**45**
Unid. Buteo	67	27	3	**97**
Unid. Eagle	0	1	0	**1**
Unid. Falcon	0	1	0	**1**
Unid. Raptor	11	33	1	**45**
Total Raptors	**4304**	**6712**	**1089**	**12105**
Hours Counted	**181.85**	**221.25**	**105.25**	**508.35**
Raptors/Hour	**23.7**	**30.3**	**10.3**	**23.8**

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH COUNTS - MARCH 1997

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Totals
Black Vulture																																0
Turkey Vulture										1	6	6	1					4	9	1		3	92	21		7	377	364	123	61		1076
Osprey																																0
Swallow-tail Kite																																0
Mississippi Kite																																0
Bald Eagle																												3	4			7
Northern Harrier							1		1			1	1				2	2			1	2	2	3			9	7	1			33
Sharp-shinned Hawk	2		1		1				1	3	2	4	6		1			6	3	1	5		4	5			25	228	103	11		412
Cooper's Hawk			2			1			2			1	4					3	2			2	21	4			17	28	10	5		102
Northern Goshawk									2	1			1				1			1								1				7
Red-shouldered Hawk			1	1					16	1	1		61					13	52	5	11	17	232	110			22	97	59	44		743
Broad-winged Hawk																																0
Swainson's Hawk																																0
Red-tailed Hawk	5	5	105	2	1	5	7	35	130	9	66	29	329			6	4	122	91	7	10	107	294	101		1	49	138	42	76	1	1777
Ferruginous Hawk																																0
Rough-legged Hawk			2				1		3			1	1										1				2	7		1		19
Golden Eagle																																0
American Kestrel	1					1						1	1						1	1		2	1				12	13	4			38
Merlin																											1					1
Peregrine Falcon												1																				1
Gyrfalcon																																0
Prairie Falcon																																0
Unid. Accipiter													2										1	2			1	3		1		10
Unid. Buteo									1				10				1	1					14	5			4	25	4	2		67
Unid. Eagle																																0
Unid. Falcon																																0
Unid. Raptor											1												1				1	8				11
Total Raptors	**8**	**5**	**111**	**3**	**2**	**7**	**9**	**35**	**156**	**15**	**76**	**44**	**417**	**0**	**1**	**6**	**8**	**151**	**158**	**16**	**27**	**133**	**663**	**251**	**0**	**8**	**520**	**922**	**350**	**201**	**1**	**4304**
Hours Counted	7.5	6	7	6	5	4	6.2	8	6.5	8	6.5	6.5	8	0	1	6	7.4	7	4.75	5	5.5	7	8	8	0	6	8	8	8	6	1	181.85
Wind Direction	SW	NW	NE	W	N	NW	W	N	E	WSW	NW	NW	NE		W	NW	SW	NE	N	SW	SSW	NNW	N	N/A		NW	WSW	N	N/A	NE	N/A	

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH COUNTS - APRIL 1997

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	Totals
Black Vulture																															0
Turkey Vulture	96	200	117	648	20	158	22	12	29	62	46	8		57	36	43		5	30	17	9	28	23	17	20	39	31	29	25	8	1835
Osprey			1		1	1								1	1	2		3	1	1	2		2			3		1	2	1	23
Swallow-tail Kite																															0
Mississippi Kite																															0
Bald Eagle	1			2	2	1									1	1															8
Northern Harrier		5	3	7	3	4	1			5	2			3	7	3		1	2	1	5		8	2	1		1		7	1	72
Sharp-shinned Hawk	7	53	47	61	84	296	7		6	55	81	3	1	64	123	197	12	17	10	4	134	82	188	11	34	68	100	7	162	166	2080
Cooper's Hawk	5	10	8	8	5	14	3		1	7	2	2		7	5	2		2	4		1		5	2		3	2	2	4	2	106
Northern Goshawk		1				1	1				1				1	2	1									1					9
Red-shouldered Hawk	11	9	4	6	2	3				2	2			6	1			1					3	1	1						52
Broad-winged Hawk															2	8	1	5			23	39	111	59	335	288	343	16	306	79	1615
Swainson's Hawk																															0
Red-tailed Hawk	83	68	9	108	2	47	4	1	36	48	45	1		68	39	9	3	29	4	2	8	2	51	10	15	13	10	1	10	10	736
Ferruginous Hawk																															0
Rough-legged Hawk	1	2		4					2	1	1			2		1				1	3	2	1				1		2		24
Golden Eagle				1							2											2							1		6
American Kestrel		3	3	1		13								1	2	5					2	2	5	1		2	1		1		42
Merlin				1		1								1	1				1			1	1		1				1		9
Peregrine Falcon			1																												1
Gyrfalcon																															0
Prairie Falcon																															0
Unid. Accipiter		6	2	11	1	1			1	5	1							2							2						32
Unid. Buteo				3		1				2	4			2	3								2		4	1	1		4		27
Unid. Eagle											1																				1
Unid. Falcon		1																													1
Unid. Raptor	1	1		1					2		4			1			1	1			5		3			4	1		7	1	33
Total Raptors	**205**	**359**	**195**	**862**	**120**	**541**	**38**	**13**	**77**	**187**	**192**	**14**	**1**	**213**	**222**	**273**	**18**	**66**	**52**	**26**	**192**	**158**	**403**	**103**	**413**	**422**	**491**	**56**	**532**	**268**	**6712**
Hours Counted	8	8.75	7.5	8	7	8.75	7.5	3	8.5	8	7.75	3	4	7.5	8	6	7.75	8	9.25	6	7	9	8	8	8.5	7.5	7	7	9	8	221.25
Wind Direction	N	SW	W	SW	N	S	W	NW	NW	NW	SSW	E	NW		SSW	SW	N	N	NE	NW	NE	NNE	NE	NE	N	NW		NW	SW	SW	

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH COUNTS - MAY 1997

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Totals
Black Vulture																																0
Turkey Vulture	3	33	8	6	34	19	14	7	5	1	10		9	20	12																	181
Osprey		1	1	1								1	1																			5
Swallow-tail Kite																																0
Mississippi Kite											1																					1
Bald Eagle					1								1																			2
Northern Harrier		6		2		1	5				4		1		1																	20
Sharp-shinned Hawk	4	70	15	54	107	7	37	57	5	2	67	12	107	4	7																	555
Cooper's Hawk		4			4		2	1					2																			13
Northern Goshawk																																0
Red-shouldered Hawk														1																		1
Broad-winged Hawk		57		43	21		16	33		1	33	2	20	7	1																234
Swainson's Hawk		2																														2
Red-tailed Hawk	2	20		8	7		7	4			1	1	2	7																		59
Ferruginous Hawk																																0
Rough-legged Hawk		1																														1
Golden Eagle																																0
American Kestrel		1	1								1				1																	4
Merlin		3				1																										4
Peregrine Falcon																																0
Gyrfalcon																																0
Prairie Falcon																																0
Unid. Accipiter		2		1																												3
Unid. Buteo								2					1																			3
Unid. Eagle																																0
Unid. Falcon																																0
Unid. Raptor											1																					1
Total Raptors	**9**	**200**	**25**	**115**	**174**	**28**	**81**	**104**	**10**	**4**	**118**	**16**	**144**	**39**	**22**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1089**
Hours Counted	4	9.25	8.75	7	8	7	5.75	7	7.5	4	6.5	9	8	7	6.5																	105.25
Wind Direction	SW	SW	W	NW	SW	NW	N	SE	VAR	NW	SW	SW	SW	NE	W																	

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH 1981 - 1997 SPECIES TOTALS

	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	*1975-1996 TOTALS*	*1981-97 Average*	Highest Total & Date	Earliest Date
Black Vulture												1					0	*1*	*0*	1-Apr 4/92	Apr 4/92
Turkey Vulture	671	521	895	616	948	837	977	2331	1406	1463	1785	1990	1852	3189	2151	2946	3092	*29507*	*1628*	748-Mar 26/88	Feb 23/84
Osprey	19	27	20	38	36	33	30	41	36	40	46	64	45	69	47	56	28	*746*	*40*	16-Apr 12/92	Mar 26/77
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite														1				*1*	*0*	1-Apr 15/94	Apr 15/94
Mississippi Kite																	1			1-12 May/97	May 12/97
Bald Eagle	1	7	7	5	10	14	7	16	17	15	17	22	14	40	24	33	17	*282*	*16*	12-Apr 28/96	Feb 26/86
Northern Harrier	102	131	125	127	113	143	217	162	175	194	219	209	126	177	177	172	125	*3013*	*158*	35-Apr 18/96	Feb 19/84
Sharp-shinned Hawk	4095	4880	3931	4683	4480	3549	2831	3108	3576	7004	3767	3418	3475	4846	2136	3290	3047	*85959*	*3889*	1556-Apr 18/76	Feb 11/87
Cooper's Hawk	179	121	160	190	152	196	199	229	180	311	220	199	209	263	256	295	221	*4041*	*211*	50-Apr 5/93	Feb 11/87
Northern Goshawk	8	51	73	67	25	21	31	27	14	24	20	34	28	73	15	37	16	*601*	*33*	11-Mar 24/84	Feb 28/88
Red-shouldered Hawk	528	638	624	838	764	901	876	861	1102	1341	761	1187	1030	1419	705	694	796	*17998*	*886*	655-Mar 23/94	Feb 23/84
Broad-winged Hawk	6904	2305	4118	7844	8239	3823	1628	2910	2304	4428	2063	2761	1963	2335	1779	1550	1849	*72959*	*3459*	6007-Apr 21/85	Apr 4/85
Swainson's Hawk					1			1	1				2	2		1	2	*10*	*1*	8 dates with 1 bird	Apr 15/94
Red-tailed Hawk	2604	2607	3150	3105	3410	2852	3265	3567	2615	3482	3023	3861	2684	2890	2861	3584	2572	*64758*	*3067*	744-Mar 16/96	Feb 11/87
Ferruginous Hawk												1						*1*	*0*	1-Apr 13/92	Apr 13/92
Rough-legged Hawk	41	131	59	85	48	45	77	87	45	127	145	128	35	62	87	98	44	*1653*	*79*	24-Apr 2/82	Feb 11/87
Golden Eagle	4	4	8	6	12	7	6	3	7	10	8	12	6	10	4	13	6	*137*	*7*	4-Apr 29/83,Apr 28/96	Feb 24/84
American Kestrel	114	102	71	56	150	126	85	148	132	207	180	92	93	122	70	61	84	*2271*	*111*	44-Mar 14/90	Feb 25/87
Merlin	2	5	2	2	5	5	12	5	4	9	11	12	9	23	14	22	14	*163*	*9*	6-Apr 25/96	Mar 1/94
Peregrine Falcon	3	3			2	1	1	4	2	6	5	6	2	4	1	2	2	*48*	*3*	3 dates with 2 birds	Mar 12/88
Gyrfalcon																		*1*	*0*	1-Apr 20/77	Apr 20/77
Prairie Falcon															1			*1*	*0*	1-Apr 19/95	
Unid. Raptors	647	435	467	640	880	1504	266	634	592	582	2681	681	534	452	480	249	189	*13799*	*701*		
Total Raptors	15922	11968	13710	18302	19275	14057	10508	14134	12208	19243	14951	14678	12107	15977	10808	13103	12105	*297951*	*14297*		
Hours Counted	562.6	583.1	565	564.6	608.5	576.2	681.5	608.2	499.3	574.5	548.5	541.5	538.5	531.0	555.7	454.5	508.35	*10541.8*	*559*		
Birds per Hour	28.3	20.5	24.3	32.4	31.7	24.4	15.4	23.2	24.5	33.5	27.3	27.1	22.5	30.1	19.4	28.8	23.8	*	*25.6*		

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch

Newsletter

Newsletter No. 16, February 1998

EIGHTH ANNUAL OPEN HOUSE FRIDAY, APRIL 10

NPH will again invite the public to view the migrating hawks on April 10 when we hold our eighth annual Open House. We have been lucky with the weather in the past few years and hope for more of the same this year. In case of really bad weather, however, events will be postponed to Saturday, April 11.

Members of the Hawkwatch stationed in the center of the circle and at the point will help visitors to see and identify raptors passing over Beamer. (Volunteers are needed – please contact Mike Street.) A highlight of Open House day for the past few years has been the release of a rehabilitated raptor. This year we hope to see a Red-tailed Hawk released around 1PM.

The very welcome coffee truck will be parked in the circle and the special kids program with Carla Carlson of Niagara Nature Tours will run at 11AM and noon. There will be short 'Hawk Talks' for visitors on the hour from 11AM-2PM and displays from birding and nature organizations, including our hosts, the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, and the Ontario Field Ornithologists.

The official 'opening' of the tower will also take place in the morning.

Be sure to invite your family and friends, it should be a good day for them and for the birds too.

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WE HAVE A TOWER!

After some delays because of permits, and a few false starts due to weather, on Tuesday, January 26, 1998 a self-propelled crane pulled a long trailer into the circle at Beamer Memorial Conservation Area. On the trailer were the main parts of the new Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Tower. A smaller truck carried additional pieces of the structure, while a third vehicle carried a welding machine and the generator to run it.

The foundation was laid late last fall, ahead of the expected frost. The tower itself was built in Hamilton and then brought to the site. In a few short hours on this day the base was raised and secured to the foundations, the platform was hoisted onto the base and fastened, and the stairs were installed. Several hours more of attachment welding, grinding and touch-up painting and – voila! We have a tower!

The concept of a tower came about in answer to the disadvantage caused NPH counters by 20 years of growth of the trees on three sides of the circle. In addition to returning our sight lines closer to what they were, the tower will give counters more time to make good identifications. After a vote of the members in late 1996, the project was underway.

continued on page 2



photo by Mike Street

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The tower was donated by Co-Steel Recycling, the Hamilton subsidiary of Co-Steel Canada. All its components are 100% recycled – new steel made from old – which is Co-Steel's particular specialty in the industry. GMB Millwrights of Mississauga built and installed the tower. The Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority installed the foundations and will complete the landscaping. Canada Trust's *Friends of The Environment Foundation* (Grimsby) provided funding for all costs not covered by Co-Steel's donation.

The official 'opening' of the tower will take place on the morning of April 10, 1998 during our annual Open House. Why not plan to attend and take a look for yourself?❖

VERACRUZ 'RIVER OF RAPTORS' FOCUS OF 1998 BANQUET

Our annual banquet and general meeting will be held on Saturday, May 2, once again at Stoney Ridge Winery's Puddicombe Farm on Hwy. 8 in Winona, starting at 4:30PM. The evening's feature will be a presentation on Pronatura Veracruz' effort to monitor their 'River of Raptors'. Every fall more than 4 million hawks, falcons, eagles and vultures fly over and past Veracruz, on the southeast coast of Mexico. More than 1.2 million birds have been counted there in two days at the peak of Broad-winged Hawk migration.

Socializing and the bucket raffle begin at 4:30PM. (PLEASE NOTE - the winery shop may close at 5PM, so come on time if you want to buy wine to take home.) Wine tasting starts at 5:15. Last year's very popular format will be repeated – members will select the wines for the evening in advance, allowing us to make sure they are chilled properly if required. With a little luck we may even get to watch the tail end of the day's migration from the balcony while tasting. Dinner will start around 6:15, followed by bucket raffle draws and a short business meeting before the Veracruz presentation.

This will be an enjoyable evening so get your tickets now. The room can accommodate 42 people; 30 tickets are still available, priced at $20 for members and $25 for non-members. Call Mike Street or John Stevens to make arrangements.❖

COUNTERS STILL NEEDED FOR 1998 SEASON

Counters are still needed for this season, especially people willing to tempt fate in early March or folks willing to forego the pleasures of Long Point and Pelee in the first half of May.

Gordon Bellerby will again look after initial scheduling of Counters, assisting Paul Summerskill who is the overall coordinator of Counters. Before March 1, please call Gordon at (905) 468-3961 to book 1998 hawkwatching day(s). After March 1, please call Paul at (905) 934-7887.

If you are interested in learning to become a counter, be sure to let us know. Many of our observers are glad to share the work and help newcomers, and we will also have our Hawk ID Workshop on weekends from March 28 through April 26.❖

THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

by Mike Street

As you have seen elsewhere in this newsletter, we finally have our tower. After close to ten years of thinking, talking and hoping it is a reality.

We owe particular thanks to Mr. Lionel Schipper, Chairman of Co-Steel Canada, which donated the tower through their Hamilton subsidiary, Co-Steel Recycling, and extra special thanks to NPH Member Norm Schipper who was instrumental in putting us together with Co-Steel.

I would also like to sincerely thank Stephan Mangotich, Manager of Co-Steel Recycling, who shepherded the tower through the various stages from modifying the design through construction and then installation; Gord Harry of the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, and his staff, who looked after getting the necessary permits and literally laid the groundwork; and Wendy Cox, Manager of the Canada Trust branch in Grimsby, who assisted us in obtaining a very significant donation from the *Friends of The Environment Foundation* to pay for the base, landscaping and other incidental costs. Last but not least, thanks also to NPH Member Bill Wilson who pointed us in the direction of the tower's design.

Without these folks we would not have this fine structure which, I firmly believe, will be so useful to us in the future.

You know, it really seems as though it was just yesterday that we took down the weather pole at Beamer to wrap up the 1997 season. Well, to paraphrase an old saying, an awful lot of hawks have flown past various count sites since then. To give just two examples, more than 700,000 Broad-winged Hawks went over Corpus Christi, TX in three days in late September, while more than 1.4 million raptors were counted in two days at Veracruz, Mexico about a week later! Good news – many of these birds are on their way back and will soon arrive at Beamer.

Thanks in advance to all our 1998 counters, especially Jack Ryan, Tom Reavley and Paul Summerskill who are our anchors, and welcome back to George Meyers who will again be able to take some turns in the circle after his unfortunate illness last year. I'm looking forward to seeing them and all of you at Beamer.❖

For comments, suggestions or articles for the NPH Newsletter, please forward them to the Editor, Bruce Harschnitz via e-mail at **M_B_Harschnitz@msn.com** *or via regular mail. Your input and ideas would be appreciated!!!*

SUCCESS SCREAMING IN OUR EARS

by Dan Strickland

Reprinted with permission from The Raven (Vol.38, No.7), Newsletter of the Friends Of Algonquin Park.

Sometimes we humans seem almost determined to take a gloomy view about our planet – to the point where we don't recognize environmental success when we see it, or where we refuse even to admit that there could be such a thing in today's world.

We had an excellent example of this just two weeks ago going through Proulx Lake on a canoe trip when we saw – and heard – something that has become increasingly common in Algonquin in the last few years. From far across the water came the excited "klee, klee, klee" screams of young Merlins – and soon we could see the birds themselves. At first they were just specks against the sky as they rose above the distant shore but then they excitedly flashed right over our heads, chasing one of their parents that was bringing back a small bird for them in its talons.

Now, it may not be immediately obvious, but the observation of those little falcons on that trip, and the many other similar sightings routinely made in the Park these days, really are splendid examples of a modern-day environmental success story. Of course, we will concede right away that our use of the word "success" in the same sentence as the word "falcon" may seem a little puzzling. Regular readers of *The Raven* and other Park literature will be well familiar with the story of the Merlin's larger and even more spectacular relative, the Peregrine. And how that better known falcon fell victim to our indiscriminate use of pesticides and disappeared from Algonquin (and much of the rest of North America) over 30 years ago.

It may even seem that holding up Merlins as a success story is suspicious – as if we wanted to gloss over the continued absence in Algonquin of the famous Peregrine Falcon and ask people to settle for the Peregrine's little cousin instead. If Merlins are so special, after all, why has almost nobody even heard of them and why haven't we publicized them more?

The truth is that, until Merlins started to (re) appear in Algonquin about 15 years ago, we didn't even know that they should be here. A few of us on the Park staff go back to the early 60's but, although we were well aware back then that Peregrine Falcons had just disappeared from the Park, it didn't even occur to us that the same thing had also happened to Merlins. We knew they weren't here, of course, but as far as we knew, that was the way it had always been. There were a few old records in the Park archives but we pretty much assumed that these represented birds from much farther north that were migrating through the Park. To give you an idea of just how nonexistent Merlins were back in the years 1963 through 1971, there was not a single observation in Algonquin, and only three were seen in the five years following that – with two of those clearly being migrants.

The year 1977 was remarkable, however, because three Merlins were seen (May, August, September) and then, in 1978, the incredible happened. A pair of Merlins actually nested in Algonquin, on an island in Hogan Lake in the middle of the Park, and they succeeded in raising at least two young.

Although the Merlin nesting was duly noted, of course, we didn't attach particular significance to it at the time. It was almost literally overshadowed by our contribution to the international Peregrine recovery effort, and to the extent we gave the Merlins much thought at all, we suppose it was more of a fluke than anything else. Events soon proved us wrong because the years following the first nesting produced more and more Merlin observations and by the mid-1980s, we had found several more nests.

Even then, however, we still didn't appreciate what was happening. The nests were all in the Park interior and we half wondered if Merlins had really been nesting there all along (albeit in low numbers). We were far more impressed by the fact that all of the nests we had found were on islands in large lakes and we speculated that such places might be the only ones suitable for Merlins. These little falcons fly with amazing speed (in some places they used to be called "bullet-birds") and they can quite literally overtake almost any prey species. They can't manoeuvre through trees, however, so, in a forested environment like Algonquin, good hunting grounds are probably restricted to open water. The best places in particular should be where there are islands or peninsulas close enough to each other or to the mainland that small birds will be tempted to cross over the water – and thus become vulnerable to Merlin hunting methods.

We think this reasoning probably does explain correctly why the first breeding Merlins in Algonquin chose to nest where they did but we were wrong when we also supposed that Merlins could not be successful anywhere else. The fact is that, in the last ten years, the Park Merlin population has exploded dramatically. True, they still seem to like peninsulas and islands (the ones in Cache, Two Rivers, Whitefish, Rock, Happy Isle, Kioshkokwi, and Lavieille are just some examples among the many that are now used by nesting Merlins) but numerous other situations are used as well. We have even had them nesting away from lakeshores (along the Visitor Centre entrance road, for example) and by 1990 they were being seen so often that we had abandoned our former effort to record every single observation. For all intents and purposes, Merlins have gone from being entirely absent in Algonquin to their present status of being widespread in just a single decade.

Although Merlins have not been studied very much in our part of the world, it seems obvious why their numbers have had this spectacular upsurge. Like Peregrines, they suffered from eggshell thinning and reproductive failure following widespread environmental contamination with DDT and the other pesticides that we humans started to use on a massive scale back in the 1950s. Like Peregrines they almost certainly disappeared from vast areas of their original breeding range and as with their larger, better publicized relatives, the way for their recovery was cleared thanks to stringent restrictions on the use of the poisons that got them into trouble in the first place. The main differences between the two species is that (here at least) Merlins disappeared without even being noticed and that, fortunately, they have managed to make a comeback on their own.

We think this is a truly remarkable story – and for many different reasons. For one thing, Merlins were probably always much more ecologically important that Peregrines, simply because, under

continued on page 4

natural conditions that we can now start to appreciate, they must have been far more numerous than the larger Peregrines. It has been calculated that two Merlins need about 24 kg of smaller birds (about 900 individuals the size of a sparrow) to feed themselves and raise their offspring in a single season. Multiplied by the dozens (or more?) of pairs of breeding Merlins now in Algonquin, this kind of consumption must have considerable significance. Indeed, figures like this might seem to represent an ecological downside to the Merlin comeback although we would argue the opposite. The very fact that so many pairs of Merlins and their offspring can be supported in Algonquin strongly suggests to us that the Park's prey base of smaller birds must be healthy and productive.

Of course, the most important lesson of all to be learned from the presence of so many Merlins in Algonquin is that the controls we placed on DDT and other pesticides have had significant success and effect. We can rejoice in the success of the Merlin and express reasonable hope that the Peregrine is probably not far behind.

And surely this is something worth thinking about the next time you hear the loud "klee, klee, klee" of young Merlins across an Algonquin lake and see them rising into the air, all trying to be the first to get the hapless warbler being brought in by one of their parents. We may not be in the habit of saluting environmental success stories but we should recognize one when we see one. After all, it will be staring us in the face – and screaming in our ears.❖

WILDLIFE WATCHERS

Volunteer-based monitoring programs like the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch annual spring raptor count provide a unique and valuable source of information about wildlife populations. Environment Canada and its many partners are working together to coordinate volunteer efforts and to integrate monitoring data in Ontario through the Wildlife Watchers program.

Wildlife Watchers: Report on Monitoring offers annual updates on monitoring projects, showing volunteers how their data is being used to conserve Ontario's wildlife and encouraging new volunteers to participate.

Colourful Wildlife Watchers stickers for individuals active in monitoring projects are available. Copies of the Report on Monitoring are sent out with the spring issue of Seasons magazine, or may be obtained from: Canadian Wildlife Service, 75 Farquhar St., Guelph, ON N1H 3N4. Phone: (519) 826-2092 or Fax: (519) 826-2113.

FALCONWATCH VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The Hamilton Naturalists' Club **Falconwatch '98** project needs volunteers to help monitor the expected Peregrine Falcon chicks as they fledge in the nest on the Hamilton Sheraton Hotel (4 were raised in 1997). In the early stages the birds can sometimes wind up on the ground and need help from humans to get back to the nest. Training will be provided. Shifts are usually 2 or 4 hours between 5AM and 9PM. Anyone interested in an opportunity to watch and hear these magnificent birds at first hand is asked to call Mike Street at (905) 648-3737 (evenings).

NEW BIRDING HOTLINE WEB ADDRESS

Please note that the entire Hamilton Naturalists' Club website has been through a 'makeover', courtesy of Grant Dixon of Electronic Scribe in Dundas, with a very nice graphical result. We have not 'moved', but the WWW address for the Hamilton Birding Hotline has changed slightly.

Should you wish to go directly to the Birding Hotline, the revised address is: http://www.hwcn.org/link/hamnature/hncblin.htm [The only difference from the previous URL is that there is no 'l' at the very end of the new address.]

--- Mike Street

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH EXECUTIVE 1997

HON. PRESIDENT: Walter Klabunde
PRESIDENT: Mike Street, 73 Hatton Drive, Ancaster, ON L9G 2H5 ..... (905) 648-3737
VICE-PRESIDENT: Mary Ellen Hebb, 47 College Ave., Port Rowan, ON N0E 1M0 ..... (519) 586-7141
SECRETARY/MEMBERSHIP: Glenn Barnett, 87 Highland Park Dr., Dundas, ON L9H 6G5 ..... (905) 628-2093
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EDITOR: Bruce Harschnitz, 81 Walnut St., Paris, ON N3L 2J5 ..... (519) 442-5429
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RESEARCH/HMANA: Bruce Duncan, 22 Church St., Paris, ON N3L 1H3 ..... (519) 442-2477
STATISTICS: Wolfgang Luft, Townhouse 83, 5045 Pinedale Avenue, Burlington, ON L7L 5J6 ..... (905) 681-2276
SPECIAL PROJECTS: Keith Dieroff, 75 Houghton Ave. South, Hamilton, ON L8K 2M9 ..... (905) 545-5859

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH MIGRATION CALENDAR FOR BEAMER CONSERVATION AREA

NOTES:

1) Species initials and Right (➢) or Left (➣) arrow:

This combination indicates the start or end of the normal (at Beamer) migration period for that species. The same in **bold** type indicates the start or end of a noticeable peak period for that species. The box in which this combination is located indicates the day and month on which the period is likely to start or end.

2) A number, followed by species initial, followed by a slash (/) and a two-digit number:

In this combination, the largest number of that species ever seen in one day is given first; the two-digit number following the / indicates the year in which this occurred. The box in which this combination is located indicates the day and month on which the event occurred. Example: 655 RS /94 in the March 23 box indicates that the highest number of Red-shouldered Hawks recorded in one day was 655, seen on March 23, 1994.

TV – Turkey Vulture
BV – Black Vulture
OS – Osprey
MK – Mississippi Kite
SK – American Swallow-tailed Kite
BE – Bald Eagle
GE – Golden Eagle

NH – Northern Harrier
SS – Sharp-shinned Hawk
CH – Cooper's Hawk
NG – Northern Goshawk
RS – Red-shouldered Hawk
BW – Broad-winged Hawk
RT – Red-tailed Hawk
SW – Swainson's Hawk

RL – Rough-legged Hawk
FH – Ferruginous Hawk
AK – American Kestrel
ME – Merlin
PF – Peregrine Falcon
GF – Gyrfalcon
PR – Prairie Falcon

The following information, based on 23 years of data from the Beamer Hawkwatch, has been updated to show significant 1997 events:

Largest number of raptors in one season: 19,724 in 1985

MARCH

1 RT➢ RL➢ CH➢ NG➢ BE➢ GE➢	2 NH➢ RS➢ AK➢ TV➢	3	4	5	6	7
8 **RL➢**	9 **RT➢**	10 **AK➢**	11	12	13	14 **RS➢ NG➢** 44 AK /90
15 **CH➢** SS➢	16 744 RT /96	17	18 **BE➢** 7 GE /86	19	20 **TV➢**	21
22	23 9 BE /94 655 RS /94	24 11 NG /84	25	26 2 PF /91 7 GE /88 748 TV /88	27 **NH➢** OS➢	28 2 PF /90
29	30	31				

Largest # of raptors in month: 5,670 in March 1988; Largest # of raptors in one day in month: 2,080 on March 26, 1988

APRIL

1	2 **<RS**	3 2 PF /91	4 1 BV /92	5 ME> PF> 50 CH /93 28 NH /93	6	7
8 706 RT /87	9	10 **<RT SS>** BW>	11	12 **OS>** 22 RL /91 16 OS /92	13 1 FH /92	14 28 NH /91
15 **<TV** 1 SK /94 1 SW /94*	16 **<BE** 2 PF /90	17	18 35 NH /96 1556 SS /76	19 **BW>** 1 PR /95**	20 1 GF /77	21 6007 BW /85
22	23	24 **<NG**	25 6 ME /96 2 PF /94	26	27	28 **<AK** 12 BE /96 4 GE /96
29 4 GE /83	30 **<CH <RL**					

Largest # of raptors in month: 15,012 in April 1984; Largest # of raptors in one day in month: 7,007 on April 21, 1985

MAY

1	2 2 SW /97*	3	4	5 1 SW /89	6 **<NH <BW** **<PF**	7
8	9	10 **<OS**	11 **<SS** 1 MK /97	12	13 **<BE**	14
15 <RL <ME	16	17	18 <NG	19	20	21
22	23	24 <OS <GE	25 <RS	26	27	28
29	30	31				

* Subject to acceptance by Ontario Bird Records Committee
** First accepted Prairie Falcon record in Ontario

Largest # of raptors in month: 2,695 in May 1980; Largest # of raptors in one day in month: 1,492 on May 4, 1989

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch

Newsletter

Newsletter No. 17, August 1998

TOWER FOCUS OF 1998 OPEN HOUSE

By Mike Street

The main event at the 1998 Good Friday Open House was the official 'Opening' of our terrific new viewing tower. Lionel Schipper, Chairman of Co-steel Canada, the primary donor of the tower, unveiled a commemorative plaque. Also in the official party were representatives of the other major donor, the Canada Trust Friends of the Environment Foundation (Grimsby), and the Chairman of our hosts at Beamer, the Niagara Pensinsula Conservation Authority.

The weather was good but a bit chilly, which may have accounted for the fact that the number of visitors was down this year. Those who came enjoyed themselves, however, whether at the children's program or Bruce Duncan's migration talks or watching the flight, a respectable 326 birds of 9 species, mostly Turkey Vultures and Red-Tailed Hawks.

The relatively mild winter and warm early spring weather had an unexpected effect – very few injured raptors were brought to rehabilitators. Thus no birds were available for release, always a highlight for visitors, but this was made up for by the talks and displays presented by the Mountsberg Centre for Birds of Prey.

The raffle was successful, with Pauline Kemper of St. Catharines winning the binoculars donated by Wild Birds Unlimited of Burlington, and Ted Goldhawk of St. Catharines the happy recipient of one of Laurie Mackenzie's beautifully hand-painted raptor sweatshirts. Our thanks to Laurie and to David Wood of WBU for their contributions.

Thanks also to all the members who helped, especially those at the windy ticket table. See you next year at the Open House on Good Friday, weather permitting.❖

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1998 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND BANQUET

The 8th Annual General Meeting and Banquet was held on Saturday, May 2nd at Puddicombe Farm in Winona. The time tested and proven format of mostly banquet, with a brief general meeting to take care of business, was again a success.

Gordon Bellerby and John Stevens provided another fine selection of wines for tasting. Since Stoney Ridge Winery had moved from Puddicombe Farm, Gordon and John selected a variety of wines from around the world. Each wine was suited for a different segment of the meal and all were enjoyed with enthusiasm.

The Annual Business Meeting included Treasurer, John Stevens' report on the NPH's financial position and President, Mike Street's brief "President's Report" – even more briefly summarized as "we have a tower, we've had a few birds, we've had fun." Recognition was given to Gordon Bellerby 'the coercer of counters' on his retirement from this position, for the excellent job he has done over the years. The slate of Officers nominated for the coming year was also presented and all were elected again by acclamation.

The evenings program consisted of two video presentations, Raising the Tower at Beamer, and Veracruz River of Raptors. Raising the Tower was a 'home video' view of what took place to get the new tower into place. Veracruz River of Raptors, the highlight of the evening, provided a video tour of Veracruz, Mexico – home of the worlds largest migration of raptors. Nearly 4 million raptors of 20 species funnel every spring and fall through a narrow corridor formed by the central volcanic mountains converging on the gulf plain. There is still much to discover and to learn about the nature of the raptor migration and the 434 species of birds that occupy a mosaic of at least 19 habitat types in this tropical Mexican state. The Veracruz River of Raptors project is a cooperative effort between Pronatura Veracruz, Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association, and HawkWatch International. The peak migration runs from September 26 to October 15 when 100,000 bird days are common.

After the video presentations, Keith and Karen Dieroff ran the traditional and ever popular bucket raffle. Prizes included beautiful had painted stone art by Laurie Mackenzie, tours of the Owl Foundation, an eagle print, books, tickets to see blue jays playing baseball and many other items.

A very interesting and enjoyable evening was had by all who attended.❖

The Visit of El Niño in Veracruz

By Ernesto Ruelas Inzunza

Thursday, October 2nd, 1997. During our early morning birding walk my group and I saw large numbers of hawks streaming by overhead. The impressive sight made us decide right then to cancel our plan for an early return to the Hotel Bienvenido. Those still lingering over breakfast only missed the start of it. On the roof official counters Ruth Tingay and Aaron Barna were surrounded by a group of visitors helping to find not just individual birds, but huge kettles of raptors that otherwise may have passed unnoticed. When I joined the group, at 10:30 am, the count total was around 500 birds. The sky was clear with less than 50% cloud cover and a temperature of 29 degrees Celsius. Over the next four hours streams of birds passed by continuously, virtually filling the sky. Ina all, eight observers were counting that morning. Octavio Cruz was playing a role of "orchestra director", determining who should work counting which stream of birds passing by and where others had missed them completely.

The final count on October 2nd was 568,273 hawks. During the migration season, there are only a few days, typically no more than five or six, when the numbers of migrants is so impressive. They fly by in such a way that it is impossible for observers to keep track of their flight and then come up with a approximate estimation of the total number of raptors that flew by.

"How can you count all those birds?", is the favorite question of visitors to Veracruz. When you have a bird or a group of birds in your binoculars it is time to make a quick decision. How big is the flock? Can you count by, lets say, threes, and later cannot continue counting, you write down the number of birds that you have in your hand clicker counter and move to a more appropriate multiple in order to continue your work. Therefore, most counts in Veracruz are not actual counts, but estimations, since it is impossible to count birds one by one.

Experiments made by Veracruz River of Raptors project personnel have shown that counts vary in accuracy depending on the number of birds seen at one time. When an observer counts only a few individual birds the precision is almost absolute. When the number of birds goes up from tens to hundreds and then to thousands, precision has an interesting tendency to deteriorate in direct relation to the increasing numbers of birds being counted. When counting by tens there is an average overestimation of about four percent. When counting by hundreds under estimations go down to an average around twenty percent. In counting by thousands under estimations, on average, go down to around forty percent. Therefore, the accuracy of the counts depends on the number of birds passing over at one time.

One cause of variations in flock size is seasonal timing. Another cause depends on weather patterns. In this case it is especially important to keep good and detailed recordings of weather data, because this is a variable that can be decisive in the number of birds estimated in one season. Annual variations in weather also affect the total number of birds recorded.

All the birds recorded October 2nd are believed to have been "grounded" somewhere North of Veracruz during the days prior to this "big day". During the preceding four or five days, from September 28th through October 1st overcast skies, low temperatures (no thermals for energy saving migration), and light winds from the south and southeast (no tail winds to help migrants), were the unfavorable conditions believed to have resulted in the so far unseasonably low bird counts.

These conditions were a result of El Niño, a weather phenomenon whose effects are well known in the tropics. El Niño happens at intervals between three to six years. This in how Jonathan Weiner describes El Niño: "..of all the chronic pathologies of weather on this planet, the worst single repeat offender is El Niño, the Child, so called for its tendency to visit the Pacific shoreline of South America around Christmas time. During an El Niño, a patch of abnormally warm water appears in the eastern Pacific and spreads until much of the eastern half of the ocean is running a fever of several degrees centigrade". And concludes: "Such a vast acreage of abnormally warm water stirs strange winds and weather virtually around the world..."

This year, an El Niño year, the migration flights over Veracruz were different. In what sense is difficult to say. The usual pace of the migration is in waves. Low count days alternate with high count days, according to prevalent weather conditions. The fall of 1997 had more low count days preceded by high count days, making these days more impressive in the numbers estimated to fly by, at the same time coming by in kettles containing really large numbers of hawks. It was a record year for overcast days as well as a record year for precipitation, according to the local weather service. El Niño brought more than ten or twelve "big days" this year, and played with the drifting migrating hawks like a child.

The migration season ended with unusual but, at the same time, expected results. The most common and abundant species followed the same order in their migration, first kites, then buteos and last, vultures. They all showed the same seasonal timing, and approximate peak days: first week of September for Mississippi Kites; end of September/early October for Broad-winged Hawks; mid October for Swainson's Hawks; end of third week of October for Turkey Vultures. Species ratio is also similar to those reported by annually since the fall of 1992. The total number, estimated by a project biologist, is definitely over ou previous record of 4.6 million set in 1996.

In conclusion, I would like to comment on the strong effect that weather patterns have on raptor migrations observed in Veracruz. The closest look should be at annual weather variations, with an El Niño having an exceptional effect on monitoring efforts. Observers, even qualified ones, are not able to accurately register raptor migration, especially on "big days". I found other notes in my journal about my feelings on those days.

November 20th: "Today ends the fall ritual. Only a few Turkey Vultures flew in the sky above Veracruz. I have the feeling that people alone cannot adequately count all the birds, and that we all may need to look at other options. I have read about radar, and also talked to some radar experts, this may be an option. Perhaps a combined effort of man and machine can help us out. Man identifies the species, radar does the counting".

I have received many letters, e-mails, and even phone calls from people asking what the count total for fall 1997. It impossible to give an accurate answer. Ei

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continued from page 2

Niño's effect on the weather taught me and my dedicated colleagues a good lesson. I prefer to wait until another technique, or combination of techniques, can validate the value of migrations counts in Veracruz....

Xalapa, Veracruz, México. December 1, 1997.❖

Reprinted with permission from Amigos del Rio de Rapaces (Volume 1, Number 2 Fall 1997), the newsletter of Pronatura Veracruz.

Editors Note: Pronatura Veracruz is a Mexican Non-profit conservation organization that sponsors conservation and environmental education projects. For more information, contact Larry D. Maynard, Coordinator of Ecotourism and Membership by writing Pronatura Veracruz, Apartado Postal #399, Xalapa, Veracruz Mexico 91000 or by e-mail to pvecotours@compuservecom.

THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

by Mike Street

In late May, Carol and I took a long awaited cruise up the Inside Passage of British Columbia and Alaska. Being a good hawk watcher, I naturally paid attention to the 'white golf balls' which from time to time would appear in conifers along the waterway. Occasionally one of these would turn into a majestic Bald Eagle doing loops over the ship, to the delight of the passengers.

However, this did not prepare us for what we found in Ketchikan, AK. As we walked along a main street which followed the harbour in the distance I could see some birds, including eagles, over the water but mostly going out of sight behind some buildings. The area wasn't exactly scenic but we pushed on. Coming around a corner, ahead we could see large conifers with lots of 'white golf balls' visible. There were 52 Bald Eagles in four trees, and that wasn't all!! Opposite these trees was the patch of water I'd seen earlier, the outfall of a fish processing plant as it turned out. Another 50 BEs were on the rocks and buildings at the water's edge!!! The 100+ birds in a 200m long area were mostly adults, but there was a good representation of younger birds. As you can imagine, it was quite a sight. Moreso, I think, for a hawk watcher.

The official 'opening' of our new viewing tower took place on Good Friday, April 10, during the annual Open House. By then, however, the jury had already reported - the consensus is that the new tower is a success! Most often heard were comments about the solidness of the structure, the quality of the construction and the central location. People looking for migrating raptors could be found on the tower in most conditions, even in relatively high winds.

There is no doubt that we have improved the line of sight and gained time for viewing birds coming from the east, and that it is now easier to see birds travelling low and close to the edge of the ridge. Dave Copeland told me that he would not have had enough time or the view necessary to identify this year's Ferruginous Hawk if he had been watching from ground level. Thanks very much once again to all the people who helped in obtaining this fine addition to the Hawkwatch.

As you will see in the migration summary elsewhere in this newsletter, numbers were up somewhat from 1997 but still below our 17-year average of 14,000+ raptors per season. Unlike last year, 1998 did see a single day count over 1,000 birds - March 29 was spectacular, with 1,532 birds including 9 Bald Eagles.

For the third year in a row our area experienced unusual spring weather. A very warm February extended into March. While the expected influx of Red-shoulders and Red-Tails did not materialize, Ospreys showed up almost a week earlier than normal and we had a good flight of Broad-wings. Be sure to read John Steven's 1998 season summary for more on this. Thanks again to all our 1998 counters, especially Jack Ryan, Tom Reavley and Paul Summerskill who are our anchors. Thanks also to the members of the Executive, whose help is much appreciated.

Good Friday saw about 750 human visitors and just over 300 raptors visit Beamer CA in excellent weather. Although nothing to sneeze at, the number of people was lower than in the last few years. We may have hit a saturation point in letting area residents know about this great natural phenomenon happening right over their heads.

It's almost August and in a few short weeks the raptors will start moving south. Elsewhere in this issue you'll find a list of fall hawk watch sites in our area. Don't wait for Spring – get out in September, October and November too! I hope to see you before the next season at Beamer.❖

1998 OFFICIAL HAWKWATCH COUNTERS

Roy Baker, John Barker, Glen Barnett, John Black, Bouwe Bergsma, Geoff Carpentier, Barry Cherriere, Jim Coey, Dave Copeland, Bob Curry, Keith Dieroff, Bruce Duncan, Denys Gardiner, Ray Geras, Ann Gray, Jerry Guild, Bruce Harschnitz, Mary Ellen Hebb, Wolfgang Luft, Stuart Mackenzie, Kevin McLaughlin, John Olmsted, Tom Reavley, John Roberts, Jack Ryan, Ron Scovell, Gerry Shemilt, John Stevens, Mike Street, Paul Summerskill.

FALL HAWKWATCH LOCATIONS FOR 1998

by Mike Stre

It isn't necessary to wait for next spring's Beamer Hawkwatch to see more raptors. Just as the southern shore of Lake Ontario causes hawks to pass by Beamer early in the year, the east side of Lake Huron and the north shores of Lake Ontario and Lake Erie concentrate birds in the fall. (NOTE - the Hawk Cliff count has moved east.) From North to Southwest, good locations are:

Lake Ontario Sites -

CRANBERRY MARSH, AJAX: take Hwy 401, exit south at Harwood Ave., Ajax. Turn left (east) on Bayly Rd., then right (south) on Halls Rd. to the 2nd path to the marsh. Park on the east side and take the boardwalk. Numbers are good except in strong south winds. (Fall counting by Greater Toronto Raptor Watch)

HIGH PARK, TORONTO: the park is located in the west end of Toronto, off Colborne Lodge Rd. between Bloor and the Queensway. The watch site is north of the restaurant. Numbers are good except in strong south winds. (Fall counting by Greater Toronto Raptor Watch)

WOODLAND CEMETERY/HIGH LEVEL BRIDGE, HAMILTON: Cemetery is off Plains Rd., behind the Royal Botanical Gardens in Burlington (follow RBG signs). West of the RBG Plains Rd. follows the outline of the bay, then becomes York Blvd. in Hamilton and leads to the bridge. A small park (historical site) near the bridge overlooks the west side of the cemetery. Numbers are best with moderate north or northwest winds.

CLAPPISON'S CUT, HAMILTON: this site is at the top of the escarpment where Hwy. 6 meets Hwy. 5. From Hwy. 403 take Hwy. 6 exit for Guelph to the top of the hill. Parking is available on side streets, the best ones being just below (city side of) the intersection. Caution - heavy, fast traffic. Numbers are best when winds have an east or south component.

Lake Erie Sites -

LONG POINT: from Hwy. 59 take Reg. Rd. 42 west to Clear Creek. At one time the Long Point Bird Observatory had a banding station in this area. Most species are seen and numbers are good except in strong south winds.

HAWK CLIFF, PORT BURWELL: difficulties with owners of adjoining properties at the old site near Port Stanley have resulted in a test of a new watch and counting site in the day use area of Port Burwell Provincial Park this year (1998). Admission fee. From Ingersoll on Hwy. 401 take Hwy. 19 south through Tilsonburg to Port Burwell. The original Hawk Cliff site is still open - from Aylmer, take Hwy. 73 south to the lake, turn right (west) on Reg. Rd. 24 to T- intersection with Reg. Rd. 22 (look for sign), go south to end of road. From Port Stanley, take Reg. Rd. 24 east to same intersection. Numbers usually higher than Long Point, good except in strong south winds. (Fall Hawkwatch by Hawk Cliff Foundation)

POINT PELEE NATIONAL PARK, LEAMINGTON: Westbound birds sometimes turn left and go to the tip of Pelee. Falcons and Osprey will cross the lake, most others will turn around. Numbers usually small, southwest winds seem to be best for peregrines. Falcon peak occurs at the end of September.

HOLIDAY BEACH CA, AMHERSTBURG: take Hwy. 18 west from Leamington or east from Amherstburg, turn south at Malden Centre (follow signs). Admission fee. Numbers can be very high, best with northerly winds. (Fall counting b Holiday Beach Migration Observatory)

LAKE ERIE METROPARK, south of DETROIT: take I-75 south from Detroit about 20 mi. to Gibraltar Rd. Go east on Gibraltar Rd. to West Jefferson Ave., then south to the park. Admission fee. Numbers can be even higher than at Holiday Beach, best with northerly winds. (Fall counting by Southeastern Michigan Raptor Research)❖

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH EXECUTIVE 1998

HON. PRESIDENT: Walter Klabunde
PRESIDENT: Mike Street, 73 Hatton Drive, Ancaster, ON L9G 2H5 .....(905) 648-3737
VICE-PRESIDENT: Mary Ellen Hebb, 47 College Ave., Port Rowan, ON N0E 1M0.....(519) 586-7141
SECRETARY/MEMBERSHIP: Glenn Barnett, 87 Highland Park Dr., Dundas,ON L9H 6G5 .....(905) 628-2093
TREASURER: John Stevens, 1365 Bayview Ave; Unit 3, Toronto, ON M4G 3A5.....(416) 484-4079
EDITOR: Bruce Harschnitz, 81 Walnut St., Paris, ON N3L 2J5 .....(519) 442-5429
COUNTERS/EDUCATION: Paul Summerskill, 37 Ann Street, St. Catharines, ON L2N 5E9.....(905) 934-7887
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SPECIAL PROJECTS: Keith Dieroff, 75 Houghton Ave. South, Hamilton, ON L8K 2M9.....(905) 545-5859

1998 Migration Summary

By: John Stevens

The 1998 hawkwatch season at the Beamer Conservation Area Parking Lot (Beamer) will appear historically as a new average year. The total number of raptors counted was about 5% below the long term (18 year) average and 3% above the five year average. However, upon examination of the individual species totals, the year was anything but average.

As an example, consider Turkey Vultures which in 1997 had for the first time achieved the title of most common migrating raptor at Beamer. In 1998, their count reached a record 3,279, about 3% above the previous record set in 1994. Still, they lost their title to the Broad-winged Hawks whose total of 3,886 was the greatest in nine years and 70% above their 5 year average. This marked the first time since 1986 that this species, which is the most common migrant at the majority of eastern and central North American hawkwatches, had been the most common migrant at Beamer.

Offsetting the good flights of the vultures and broadwings was the third lowest flight of Sharp-shinned Hawks since we began counting in 1975. The season's total of 2,816 was more than 1,000 below the long term average and 400 below the 5-year average. It appears that the decline in migrant sharpies seen in the last decade at the east coast lookouts may now be happening at Beamer.

The count of 2,235 Red-tailed Hawks represents the lowest total for that species in the 24 year history of our watch. This, in spite of the fact that limited coverage in February added 76 birds to the total. Historically, this species has been the most consistent migrant at Beamer, only once before being more than 600 birds from the long-term average of 3,021. The mild winter of 1997-98 may have had an effect on the red-tailed count. Birds may have short-stopped north of our watch and certainly we missed some migrants coming through in February which was unusually mild and snow-free in our area this year.

It is tempting to use this same rationale to explain why the Rough-legged Hawk count of 32 was only 50% of the 5-year average and 42% of the long-term average as this species will winter to the north however, does it explain why the Northern Harrier count of 84 was only 54% of the long-term average or why the Red-shouldered Hawk count of 547 was the lowest since 1981 and just 63% of the long-term average? For many years, Beamer has been the best place anywhere to watch Red-shouldered Hawks in migration. Between 1976 and 1994, we watched a steady, albeit irregular, increase in the number of them. Suddenly, we are 61% below the peak year and the count was at a level not seen in 17 years.

Last year in this summary I referred to the Red-shouldered Hawks as endangered. As Ron Pittaway kindly pointed out, they are not endangered 'in' the legal sense, but our numbers suggest that they may be endangered from a practical perspective.

Not all the news was gloomy in 1998. March 29 was a great day with over 1,500 migrants passing including 858 Turkey Vultures. That is more vultures than we'd ever had in an entire season up to 1983. There were 13 different species seen that day including a very early Osprey and a Peregrine Falcon. For me, the best day was April 12 when 14 of the 15 raptor species normally seen in a season were seen on the one day. Only a Peregrine was missing and it is uncommon at Beamer. There were 587 migrants in total on a day to really test your identification skills.

Other highlights in 1998 included our second Ferruginous Hawk ever for which I hope reports have been filed with the Ontario Bird Records Committee. 1998 was also the first year that we've counted 3 Swainson's Hawks. This species is becoming almost an annual visitor at Beamer and one was even banded at Hawk Cliff, near Port Stanley, during the 1997 fall migration.

Our coverage this year extended over 80 days although there were 8 days when no migrants were counted. Overall the coverage was almost 100 hours below the long-term average. This was partly the result of reduced hours in March when a two week stretch between March 8 and March 23 had only four days with 6 hours or more of coverage and 10 days when the count was three birds or less. Of course, it was this stretch of poor weather that led to the good flights in the last week of the month capped off on March 29.

As the hours of counting were down but the number of migrants about average, the number of raptors per hour was over the long-term average by about 10%. It is tempting to attribute part of this "improvement" to the new tower. It is also interesting to note that the proportion of unidentified raptors is about one third of the long-term average. It was hoped that the tower would assist with identification by giving us longer looks at some birds. More data is needed to evaluate these speculations.

This year marked the first time in over 20 years that Walter Klabunde of Lewiston, New York was not a major part of the monitoring program. We miss you Walter and hope that the fall flights in Delaware are nice and low for you in your retirement.

1998 also marks the last year that Gordon Bellerby will be the coordinator of the watchers. Thanks Gordon for an excellent stint in what can be a thankless job.

Thanks also to Paul Summerskill for assembling all the data, covering the emergencies and stick handling the conflicts. To all the official counters, listed elsewhere in this newsletter, many thanks. We hope you enjoyed it and next year you'll have a much better day. To those members who have yet to step forward, don't be reticent. There are generally experienced watchers present to provide assistance and like so many things, you become much better at spotting and identifying when you have to do it.❖

1998 NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH MONTHLY COUNT SUMMARY

SPECIES	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	TOTALS
Black Vulture				
Turkey Vulture	1898	1346	33	**3277**
Osprey	2	33	7	**42**
Am. Swallow-tail Kite				
Mississippi Kite				
Bald Eagle	19	5	8	**32**
Northern Harrier	23	46	15	**84**
Sharp-shinned Hawk	512	1380	923	**2815**
Cooper's Hawk	89	76	20	**185**
Northern Goshawk	8	6		**14**
Red-shouldered Hawk	492	53	3	**548**
Broad-winged Hawk		2869	1017	**3886**
Swainson's Hawk		3		**3**
Red-tailed Hawk	1249	842	68	**2159**
Ferruginous Hawk		1		**1**
Rough-legged Hawk	11	20	1	**32**
Golden Eagle	4	2		**6**
American Kestrel	48	21	8	**77**
Merlin	3	7	5	**15**
Peregrine Falcon	1	1	2	**4**
Gyrfalcon				
Prairie Falcon				
Unid. Accipiter	4	15	1	**20**
Unid. Buteo	64	81	3	**148**
Unid. Eagle		1		**1**
Unid. Falcon		17		**17**
Unid. Raptor	5	22	14	**41**
Total Raptors	**4432**	**6847**	**2128**	**13407**
Hours Counted	**167**	**221**	**103**	**491**
Raptors/Hour	**26.6**	**31.0**	**20.6**	**27.3**

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH COUNTS - MARCH 1998

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Totals
Black Vulture																																0
Turkey Vulture					1		5						1		4		1			2				39	22	95	347	282	858	51	190	1898
Osprey																												1	1			2
Am. Swallow-tail Kite																																0
Mississippi Kite																																0
Bald Eagle							2	1								2	1							1		1		1	9		1	19
Northern Harrier							3						1													4	5	4	4	2		23
Sharp-shinned Hawk		1	1				1						2			4	3							7	4	8	15	155	133	67	111	512
Cooper's Hawk		1				1	1	2						1		3	3								2	2	8	23	21	11	10	89
Northern Goshawk																	1									1		2	2	2		8
Red-shouldered Hawk		1	1	1	2	1	14	3							1	5	15							27	42	96	27	23	219	12	2	492
Broad-winged Hawk																																0
Swainson's Hawk																																0
Red-tailed Hawk	1	1	7	61	88	15	155	27			2		11	2	25	93	57			30			2	87	153	22	58	72	253	15	12	1249
Ferruginous Hawk																																0
Rough-legged Hawk							2									1	2								1	1			2	1	1	11
Golden Eagle																								1	1				2			4
American Kestrel	1																							1		2	12	20	4	4	4	48
Merlin																										1	2					3
Peregrine Falcon																													1			1
Gyrfalcon																																0
Prairie Falcon																																0
Unid. Accipiter																								1			1			2		4
Unid. Buteo						1	3	1									5							16	12		2	2	22			64
Unid. Eagle																																0
Unid. Falcon																																0
Unid. Raptor																								1	2		1		1			5
Total Raptors	**2**	**4**	**9**	**62**	**91**	**18**	**186**	**34**	**0**	**0**	**2**	**0**	**15**	**3**	**30**	**108**	**88**	**0**	**0**	**32**	**0**	**0**	**2**	**181**	**239**	**233**	**478**	**585**	**1532**	**167**	**331**	**4432**
Hours Counted	5.75	6	7.2	6	6	5.5	8	2.6	4.5	4.25	4	4	8.5	3	7	6.5	6	2	1.5	5.2	1		4	6.25	4.25	8	8.2	8	9	7	7.5	166.7
Wind Direction	SW/ W	NW/ SW	SW	NE	W/ NE	S/N	S/ NE	NE	NE/ SW	NW	NE	NW	SW	N	N	NE	N/E	E	E	NE	NNE		NW	W/S	S	SSW	SSW	SW	N/ SW	SSW	W	

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH COUNTS - APRIL 1998

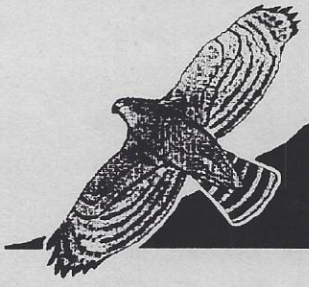
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	Totals
Black Vulture																															0
Turkey Vulture	73	20	47	123	84	171	50	4		156	144	201	13	18	35		10	57	46	12	13	7	2	10	21	7	3	10	6	3	1346
Osprey					3		1			1	1	2	1					6	2	1	4	4			2	1		3	1		33
Am. Swallow-tail Kite																															0
Mississippi Kite																															0
Bald Eagle				1								1						1										1	1		5
Northern Harrier	1	1		4	1	2				2	5	7	3	3				5	4		2	4	1					1			46
Sharp-shinned Hawk	25	6	12	20	34	48	39	2	2	11	26	188	219	79	29		3	79	130	22	95	30	9	60	34	30	13	13	69	53	1380
Cooper's Hawk	4		5	6	2	5	1	1		4		5	1	3	2		1	5	1	1	5	4			4	6	2		7	1	76
Northern Goshawk			1		2	1						1													1						6
Red-shouldered Hawk	5	2	2	10	7	3	2			3	2	5	3	1	2				1		1	1			2	1					53
Broad-winged Hawk												16	8	4	7			295	571	153	435	133	1	6	89	139	104	256	507	145	2869
Swainson's Hawk																												1	2		3
Red-tailed Hawk	17	2	55	60	68	50	14	2		133	63	146	19	4	25		2	37	7	18	27	14	7	2	9	9	17	8	18	9	842
Ferruginous Hawk																							1								1
Rough-legged Hawk			2		1	1				6	3	3		1				1				1							1		20
Golden Eagle						1						1																			2
American Kestrel				1	1		1					2	4	1				1	3	1	1	1		1	1			1	1		21
Merlin						1				1		1					1	1			1		1								7
Peregrine Falcon																													1		1
Gyrfalcon																															0
Prairie Falcon																															0
Unid. Accipiter			2	1	4	1				2								2			1	1							1		15
Unid. Buteo		1		1	9		15			4	11	8	2					4				15			2				7	2	81
Unid. Eagle																					1										1
Unid. Falcon				1						1	1				2						12										17
Unid. Raptor							3			2	7											3			3	2			2		22
Total Raptors	**125**	**32**	**126**	**228**	**216**	**284**	**126**	**9**	**2**	**326**	**263**	**587**	**273**	**114**	**102**	**0**	**17**	**494**	**765**	**208**	**598**	**218**	**22**	**79**	**168**	**195**	**139**	**294**	**624**	**213**	**6847**
Hours Counted	5.75	6	7.5	8	9	7	7	4	5	9	7.75	9	8	4.5	6.25	2	7.8	9.5	8.5	8	8	6.75	7	7.25	10.5	9.7	7.5	9	7.75	8	221
Wind Direction	SW	SW	N	NE	NNW/ NNE	NW/ NE	NW/ NE	NE	ENE	N	NNW/ E	S	NE	N/ SW	W/ NE	N	ESE/ W	W/ SW	SW/ NE	N	NE/ SE	NE	N	S	NW	ENE	N	VAR	SW/ SE	N	

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH COUNTS - MAY 1998

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Totals
Black Vulture																																0
Turkey Vulture	8	11	5				4	1							4																	33
Osprey		1			1		4								1																	7
Am. Swallow-tail Kite																																0
Mississippi Kite																																0
Bald Eagle		2				1	1					1	1		2																	8
Northern Harrier	1	4			1	3	1	1				2			2																	15
Sharp-shinned Hawk	205	277	12	2	29	118	135	19		33		66	15		12																	923
Cooper's Hawk	2	5					5					1	1	6																		20
Northern Goshawk																																0
Red-shouldered Hawk	2											1																				3
Broad-winged Hawk	394	225	14		7	236	95	3		7		25			11																	1017
Swainson's Hawk																																0
Red-tailed Hawk	1	7	1		1	9	31			2		9	3		4																	68
Ferruginous Hawk																																0
Rough-legged Hawk	1																															1
Golden Eagle																																0
American Kestrel		3				1	3					1																				8
Merlin						2	2			1																						5
Peregrine Falcon			1												1																	2
Gyrfalcon																																0
Prairie Falcon																																0
Unid. Accipiter			1																													1
Unid. Buteo			2												1																	3
Unid. Eagle																																0
Unid. Falcon																																0
Unid. Raptor			8			5									1																	14
Total Raptors	**614**	**535**	**44**	**2**	**39**	**375**	**281**	**24**	**0**	**43**	**0**	**106**	**20**	**6**	**39**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**2128**
Hours Counted	7.75	7.5	6	6.5	6	8.5	8.5	5.5	4	9	4	7	8	6.5	8.5																	103.25
Wind Direction	E/N	N	NE	N/ NE	N	N/ NE	N	NNE	SE	NE	NE	ESE/ NE		N	NO WIND																	

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH 1981-1998 SPECIES TOTALS

	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1975-1998 TOTALS	1981-98 Average	Highest Total & Date	Earliest Date
Black Vulture												1							1	1	1-Apr 4/92	Apr 4/92
Turkey Vulture	671	521	895	616	948	837	977	2331	1406	1463	1785	1990	1852	3189	2151	2946	3092	3277	35876	1719	748-Mar 26/88	Feb 23/84
Osprey	19	27	20	38	36	33	30	41	36	40	46	64	45	69	47	56	28	42	816	40	16-Apr 12/92	Mar 26/77
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite														1					1	1	1-Apr 15/94	Apr 15/94
Mississippi Kite																	1		1	1	1-12 May/97	May 12/97
Bald Eagle	1	7	7	5	10	14	7	16	17	15	17	22	14	40	24	33	17	32	331	17	12-Apr 28/96	Feb 26/86
Northern Harrier	102	131	125	127	113	143	217	162	175	194	219	209	126	177	177	172	125	84	3222	164	35-Apr 18/96	Feb 19/84
Sharp-shinned Hawk	4095	4880	3931	4683	4480	3549	2831	3108	3576	7004	3767	3418	3475	4846	2136	3290	3047	2815	91821	3830	1556-Apr 18/76	Feb 11/87
Cooper's Hawk	179	121	160	190	152	196	199	229	180	311	220	199	209	263	256	295	221	185	4447	209	50-Apr 5/93	Feb 11/87
Northern Goshawk	8	51	73	67	25	21	31	27	14	24	20	34	28	73	15	37	16	14	631	32	11-Mar 24/84	Feb 28/88
Red-shouldered Hawk	528	638	624	838	764	901	876	861	1102	1341	761	1187	1030	1419	705	694	796	548	19342	867	655-Mar 23/94	Feb 23/84
Broad-winged Hawk	6904	2305	4118	7844	8239	3823	1628	2910	2304	4428	2063	2781	1963	2335	1779	1550	1849	3886	78694	3483	6007-Apr 21/85	Apr 4/85
Swainson's Hawk					1			1	1				2	2		1	2	3	15	2	2-Apr 29/98	Apr 15/94
Red-tailed Hawk	2604	2607	3150	3105	3410	2852	3265	3567	2615	3482	3023	3661	2684	2890	2861	3584	2572	2159	69489	3016	744-Mar 16/96	Feb 11/87
Ferruginous Hawk												1						1	2	1	2 dates with 1 bird	Apr 13/92
Rough-legged Hawk	41	131	59	85	48	45	77	87	45	127	145	128	35	62	87	98	44	32	1729	76	24-Apr 2/82	Feb 11/87
Golden Eagle	4	4	8	6	12	7	6	3	7	10	8	12	6	10	4	13	6	6	149	7	4-Apr 29/83,Apr 28/96	Feb 24/84
American Kestrel	114	102	71	56	150	126	85	148	132	207	180	92	93	122	70	61	84	77	2432	109	44-Mar 14/90	Feb 25/87
Merlin	2	5	2	2	5	5	12	5	4	9	11	12	9	23	14	22	14	15	192	10	6-Apr 25/96	Mar 1/94
Peregrine Falcon	3	3			2	1	1	4	2	6	5	6	2	4	1	2	2	4	54	3	3 dates with 2 birds	Mar 12/88
Gyrfalcon																		0	1	0	1-Apr 20/77	Apr 20/77
Prairie Falcon															1			0	1	1	1-Apr 19/95	
Unid. Raptors	647	435	467	640	880	1504	266	634	592	582	2681	681	534	452	480	249	189	227	13799	674		
Total Raptors	15922	11968	13710	18302	19275	14057	10508	14134	12208	19243	14951	14678	12107	15977	10808	13103	12105	13407	323463	14248		
Hours Counted	562.60	583.10	565.00	564.60	608.50	576.20	681.50	608.20	499.30	574.50	548.50	541.50	538.50	530.95	555.70	454.50	508.35	490.95	11541.05	555.14		
Birds per Hour	28.3	20.5	24.3	32.4	31.7	24.4	15.4	23.2	24.5	33.5	27.3	27.1	22.5	30.1	19.4	28.8	23.8	27.3	*	25.8		



Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Newsletter

Newsletter No. 18, February 1999

DAVE COPELAND TO SPEAK AT APRIL 17TH BANQUET - OUR 25TH YEAR

Once again our annual banquet and general meeting will be held at Puddicombe Farms on Hwy. 8 in Winona. Changes made at the winery in the last year will allow us to start things off at 5PM and conduct our own wine tasting session. The evening's Guest Speaker will be Dave Copeland, one of the founders of the Hawkwatch at Beamer CA. Dave will tell about the early days and some of the unusual things which have happened over the years.

Socializing and the bucket raffle will begin at 5PM. The pre-supper wine tasting starts at 5:15PM. Members of the NPH will select the wines for the evening in advance, ensuring they are chilled properly if required. Dinner will start around 6:15PM. Keith and Karen Dieroff will look after the ever popular bucket raffle (donations are still needed).

This will be an enjoyable evening so get your tickets now. The room can accommodate 42 people; 30 tickets are still available, priced at $20 for members and $25 for non-members. Call Mike Street or John Stevens to make arrangements for a ticket(s) or Keith Dieroff for a raffle donation - phone numbers are in the Executive listing in this newsletter.❖

COUNTERS STILL NEEDED FOR 1999 SEASON

This year Mike Street will schedule Counters, assisting Paul Summerskill who is the overall coordinator of Counters. Please call Mike at (905) 648-3737 to schedule 1999 hawk watching day(s).

We especially need coverage at the beginning and end of the season. While early March can be slow, and in May most people want to head to the woods for warblers, our work also needs attention. If enough people offer to help, it should be easy to fill in all the dates.

If you are interested in learning to become a counter, be sure to let Mike know. Many of our observers are glad to share the work and help newcomers, and we will also have our Hawk ID Workshop on weekends from March 27 through April 25.❖

NINTH ANNUAL OPEN HOUSE FRIDAY, APRIL 2ND

The NPH will be inviting the public to view the migrating hawks when we hold our ninth annual Open House on April 2nd. Let's hope for good weather and a good flight - if we have an early and warm spring, as happened last year, anything is possible. In case of really bad weather, events will be postponed to Saturday, April 3rd.

Members of the Hawkwatch stationed in the center of the circle and at the point will help visitors to see and identify raptors passing over Beamer. (Volunteers are needed - please contact Mike Street.) A highlight of Open House day for the past few years has been the release of a rehabilitated raptor. This year we hope to see a Peregrine Falcon or a Red-tailed Hawk released around 1PM.

The very welcome coffee truck will be parked in the circle and the special kids program with Carla Carlson of Niagara Nature Tours will run at 11AM and noon. Bruce Duncan will again give his popular 'Hawk Talks' for visitors on the hour from 11AM-2PM, and we hope to have the folks from the Mountsberg Raptor Centre present once more. As in past years, there will also be displays from birding and nature organizations, including our hosts, the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, and the Ontario Field Ornithologists.

Be sure to invite your family and friends; it should be a good day for them and for the birds too.❖

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THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

by Mike Street

I think that this is going to be an interesting season. We have had two years of unusually late winter and early spring weather, with respectable but less than average total counts, so many of us are hoping for a barn burner. Keep your fingers crossed!

One of the benefits of the Internet is that there is now a terrific amount of good weather information available to those of us who are online - multi-day weather system maps and forecasts, jet stream maps and, especially, weather radar. Want to know what it's like on the Niagara Peninsula any morning? Just do an Internet search for 'Buffalo Nexrad' - you'll be amazed. With a bit of work and study, sooner rather than later we're going to be able to predict good flights at Beamer a few days ahead.

Again this year we will be trying to pass on our knowledge to others through the Hawk ID Workshop. Many people want to learn to identify raptors but are a bit intimidated by the weekend scrum around the official counter. Having a free service in the middle of the circle has proven popular, so we will repeat it again in 1999 on Saturdays and Sundays from March 27 through April 25. Anyone who wants to learn about identifying raptors is welcome; just look for the sign. Experienced people willing to help the learners are needed. Please contact me at (905) 648-3737.

Members may have noted that most members of the Executive have served for five years or more. As the Hawkwatch approaches its 25th Anniversary, it is time to bring some new blood aboard. I have advised the other members of the Executive that I will be stepping down as President next year, and would like to take on another role with NPH at that time. Some of the other Execs would like a change too. NPH work is not onerous, either physically or in terms of time required, but it does take a little time and some dedication. Please consider giving some of yours to a good cause. If you can help, or would like more information, my phone number is just one paragraph up, or talk to me or any other of the Execs at Beamer. Any help will be appreciated.

Thanks in advance to all our 1999 counters, especially Jack Ryan and Tom Reavley who will again be our anchors, and to Paul Summerskill who will help coordinate things. I'm looking forward to seeing them and all of you at Beamer. 1999 REALLY STARTS MARCH 1!❖

THE HAWK MIGRATION ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA

By John Stevens

In late 1997, I was acclaimed as a member of the Board of Directors of the Hawk Migration Association of North America (HMANA) when only nine nominations were received for nine positions. This is the first of what I hope will be a regular report to the NPHW Newsletter.

HISTORY

In 1974, a conference on hawk migration, organized by Hawk Mountain Sanctuary and the National (US) Audubon Society, was held in Syracuse, NY. One result of the conference was the birth of HMANA which was incorporated in early 1975 as a not for profit, all volunteer organization. Its purpose was to conserve raptor populations, to advance knowledge of raptor migration, to monitor migrant raptor populations and to provide, through the use of standard reporting forms and procedures, a data bank on migration for the use of professional and amateur ornithologists.

Early efforts by HMANA included; publication of the proceedings of the 1974 conference; development of a standardized count form (substantially revised in 1978 and modified in 1992); organization of regional districts for purposes of reporting data; publication of a semi-annual newsletter containing seasonal reports of the watches; and organizing additional conferences. Over the years, HMANA evolved as membership grew and hawk watches were established across the continent. The newsletter became the **Journal** in 1998 under the editorship of Jeff Dodge, still published semi-annually with issues devoted to the spring and fall migrations. Regional reporting areas changed to more closely reflect flight routes rater than geographical or political boundaries. Eight conferences have been held with the next one scheduled for June 8-11, 2000 in the 25th year of the organization.

More recent developments have included the publication of **Hawk Flights**, a newsletter to members between **Journal** issues, establishment of an electronic communication forum, BIRDHAWK listserv, and initiation of an internet wet site, found at *http://www.hmana.org*.

OUTLOOK

Wildlife watching has become a big business. By 1996, direct expenditures in the U.S. were $29.2 billion with the industry impact being $85.4 billion or .79% of the U.S. Gross National Product. The growth rate exceeds that of the economy as a whole by about a factor of 2. A similar impact is suspected to exist in Canada.

One result has been an increase in the number and membership totals of organizations for the birdwatching

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public. The NPHW is a small example. HMANA membership, after an initial period of growth, has leveled off between 7-800 members since 1984. Like many volunteer organizations, the operations have come to rely on a small group of people. Because of the increased demand on their time, some drop-out, compounding the work load for the remainder. Present conditions of the public's interest suggest that HMANA could play a larger role.

BUSINESS PLAN

The HMANA Board of Directors recognized a need for change and, at a meeting in December 1997, adopted a revised mission statement:

"To conserve raptor populations through the scientific study, enjoyment and appreciation of raptor migration."

A number of goals were established which generally represent a continuation and rededication of ongoing initiatives. At a Board meeting in January 1999, an ambitious business plan was initiated to achieve the goals.

These goals include;

1) To inspire and educate the public on the value of hawk migration studies and to facilitate broad public involvement at count sites by supporting local efforts to provide meaningful watchable wildlife and educational opportunities. It is a goal of HMANA to promote conservation of hawks through the advancement of scientific theory and education outreach.
2) To expand HMANA's membership and involve members in high-priority raptor conservation activities at local, regional, and national levels.
3) To coordinate scientific, volunteer-based raptor migrations counts to monitor the status, trends, and distributional changes of migrant raptor populations across the continent by;
   a) ensuring site-specific standardization of data collections through protocol and written documentation, forms, and techniques, in accordance with standardized scientific methods;
   b) providing technical support, as needed to improve data collections and analysis procedures, at existing count sites;
   c) providing inspiration, expertise and training in support of local volunteers to facilitate the start-up of new count sites, especially in regions where data are lacking; and
   d) providing technical support for each site for the analysis and interpretations of migration count data.
4) To provide and maintain a central depository for migration data to facilitate its use in accordance with the HMANA Data Release Policy.
5) To ensure the timely dissemination of migration counts and trends to HMANA members, the scientific community, public and private agencies, conservationists, and the general public to promote the cause of raptor conservation by;
   a) Communication through publications, web pages and email list-server (BIRDHAWK), and conferences.
   b) Collaboration with organizations which have similar missions.

Briefly, the business plan incorporates a major change by which the organization will move to hire staff beginning with a program director. One of the first functions of this employee will be to raise funds. In order to get the program underway, a campaign has been launched to raise start-up funds during 1999 so that the new program director can start in 2000.

More about this in my next report, but in the interim, if anyone wishes more information about HMANA, please contact me, either at the hawk watch or through information given elsewhere in this newsletter.❖

1999 NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH EXECUTIVE

HON. PRESIDENT: Walter Klabunde
PRESIDENT: Mike Street, 73 Hatton Drive, Ancaster, ON L9G 2H5 ..... (905) 648-3737
VICE-PRESIDENT: Mary Ellen Hebb, 47 College Ave., Port Rowan, ON N0E 1M0 ..... (519) 586-7141
SECRETARY/MEMBERSHIP: Glenn Barnett, 87 Highland Park Dr., Dundas, ON L9H 6G5 ..... (905) 628-2093
TREASURER: John Stevens, 1365 Bayview Ave; Unit 3, Toronto, ON M4G 3A5 ..... (416) 484-4079
EDITOR/STATISTICS: Bruce Harschnitz, 81 Walnut St., Paris, ON N3L 2J5 ..... (519) 442-5429
COUNTERS/EDUCATION: Paul Summerskill, 37 Ann Street, St. Catharines, ON L2N 5E9 ..... (905) 934-7887
RESEARCH/HMANA: Bruce Duncan, 22 Church St., Paris, ON N3L 1H3 ..... (519) 442-2477
SPECIAL PROJECTS: Keith Dieroff, 75 Houghton Ave. South, Hamilton, ON L8K 2M9 ..... (905) 545-5859

MIGRANT RAPTORS AND BREEDING OWLS OF THE REDHILL VALLEY

By Rosalind Chaundy

In the spring of 1996, a migratory hawk and breeding owl survey was conducted in the Redhill Valley, Hamilton, Ontario. This study was done to provide information to the Hamilton Region Conservation Authority on the behaviour of migrating raptors as they passed the Redhill Valley and to determine if the valley is a suitable place to have a public hawk watch. Surveys were also done for breeding owls to determine which species and how many of each were currently found in the valley.

Field work for the study was conducted between March 12 and May 9, 1996. The days chosen were those that were thought to have the best weather for migrating raptors, although it was not always possible. The site chosen for the watch was at the top of the Niagara Escarpment on an old, unused ski hill situated near the junction of Mohawk Rd. and Mountain Brow Blvd. on the east side of the city of Hamilton. The hawk watch data was also compared with hawk watch data from the Beamer Conservation Area, Grimsby, a site about 20 km to the east (Table 1). This site is about 1.5 km away from Lake Ontario and on top of the Niagara Escarpment.

In total, 1,506 migrating raptors were seen from the hawk watch site in the Redhill Valley. Turkey Vultures made up a disproportionate number of the birds that were seen. Many of the birds that passed by Beamer Conservation Area to the east were not seen at the Redhill Valley hawk watch site. It is thought that many of the birds were flying close to the lake, and therefore were not visible from this site. The raptors may also have been more spread out than at Beamer.

This site would not make a good general public hawk watch, not only because not enough birds pass by to make it interesting but also a large majority of those that do pass by are very distant or not visible to the naked eye.

Small numbers of migrating raptors were found roosting or hunting in the King's Forest portion of the valley. Coniferous areas were used by nine Turkey Vultures and three other raptors found roosting. The several dozen birds of prey thought or known to be hunting in the valley indicate that although the Redhill Valley is used for feeding by migrant raptors, it is not a major feeding area.

A COMPARISON OF MIGRATING RAPTOR NUMBERS BETWEEN THE REDHILL VALLEY AND BEAMER CONSERVATION AREA

IDENTIFIED SPECIES	REDHILL TOTAL	ADJUSTED BEAMER TOTAL*
TV	929	1113
OS	4	17
BE	0	13
NH	16	61
SS	141	966
CH	14	90
NG	1	4
RS	7	274
BW	36	703
RT	166	1378
RL	4	23
GE	0	6
AK	12	20
ME	2	3
PF	1	1
TOTAL	1343	4672

* - Adjusted Beamer Total = Total # seen at Beamer multiplied by .65 (128.4 hours at Redhill/199 hours at Beamer) less a further 10% for the difference in the number of observers.

Between two and four Great Horned Owls use the valley on a constant basis although no proof of breeding was found in 1996. No proof of breeding was found for Screech Owl either, a species for which it is difficult to confirm breeding. Nonetheless it is possible that as many as five pairs may breed in the valley. No other species of owl was found despite the use of tape-recorded calls of Long-eared and Saw-whet owl.❖

Please forward comments, suggestions or articles for the NPH Newsletter to the Editor, Bruce Harschnitz via e-mail at **M_B_Harschnitz@msn.com** *or via regular mail. Your input and ideas would be appreciated!!!*

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH MIGRATION CALENDAR FOR BEAMER CONSERVATION AREA

NOTES:

1) Species initials and Right (➢) or Left (➣) arrow:

This combination indicates the start (➢) or end (➣) of the normal (at Beamer) migration period for that species. The same in **bold** type indicates the start or end of a noticeable peak period for that species. The box in which this combination is located indicates the day and month on which the period is likely to start or end.

2) A number, followed by species initial, followed by a slash (/) and a two-digit number:

In this combination, the largest number of that species ever seen in one day is given first; the two-digit number following the / indicates the year in which this occurred. The box in which this combination is located indicates the day and month on which the event occurred. Example: 655 RS /94 in the March 23 box indicates that the highest number of Red-shouldered Hawks recorded in one day was 655, seen on March 23, 1994.

TV - Turkey Vulture
BV - Black Vulture
OS - Osprey
SK - American Swallow-tailed Kite
BE - Bald Eagle
GE - Golden Eagle

NH - Northern Harrier
SS - Sharp-shinned Hawk
CH - Cooper's Hawk
NG - Northern Goshawk
RS - Red-shouldered Hawk
BW - Broad-winged Hawk
RT - Red-tailed Hawk
SW - Swainson's Hawk

RL - Rough-legged Hawk
FH - Ferruginous Hawk
AK - American Kestrel
ME - Merlin
PF - Peregrine Falcon
GF - Gyrfalcon
PR - Prairie Falcon

The following information, based on 24 years of data from the Beamer Hawkwatch, has been updated to show significant 1998 events.

Largest number of raptors in one season: 19,724 in 1985.

NH➢, SS➢, CH➢, RT➢, RL➢ & AK➢ began February 20.

MARCH

1 **RT➢** NG➢	2 GE➢	3 RS➢	4	5	6 BE➢	7
8 TV➢	9	10	11 **RL➢**	12 **AK➢**	13 **CH➢ RS➢**	14
15	16 744 RT /96	17	18 **BE➢**	19	20 **TV➢** ME➢ PF➢	21
22	23 **NH➢** 9 BE /94 655 RS /94	24 11 NG /84	25	26 **SS➢** 2 PF /91 7 GE /88 748 TV /88	27	28 2 PF /90
29	30	31 OS➢				

Largest # of raptors in month: 5,670 in March 1988; Largest # of raptors in one day in month: 2,080 on March 26, 1988.

APRIL

1	2	3 2 PF /91	4 1 BV /92	5 50 CH /93 28 NH /93	6	7
8 **OS➢ ≺RS** 706 RT /87	9	10 BW➢	11	12 22 RL /91 16 OS /92	13 1 FH /92	14 28 NH /91
15 **BW➢** 1 SK /94 1 SW /94*	16 **≺BE** 2 PF /90	17	18 1 SW /96* 35 NH /96 1556 SS /76	19 1 PR /95**	20 1 GF /77 1 SW /93	21 1 SW /85 6007 BW /85
22 1 SW /88	23	24 **≺OS**	25 **≺TV** 6 ME /96 2 PF /94 1 SW /94*	26	27 1 SW /93*	28 1 SW /98* 12 BE /96 4 GE /96
29 2 SW /98* 4 GE /83	30 **≺RL**					

* Sighting not reviewed/accepted by Ontario Bird Records Committee

** First accepted Prairie Falcon record in Ontario

Largest # of raptors in month: 15,012 in April 1984; Largest # of raptors in one day in month: 7,007 on April 21, 1985.

MAY

1	2	3	4 **≺RT**	5 1 SW /89	6 ≺PF	7
8	9	10 ≺GE	11	12 **≺NH ≺AK**	13 **≺CH** ≺BE	14 **≺SS**
15 **≺BW** ≺RL ≺ME	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25 ≺OS	26	27	28
29	30	31 ≺TV ≺NH ≺SS ≺CH ≺NG ≺RS ≺AK	BW and RT continue beyond May 31.			

Largest # of raptors in month: 2,695 in May 1980; Largest # of raptors in one day in month: 1,492 on May 4, 1989.

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch

Newsletter

Newsletter No. 19, August 1999

1999 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND BANQUET

The NPH held it's 9th Annual General Meeting and Banquet on April 17th at Puddicombe Farm in Winona. The extended banquet and brief general meeting format for the evening was again well received and very successful.

John Stevens thank you another excellent variety of wines for tasting. John had also selected a number of cheeses from around the world to accompany the wine, a new treat this year. The evening was truly a wine and cheese affair.

The Annual Business Meeting included Treasurer, John Stevens' report on the current financial position of the NPH and President, Mike Street's brief, and sadly his last, "President's Report". Mike requested the guests to consider becoming more actively involved in the NPH by joining the executive, as he and other longstanding members would like to change roles. The slate of Officers nominated for the coming year was also presented and all were elected by acclamation.

Dave Copeland, the evening's Guest Speaker, presented an entertaining talk and slide show about the first ten years at Beamer. As one of the founders of the Hawkwatch, Dave had many interesting stories to tell about those early days. Elsewhere in this newsletter, Beamer – The First Ten Years 1975-1984 (Part I) details Dave's account of the years 1975 to 1979.

After Dave's presentation, Keith and Karen Dieroff again ran the popular bucket raffle. Many thanks to all the people who contributed prizes, especially Laurie Mackenzie for donating more of her wonderful raptor artwork.

A very enjoyable evening was had by all who attended. ❖

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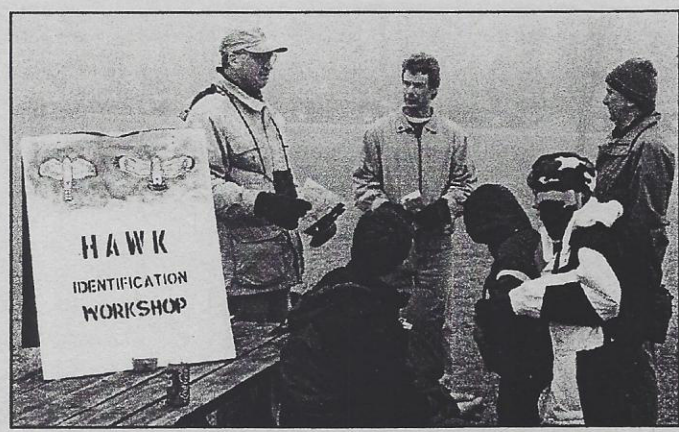
By Mike Street

After three excellent years, Mother Nature decided to give someone else a break. On Good Friday 1999, for the second time since NPH started holding an Open House, a wet blanket of fog hung over Beamer CA. Much to our surprise, this did not shut things down. Almost all our regular exhibitors came out, and so did close to 500 people!

Most disappointed was the Official Counter for the day, Stuart Mackenzie. Able to take a weekday turn because schools were closed, Stuart hung around to the bitter end hoping to be able to tally at least one bird for the day, but to no avail.

In the "The fog didn't bother me a bit" category was Videographer Jim Lagogiannes of ONTV-Channel 11. In preparation for the Open House, Jim visited Beamer two days ahead of time to get the lay of the land and shoot some preliminary footage. Within a half-hour he had photographed a Bald Eagle and a Golden Eagle! Not only that, but both came in low and over the circle – instead of miles out where we most often see eagles! With shots like that, the scenes of the foggy conditions on the actual Open House day did not spoil Jim's report one bit.

Thanks again to all who supported Open House 1999. Next year, Good Friday 2000 falls on April 21. Cross your fingers for weather conducive to a big Broad-wing flight.❖



The fog didn't stop people from attending Bruce Duncan's popular workshop. *Photo by B. Harschnitz.*

BEAMER – THE FIRST TEN YEARS 1975 – 1984

(PART I: 1975 to 1979)

By Dave Copeland

1975

During our first year, coverage was sparse. The watch began March 16th and lasted only until May 3rd. Only 31 days within the count period were covered, usually for only two or three hours at a time. Another 13 days were not even covered. Observers were almost exclusively from the Hamilton Naturalists' Club (HNC). The first Hawk Migration Association of North America (HMANA) conference had taken place during the spring of 1974 at Syracuse, NY. Since we were part of the new HMANA observation network, Chauncy and Sarah Wood of the HNC were in attendance.

We hit pay-dirt immediately with the discovery of previously unknown numbers of Red-shouldered hawks migrating into Ontario. A total of 220 were identified with Bill Smith counting 44 on March 28th. Although the numbers were unexpected, armed with Derby Hill data, I was expecting to see some migration of this species. For comparison, I recorded 11 Red-shouldered hawks during the entire spring of 1974 along the escarpment, more than double what I had seen previously. The day-oners were Larry and Linda Bird, Dave and Sue Copeland, John Cumming, Bob Curry, Ron Davis and Bob Copeland from Brantford, Alf Epp, Barry Jones, John Olmstead, Kevin McLaughlin, George Meyers, J. Pummel, P. Seleanger, F. Smith, Bill Smith, Rick Snider, and Al Wormington. Other observers probably accompanied some of the afore mentioned. Results from the first annual Grimsby Hawk Watch, total raptors were 3,428, were published in the HNC's newsletter The Wood Duck, Volume 29 Number 2, October of 1975 and outlined in the HMANA newsletter by Marshall Field.

NEWSFLASH – April 20th; George Meyers leads HNC spring hawk outing at Beamer. Total count: 6 SS, 1 Acipiter, and 2 Kestrels sighted!

1976

Our coverage in terms of days covered was similar to the previous year, however, the hourly coverage improved. Consequently, we saw twice the number of raptors counted during the first year. The Red-shouldered hawk numbers also nearly doubled to 433. In just three days, we counted 359 with Ron Ridout observing 156 on March 27th. The other notable discovery of 1976 was the large number of Sharp-shinned Hawks migrating across the Niagara Peninsula. During the Easter weekend from April 16th until the 18th, over 3,000 were tallied. On April 18th, Jim Dowall had recorded 768 sharpies by noon before passing the count onto another person who tallied another 788 for a daily high of 1,556. Winds were southwest with temperatures I the high 70's. During the first two weeks of April, winds had been northerly. On the 17th we also sighted our first eagles, two balds, one at noon and one at 2pm at the parking lot. Earlier that day, Ray Hughes and John Cumming had spotted an immature Golden below the escarpment.

Finally, on April 29th, a Peregrine Falcon flew in over the point to be challenged by a buteo and then aggressively by a Sharpie. A mock stoop sent both curiosity seekers on their way. Observers of note from 1976 include Brian Wyley, Phil Walker, Chris Riesely, Ron Ridout, Jim Dowall to name a few. During this spring we also received our first media coverage, an article by Peter Whelan in **The Globe & Mail.**

NEWSFLASH – Park Rd., Grimsby; Dave Copeland smashes into George Meyer's '88 Olds. The back of George's car looked like an opened sardine can. There was about $750 damage mostly to my wife's car.

1977

In September of 1976, the 2nd HMANA Conference was held at Duluth, Minnesota. There I met for the first time, Eric Single, Continental Editor for HMANA as well as Walter Klabunde of the Buffalo Ornithological Society (BOS). Eric was in the process of moving from New York to Toronto and it was at this time that we discussed the possibility of getting Toronto observers interested in the Grimsby count. On January 7, 1977, I sent out an appeal for observers for the upcoming spring watch to both Eric in Toronto and Walter in Buffalo. The response was positive from both individuals.

Accordingly, Toronto, Buffalo and Hamilton area observers were assigned specific weeks on a three week rotation starting on March 10th. This was the first time we had coverage on a daily basis.

Coverage actually began on March 8th and continued daily until May 3rd with marginal coverage until May 14th. Getting people there was still a problem and it wasn't unusual to assign the A.M. and P.M. shift to two different observers. Total raptors tallied increased to over 10,000 and count highlights included 651 Red-shouldereds, over 4,000 Sharpies, 450 Vultures and a gray-phase Gyrfalcon.

Although the counter observation position had been fixed at the parking lot by now, net lookout numbers were still being added to the list. The number of HNC observers also continued to increase. Newcomers included Mark Jennings and Barry Cherriere. Media coverage increased as well with two articles in **The Globe & Mail.** For the first time, results of the count were published by Walter Klabunde in **The Prothonotary** (Dec. '77), the newsletter of BOS.

NEWSFLASH – March 16th; sitting in lawn chair at Beamer parking lot, 4:30 p.m., no car, two broken arms in casts, no birds, empty thermos, heavy overcast, wind NW gusting to 50 km/hr. Saw swallow but could not focus my binos.

1978

1978 was a disappointing year at Beamer. We witnessed our first decline in numbers with about 7,500 raptors recorded. Sharpies were down by 75% t 1,000. Red-shouldereds declined by 50%.

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Our coverage suffered some set backs as well, it was a snowy March, and the flight was delayed. There were no major flights of BW's until May when coverage was sporadic. The big Sharpie day was May 11th with 654 tallied. Braddock Bay, on the other hand, recorded their highest count with coverage until June 30th.

Notable appearances at the watch were put in by Bruce Duncan, Bruce Mackenzie, John Heaslip, Gerry Chapple and Roy Baker. As HMANA rep for Eastern Great Lakes, I received data sheets from Vinemount Banding Station (Bruce Duncan) and from Youngstown, N.Y. (Walter Klabunde) during the 1978 migration.

NEWSFLASH – Beamer parking lot; Eric Single arrives with plastic owl. John Vanhalen climbs shagbark #1 and erects owl. From now on shagbark #1 would be called "the owl tree".

1979

1979 was the turn around year at Beamer. Klabunde abandoned his home turf and threw in with the Beamer brigade. Walt would now cover the weekdays and HNC people would cover weekends. The total count immediately rebounded with 12,830 raptors recorded. Still, coverage was only from St. Paddies day until May 10th, but, from now on, only snow or rain would interrupt daily coverage. On April 29th, observers recorded 2,081 BW's, nearly 50% of the entire count of this species for the season, in one day.

During this season, we started to experiment with inland stations. This paid off on April 21st when Vern Evans and myself counted 747 raptors on Woolverton Road south of Kemp Road. Over the years, inland counts have revealed that certain species such as Harriers and Rough-legged hawks frequent those flyways.

NEWSFLASH – Beamer parking lot; George North arrives at Beamer parking lot with companion. I think to myself here is a wonderful opportunity to introduce Walter Klabunde to George. George rolls down his window and asks me how the count is going. He proceeds to tell me that his friend has just seen a Broad-winged hawk down a Vinemount. Walt, with a grin on his face, rises out of his lawn chair, saunters over to George's car and says in a laughing manner, "*there isn't a Broad-winged Hawk within 1000 miles of here!*" North becomes annoyed and drives off setting a new parking lot speed record and they were still not formally introduced.

Beamer – The First Ten Years 1975 – 1984 (Part II: 1980 to 1984) will appear in the Spring 2000 issue of this newsletter.❖

THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

by Mike Street

You know, I'd never have expected to find myself complaining about good weather, but I did this year. It was a major reason why, for the third season in a row, the total number of raptors tallied by NPH counters was well below our 18-year average.

Almost all of the last month of the count took place under clear blue skies. This meant either that the birds were out of sight by the time they reached Beamer, or that they took a more direct route across the Niagara Peninsula, bypassing us completely. Either way, it also makes for boring hawk watching, so let's all hope for a little more cloud next year.

The second season with our viewing tower confirmed its usefulness, even under the conditions described above. On a couple of occasions, after being sighted well to the east, groups of birds disappeared as they gained height and came toward Grimsby. Knowing that they were on their way, however, allowed the counters to prepare and watch for them. We weren't able to count every one, but we didn't miss all of them either.

Letting people, especially residents of the Niagara Peninsula, know about this great natural phenomenon happening right over their heads is NPH's second job. We do this by being at Beamer and talking to visitors, through press releases and our website, and particularly through our annual Open House. Mother Nature was not as cooperative for the 1999 Open House, but the number of visitors who came anyway tells us that people are still interested in natural things. We hope to do more in this area, not only to spread the message but also to encourage newcomers to become NPH members and, hopefully, counters. An initiative currently under way is the development of a new information sign which will provide more information about the raptor migration and include a map showing the vast distances some of these birds travel to get to Beamer.

Thanks to all our 1999 counters, especially Jack Ryan and Tom Reavley who once again were our mainstays. Thanks also to Dave Copeland whose talk at the annual banquet was most interesting, and to the members of the Executive, whose help is much appreciated.

In the last newsletter I mentioned that some of the NPH Executive, myself included, would like a change. A few members expressed interest in helping out with the Hawkwatch. If you would like to as well, please contact me. NPH work is not onerous, either physically or in terms of time required, but it does take a little time and some dedication. Please consider giving some of yours to a good cause.

It's early August and the first apparently migrant Osprey have been reported over northern Burlington. It won't be long before more raptors start moving south on their fall trek and I can't wait. Seeing the birds in the fall is a great way to prepare for the next season at Beamer! I hope to see you at the fall hawkwatching sites.❖

1999 MIGRATION SUMMARY

By John Stevens

The 1999 hawk watch at Beamer Conservation Area (C.A.) marked the 25th consecutive year of recorded counts at the site and the 20th consecutive year in which full coverage from March 1st to at least May 15th has been conducted. While the counters were aware of the significance, the counters showed interest and were noticeable mostly by their absence. The final all species total of 10,995 was the lowest since 1987 and the second lowest in the 20 years of complete coverage.

Bucking the trend to fewer birds was the Turkey Vulture that set yet another seasonal record total of 3,376, 3% above the previous record and almost double the 20-year average of 1,748. Turkey Vultures accounted for 30.7% of the count in 1999 whereas in the last 20 years, they represented only 12.4%. It's almost getting to the point where we'll have to rename our organization the Niagara Peninsula Vulture Watch.

A handful of other species also had reasonable counts this year, including the other very large species. The 43 Osprey seen was below the most recent 5-year average and slightly above the 20-year average. Bald Eagles, at 30 birds, were above both the 5-year and long term average and the fourth highest total since we began counting. The 10 Golden Eagles seen were also above both averages. When the 5 unidentified eagles are included, it is clear that the 1999 eagle count was very respectable.

We also counted 240 Coopers Hawks in 1999, a figure that equals the most recent 5-year average but is about 16% above the long term average. Interestingly, Coopers Hawks, Turkey Vultures, Osprey, and both Eagle species along with Merlins are the only species for which the 5-year average is above the 20-year average at Beamer C.A. We shouldn't be too surprised that these species had relatively good counts in 1999 as they are just confirming the trends that we have seen developing in our monitoring.

Leading the decliners are the Sharp-shinned Hawks whose 1999 total of 1,903 birds, was the lowest we have had in 20 years of coverage and represents 52.5% of the 20-year average. It used to be generally acknowledged at Beamer that the Sharp-shinned/Coopers ratio was about 20:1. With these species trending in opposite directions, the 5-year average ratio has fallen to 11:1, with the 1999 figures representing a ratio of only 8.3:1.

In 1998, the Red-tailed Hawk count was the lowest at Beamer in 22 years. This year we discovered that the 1998 count was not a fluke as the total declined a further 1% to the record low of 2,216 birds in 1999. Other species whose counts were well below their 20-year averages included; Northern Harrier, Red-shouldered Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, and American Kestrel. The 6 Northern Goshawk counted represents the lowest total since 1980, but we are midway between their cyclical peaks.

No unusual species were seen in 1999. The best count was on April 3rd following a day of fog and rain when no birds were seen in 7 hours. During the 8.5-hour count, 1,171 birds of 10 species were recorded. The best day for species, 12, was April 24th.

The count got off to a particularly slow start and the 100th bird was not counted until March 17th, despite over 86 hours of effort. The first Red-shouldered Hawk was not seen until March 19th, a week later than we'd typically have a day with over 50 and two weeks after we'd typically have a day with 5 or more. The last group of these (7) passed on April 27th, a very typical date. These were the last of the year for this species except for two adults travelling together on May 11th. Despite the shorter flight period, the Red-shouldered Hawk count of 678 was 130 (24%) ahead of 1998 and just under the 5-year average.

Finally, I would like to postulate on possible explanations for the low total count this year. Considering that: i) the total hours of coverage (503) was not significantly different from what we have done since we stopped covering the second half of May; ii) the larger species totals appear to be generally increasing; iii) despite poor weather in early March; and iv) the Red-shouldered Hawk total was not significantly lower than average, the main reason that the total count is low is because the weather was too pleasant. The species that we're not seeing are the smaller birds like Sharpies, Kestrels, and Broad-wings. When there is lots of blue sky and warm temperatures, as there was in April and May this year, the birds are very high and, unless they are directly overhead, they can often pass by without being detected, particularly when only one or two pairs of eyes are watching. On closing, I would like to thank all the counters involved (listed elsewhere in the newsletter) for their support. ❖

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH EXECUTIVE 1999

HON. PRESIDENT: Walter Klabunde
PRESIDENT: Mike Street, 73 Hatton Drive, Ancaster, ON L9G 2H5 ..... (905) 648-3737
VICE-PRESIDENT: Mary Ellen Hebb, 47 College Ave., Port Rowan, ON N0E 1M0..... (519) 586-7141
SECRETARY/MEMBERSHIP: Glenn Barnett, 87 Highland Park Dr., Dundas,ON L9H 6G5 ..... (905) 628-2093
TREASURER: John Stevens, 1365 Bayview Ave; Unit 3, Toronto, ON M4G 3A5..... (416) 484-4079
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COUNTERS/EDUCATION: Paul Summerskill, 37 Ann Street, St. Catharines, ON L2N 5E9 ..... (905) 934-7887
RESEARCH/HMANA: Bruce Duncan, 22 Church St., Paris, ON N3L 1H3..... (519) 442-2477
SPECIAL PROJECTS: Keith Dieroff, 75 Houghton Ave. South, Hamilton, ON L8K 2M9..... (905) 545-5859

FALL BIRDING OPPORTUNITIES

1) Port Burwell Provincial Park (P.P.) Fall Hawk Watch.

Dave Martin, Ross Snider and friends will help visitors to identify hawks and other fall migrants at the 3rd year of Hawk Watches at Port Burwell P.P. Almost as many hawks pass by as at Hawk Cliff and lots of other migrants such as hummingbirds, dragonflies, Monarchs, and Blue Jays move along the Lake Erie shoreline from late August to December. We will be there from 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on Sept 11, 18, 26, Oct 2, 3, and 10. Meet in day use parking lot #5. Bring a lawn chair and a picnic lunch. Cost: park entry fee. For more info: Dave Martin at 269-3262.

2) Friends of Point Pelee Fall Hikes.

Friends of Point Pelee has hired Dave Martin, Alan Wormington and other leaders to conduct nature hikes at Point Pelee on Saturdays (10:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.) and Sundays (1:30 p.m.) every weekend from August 28 to October 10. Most of the hikes go to the tip of Point Pelee to maximize viewing of birds (especially hawks) and butterflies. Cost is the park entry fee PLUS $5.00/person/hike. For more info call Dave Martin at 269-3262.

3) Hawk Cliff Annual General Meeting.

Saturday, October 30 (6:30 to 10:00 p.m.), Greenhills Golf and Country Club. This year's Hawk Cliff Foundation Annual General Meeting features speaker Allen Chartier, one of the original members of the Holiday Beach Migration Observatory. Allen will give an overview of hawk migration at Holiday Beach and many of the other highlights of the fall migration at this hotspot. The evening starts with a social hour and finger food dinner. There are lots of bird related bucket draw prizes and Ross Snider will bring a couple of his rehabilitated raptors for viewing. Cost: $15.00 per person (cash bar). Book now to guarantee a space. Non-members are welcome. For info: contact Ellen Smout 434-5884 or Dave Martin 269-3262.❖

HAMILTON NATURALISTS' CLUB *FALCON WATCH 1999*

By Mike Street

Peregrine falcons have nested on the south face of the Sheraton Hotel on King Street West in downtown Hamilton each year since 1995. In 1995 one bird hatched in Hamilton. Two more youngsters were brought in from the now-closed Canadian Wildlife Service falcon breeding facility at Wainwright, Alberta - and placed in the nest. All three fledged successfully. In 1996 one chick hatched but died soon after. In both 1997 and 1998 four birds hatched and all four fledged successfully.

This year there has been a significant change. While the male adult, known affectionately as 'Dad', is the same bird who fathered the 1995-98 chicks, the female is different. 'Mom', who produced the 1995-1998 chicks, disappeared in October 1998. That in itself was not unusual, but 'Mom' did not return this spring. We don't know what happened to Mom, but assume the worst, as it is not common for Peregrines to change partners after 4 years.

Meanwhile a new female, name 'Toledo' after the Ohio city where she was born in a similar downtown building nest, arrived in Hamilton last November. This spring, after acclimatizing to the city and relearning how to land on building ledges, Toledo set up housekeeping with Dad.

In all, eleven chicks fledged from the nest between 1995 and 1998. All were monitored throughout the fledging period by volunteers organized and coordinated by the Hamilton Naturalists' Club (HNC). Were it not for the efforts of the HNC's *Falcon Watch*, however, four of these chicks probably would have died.

Why? Well, first flights of young birds are often unsuccessful, ending on the street, the sidewalk, or on the roofs of nearby buildings.

Throughout the first three weeks of flight, the fledglings can easily crash into buildings - especially those with large plate glass windows - and fall to the ground while they learn to control themselves in the air.

Their survival depends on our team of dedicated, trained volunteers who keep an eye on the birds, rescue them if necessary, and return them to the safety of the roof nest area.

By the end of the 1997 season, four of the seven chicks at the Hamilton site had been rescued at ground level a total of five times. No rescues were required in 1998 but, sadly, several weeks after the fledging period, one of the 1998 chicks was killed in a collision with a building during a fight with an American Kestrel.

In 1999 four eggs were laid in the Sheraton nest in late March. Monitoring was carried out through the video camera and website provided by the Canadian Peregrine Foundation. Everything appeared to be fine until May 10 or so, when it was discovered that three of the eggs were gone. A week later it was obvious that the fourth egg was not going to hatch either. (It is believed that the failed eggs became fragile and were crushed by the weight of the incubating parents. The disappearing eggshells are accounted for by the fact that many birds eat their own eggshells for the calcium content.)

On May 21st, two chicks were brought to Hamilton from a breeding facility in Quebec. The chicks were located and purchased by CPF and turned over to the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, who have jurisdiction over endangered species. Once at the Sheraton, the two chicks were banded by the HNC's Bruce Duncan and then carried down 7 metres of sheer wall into the nest by mountain climber Rick Folkes, also a HNC member.

...continued on page 6

...continued from page 5

What happened next was amazing. As soon as Rick got back to the Sheraton's roof, Dad flew to the nest ledge, looked in for a moment, and then flew off. In eight (8) minutes flat he was back with a pigeon!! Toledo promptly arrived, accepted the food from Dad and started feeding the chicks! The chicks have since fledged normally.

The club, as Coordinator of the Falcon Watch volunteers, contracted Meredith Rose, a 1999 Graduate in Biology from the University of Guelph. From June 7 until June 27 volunteers monitored the chicks from dawn to dusk, from their first flights until they were flying all over the downtown area and trying to catch food on their own.

Falcon Watch is a wonderful opportunity to observe the daily activities and amazing acrobatics of this endangered species, and to participate in their recovery. The HNC wishes to thank all the Volunteers who worked downtown, as well as the Business Sponsors and Helpers who made Falcon Watch 1999 possible.❖

HMANA REPORT

By John Stevens

As reported in the February issue, while a member of the Hawk Migration Association of North America Board of Directors, I'm attempting to keep members informed of developments in the organization.

BUSINESS PLAN

Since I last reported to you, the Board has retained a professional fundraiser to assist with the raising of sufficient funds to engage a program director. The necessary funds to make even this effort was assembled from donations by some board members, temporary diversion of research grant funds and tapping a fund established in memory of a former member (William Gordon). The gentleman engaged, Noble Smith, was once a frequent hawk watcher at Hawk Mountain so that in addition to being a successful fundraiser, he is familiar with the organization and sympathetic to it. All firms approached for the position felt that HMANA has an excellent plan and should have no difficulty obtaining the funds. The key will be to get a major donation, possibly from a member or a foundation. As the only Canadian on the Board, I was amazed at the number and variety of major funding agencies that operate in the U.S. it really pointed out to me how financially well off the U.S. is compared to Canada. The Board meets again in August for training in how to assist Noble Smith when potential donors are approached.

25th ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE

Laurie Goodrich of Hawk Mountain Sanctuary is chair of the next HMANA conference, which will celebrate the first 25 years of our organization. The dates are set for June 8 – 11, 2000 at Split Rock Resort in the Pocono Mountains of eastern Pennsylvania. The theme will be; Past, Present and Future, and Laurie has a marvelous list of invited speakers committed to attend.

The location is superb and large rooms in the lodge, cottages, villa or slope-side suites are available. Costs will be in the range of $100 US/night but you can take the whole family, as the resort is fully equipped. It is situated on a lake with a sandy beach and five kinds of watercraft. It has a golf course, theatre, various racquet sport courts, hiking trails, fitness centre, etc., etc., etc. there are several restaurants and ample meeting space. Field trips, picnics, workshops, a banquet and lots of opportunities to meet fellow watchers and the big names like Paul Kerlinger, Scott Kellogg, and Jim Brett.

Having attended two of these conferences, I can vouch for the educational and friendship aspects. The setting for this one should make it a real treat.

THE JOURNAL

Steve Byland, the new editor of the HMANA Journal is very impressive. He got the spring issue out within 3 months and the fall issue is on track to actually come out before the migration season as it was intended. This will bring the organization up to date with its Journals and will allow Steve six months to get the spring 2000 issue out before next spring's flights. He is quite a good storyteller and as he gets accustomed to his position, I'm sure his editorials will become hilarious.

The two-part publication idea with the watch site data separate from the rest of the journal appears to be a dead issue. Printing costs have been significantly reduced and as more and more data becomes available in electronic from, the time required to produce legible text for the numbers should also decrease. All that's needed is a larger membership base to reduce the per-copy cost and full colour issues should not be distant. On that note, I'll remind you that memberships are $25 US per year and I have forms for those who would like to join or rejoin. I also have a few extra copies of the 1999 Spring Issue with the 1998 data for anybody that is interested in checking it out.❖

1999 OFFICIAL HAWKWATCH COUNTERS

Roy Baker, John Barker, Glen Barnett, Bouwe Bergsma, John Black, Geoff Carpentier, Barry Cherriere, Jim Coey, Bob Curry, Willie D'Anna, Keith Dieroff, Rob Dobos, Bruce Duncan, Chris Escott, Denys Gardiner, Ann Gray, Jerry Guild, Bruce Harschnitz, Jean Iron, Stuart Mackenzie, Kevin McLaughlin, Dave Milsom, George Naylor, John Olmsted, Tom Reavley, Jack Ryan, Ron Scovell, Gerry Shemilt, Rick Snider, John Stevens, Mike Street, Paul Summerskill.

1999 NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH MONTHLY COUNTS

SPECIES	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	TOTALS
Black Vulture				
Turkey Vulture	1653	1659	64	**3376**
Osprey		40	3	**43**
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite				
Mississippi Kite				
Bald Eagle	26	4		**30**
Northern Harrier	23	60	8	**91**
Sharp-shinned Hawk	170	1723	90	**1983**
Cooper's Hawk	145	88	7	**240**
Northern Goshawk	6			**6**
Red-shouldered Hawk	497	179	2	**678**
Broad-winged Hawk		1807	26	**1833**
Swainson's Hawk				
Red-tailed Hawk	1434	730	52	**2216**
Ferruginous Hawk				
Rough-legged Hawk	33	35	1	**69**
Golden Eagle	7	3		**10**
American Kestrel	24	41	4	**69**
Merlin	1	8	1	**10**
Peregrine Falcon	1			**1**
Gyrfalcon				
Prairie Falcon				
Unid. Accipiter	9	36	4	**49**
Unid. Buteo	135	85	2	**222**
Unid. Eagle	3	2		**5**
Unid. Falcon			1	**1**
Unid. Raptor	23	38	2	**63**
Total Raptors	**4190**	**6538**	**267**	**10995**
Hours Counted	**200**	**206**	**96**	**502.81**
Raptors/Hour	**20.9**	**31.7**	**2.8**	**21.9**

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH COUNTS - MARCH 1999

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	**Totals**
Black Vulture																																**0**
Turkey Vulture												1	1	1			13	2	24	27	304		126	47	75	94	59	185	347	272	75	**1653**
Osprey																																**0**
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite																																**0**
Mississippi Kite																																**0**
Bald Eagle													1	1			1	1	1	7	8				2	1			1	1	1	**26**
Northern Harrier																	1	1			5		1	2		1	1	3	1	2	5	**23**
Sharp-shinned Hawk		1									1	1			1		2		5	1	13		9	3	5	2	5	7	12	34	68	**170**
Cooper's Hawk									1		1		1		1	1	6	3	2	13	34		14	1	2	23	16	15	1	5	5	**145**
Northern Goshawk																	1				1					3				1		**6**
Red-shouldered Hawk																			3	38	158		74	6	18	76	39	27	7	27	24	**497**
Broad-winged Hawk																																**0**
Swainson's Hawk																																**0**
Red-tailed Hawk	3	15		2	1		2	1	3	5	9	1	8	8	6	1	12	21	125	203	289	1	54	42	91	120	90	131	59	76	55	**1434**
Ferruginous Hawk																																**0**
Rough-legged Hawk																	1	1	2	11	9		1	2		2		2		1	1	**33**
Golden Eagle																			2	2	1				1						1	**7**
American Kestrel															1		1			4	3			1			2	1	5	4	2	**24**
Merlin															1																	**1**
Peregrine Falcon															1																	**1**
Gyrfalcon																																**0**
Prairie Falcon																																**0**
Unid. Accipiter																				1	3					1	4					**9**
Unid. Buteo																	1		5	14	75			1	3		30	5	1			**135**
Unid. Eagle																					2							1				**3**
Unid. Falcon																																**0**
Unid. Raptor																				2			5	1	1		12		2			**23**
Total Raptors	**3**	**16**	**0**	**2**	**1**	**0**	**2**	**1**	**4**	**5**	**11**	**3**	**11**	**10**	**11**	**2**	**39**	**29**	**169**	**323**	**905**	**1**	**284**	**106**	**198**	**323**	**268**	**377**	**436**	**423**	**237**	**4190**
Hours Counted	5	8	0	7	4	0	7	3	8	6	6.5	5	7.5	7.3	5	7.33	6	7.25	9.75	8.25	8.5	3	7	7.5	8.5	7	9	8	8	8	8	200.33
Wind Direction	VAR/ NW	SW	FOG OUT	N	NE	SNOW OUT	N	NE	NW/ SW	NE	N/ NW	NE/ N	E	NE	NE	SW	SW	SW	NW	SE/ SW	NE/ S	SW SNOW	SW	SW/ NW	NW	N	NE		N	S/ SW		

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH COUNTS - APRIL 1999

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	Totals
Black Vulture																															0
Turkey Vulture	4		327	30	83	18	409	141	3	89	1	19	45	58	44		24	48	50	89	52			32	18	44	30		1		1659
Osprey			2		2	2		2		1	2		3		4		1				4			9	4	2	1	1			40
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite																															0
Mississippi Kite																															0
Bald Eagle			1	1											1			1													4
Northern Harrier			13		1	1	5	1		2			3	4	2			3		4	4			1	5		1	6	4		60
Sharp-shinned Hawk	10		458	26	12	90	41	131	3	48	3	2	23	99	104		12	64	56	113	68			57	143	59	63	26	12		1723
Cooper's Hawk			17	3	4	1	1	4		6			1	2	2		1	3	1	4	5			1	6	2	20	4			88
Northern Goshawk																															0
Red-shouldered Hawk	2		130	1	16					4				1	1		5	5	1	1	2			3			7				179
Broad-winged Hawk													1		5		1	60	49	179	269			389	262	96	468	25	3		1807
Swainson's Hawk																															0
Red-tailed Hawk			135	89	70	19	18	12	4	131	8	1	12	3	14		10	12	9	40	27			32	24	5	47	6	2		730
Ferruginous Hawk																															0
Rough-legged Hawk			7	6		1				2			1	1	1		2			2	6			1	3		2				35
Golden Eagle																								1			2				3
American Kestrel			10		2	2		1		1			4	1	3			1		4	2			1	2	2	1	3	1		41
Merlin																				1				3	1	3					8
Peregrine Falcon																															0
Gyrfalcon																															0
Prairie Falcon																															0
Unid. Accipiter			22							6	1				1				2	1	2				1						36
Unid. Buteo			49	3	2			3		1	1				6			8	1		4				7						85
Unid. Eagle									1		1																				2
Unid. Falcon																															0
Unid. Raptor				1	2					5					1			6		3				5	13		2				38
Total Raptors	**16**	**0**	**1171**	**160**	**194**	**134**	**474**	**295**	**11**	**296**	**17**	**22**	**93**	**169**	**189**	**0**	**56**	**211**	**169**	**441**	**445**	**0**	**0**	**535**	**489**	**213**	**644**	**71**	**23**	**0**	**6538**
Hours Counted	7	7	8.5	7	8	9	8	8	6.7	9.5	5	6	8.5	7	8	1.5	10	8.5	7	8.583	6	3	1	9	9.5	6.5	9	7	6.7		206.483
Wind Direction	S	NE FOG	N	NE	NE	E/SW NW	W	SW	NE WET	NE	ENE	N/ NW	NW	NW	NW/ NE	S RAIN	SW	SW/ W	W/N SW	N/ W	SW/ NE	FOG RAIN	RAIN WIND	N/ NW	SW/ S	W/ NE	N/ NE	E	NNE		

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH COUNTS - MAY 1999

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Totals
Black Vulture																																0
Turkey Vulture		11		11	1		4	2		12	9		14																			64
Osprey		1					1		1																							3
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite																																0
Mississippi Kite																																0
Bald Eagle																																0
Northern Harrier	2	2		2					1		1																					8
Sharp-shinned Hawk	9	23	2	4		16	13	2	11	1	5		4																			90
Cooper's Hawk		2				4						1																				7
Northern Goshawk																																0
Red-shouldered Hawk											2																					2
Broad-winged Hawk		2		6		7		1			8		2																			26
Swainson's Hawk																																0
Red-tailed Hawk	1	7	5	7			4	2	15	2	4	2	3																			52
Ferruginous Hawk																																0
Rough-legged Hawk											1																					1
Golden Eagle																																0
American Kestrel	3								1																							4
Merlin	1																															1
Peregrine Falcon																																0
Gyrfalcon																																0
Prairie Falcon																																0
Unid. Accipiter			1			3																										4
Unid. Buteo									2																							2
Unid. Eagle																																0
Unid. Falcon		1																														1
Unid. Raptor		1				1																										2
Total Raptors	**16**	**50**	**8**	**30**	**1**	**31**	**22**	**7**	**31**	**15**	**30**	**3**	**23**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**267**
Hours Counted	7	6	5	6	5.5	6	6	8.5	8	7	9.5	6	7	5	3.5																	96
Wind Direction	N	NE	NE	NE	NE	NE/ N	SW	SW	W	NW/ N	NE	NE	N	NE																		

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH
Annual Summaries 1981-1999

	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	1981-1999 TOTALS	1981-99 Average	Highest Total & Date	Earliest Date
Black Vulture												1								1	0	1-Apr 4/92	Apr 4/92
Turkey Vulture	671	521	895	616	948	837	977	2331	1406	1463	1785	1990	1852	3189	2151	2946	3092	3277	3376	34323	1628	748-Mar 26/88	Feb 23/84
Osprey	19	27	20	38	36	33	30	41	36	40	46	64	45	69	47	58	28	42	43	760	40	16-Apr 12/92	Mar 26/77
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite														1						1	0	1-Apr 15/94	Apr 15/94
Mississippi Kite																	1			1	0	1-May 11/97	May 11/97
Bald Eagle	1	7	7	5	10	14	7	16	17	15	17	22	14	40	24	33	17	32	30	328	19	12-Apr 28/96	Feb 26/86
Northern Harrier	102	131	125	127	113	143	217	162	175	194	219	209	126	177	177	172	125	84	91	2869	169	35-Apr 18/96	Feb 19/84
Sharp-shinned Hawk	4095	4880	3931	4683	4480	3549	2831	3108	3576	7004	3767	3418	3475	4846	2136	3290	3047	2815	1983	70914	4171	1556-Apr 18/76	Feb 11/87
Cooper's Hawk	179	121	160	190	152	196	199	229	180	311	220	199	209	263	256	295	221	185	240	4005	236	50-Apr 5/93	Feb 11/87
Northern Goshawk	8	51	73	67	25	21	31	27	14	24	20	34	28	73	15	37	16	14	6	584	34	11-Mar 24/84	Feb 28/88
Red-shouldered Hawk	528	638	624	838	764	901	876	861	1102	1341	761	1187	1030	1419	705	694	796	548	678	16291	958	655-Mar 23/94	Feb 23/84
Broad-winged Hawk	6904	2305	4118	7844	8239	3823	1628	2910	2304	4428	2063	2761	1963	2335	1779	1550	1849	3886	1833	64522	3795	6007-Apr 21/85	Apr 4/85
Swainson's Hawk					1			1	1				2	2		1	2	3		13	1	2-May 2/97	Apr 15/94
Red-tailed Hawk	2604	2607	3150	3105	3410	2852	3265	3567	2615	3482	3023	3861	2684	2890	2861	3584	2572	2159	2216	56507	3324	744-Mar 16/96	Feb 11/87
Ferruginous Hawk												1						1		2	0	1-Apr 13/92, Apr 23/98	Apr 13/92
Rough-legged Hawk	41	131	59	85	48	45	77	87	45	127	145	128	35	62	87	98	44	32	69	1445	85	24-Apr 2/82	Feb 11/87
Golden Eagle	4	4	8	6	12	7	6	3	7	10	8	12	6	10	4	13	6	6	10	142	8	4-Apr 29/83,Apr 28/96	Feb 24/84
American Kestrel	114	102	71	56	150	126	85	148	132	207	180	92	93	122	70	61	84	77	69	2039	120	44-Mar 14/90	Feb 25/87
Merlin	2	5	2	2	5	5	12	5	4	9	11	12	9	23	14	22	14	15	10	181	11	6-Apr 25/96	Mar 1/94
Peregrine Falcon	3	3			2	1	1	4	2	6	5	6	2	4	1	2	2	4	1	49	3	3 dates with 2 birds	Mar 12/88
Gyrfalcon																				0	0	1-Apr 20/77	Apr 20/77
Prairie Falcon															1					1	0	1-Apr 19/95	Apr 19/95
Unid. Raptors	647	435	467	640	880	1504	266	634	592	582	2681	681	534	452	480	249	189	227	340	12480	734		
Total Raptors	15922	11968	13710	18302	19275	14057	10508	14134	12208	19243	14951	14678	12107	15977	10808	13103	12105	13407	10995	267458	15733	TOTAL RAPTORS '75-'99:	322353
Hours Counted	562.60	583.10	565.00	564.60	608.50	576.20	681.50	608.20	499.30	574.50	548.50	541.50	538.50	530.95	555.70	454.50	508.35	491.00	502.81	10495.31	617.4		
Birds per Hour	28.30	20.52	24.27	32.42	31.68	24.40	15.42	23.24	24.45	33.50	27.26	27.11	22.48	30.09	19.45	28.83	23.81	27.31	21.87	25.48	25.5		
																					*	**	

* Cannot calculate 1975-1999 rate due to missing data in 1977-78

** Only 1981-99 averages are calculated due to missing data or low coverage in previous years

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch

Newsletter

Newsletter No. 20, February 2000

BRIAN RATCLIFF TO SPEAK AT APRIL 15TH BANQUET

The Year 2000 NPH Annual General Meeting and banquet will be held at Puddicombe Farms on Hwy. 8 in Winona on Saturday, April 15th. The evening's Guest Speaker will be Brian Ratcliffe, a member of the NPH Executive for several years after the formal NPH was founded in 1990. Brian, who now lives in Thunder Bay, is the Coordinator of Project Peregrine for the Thunder Bay Field Naturalists. The club started hacking Peregrine Falcons locally in 1989 and 87 young birds were released. Monitoring of the 12-15 active Peregrine nests in Thunder Bay region started in 1996, and 90 chicks have been banded at the nest. Brian's talk is accompanied by a slide presentation.

Socializing and the bucket raffle begin at 5pm. The before supper wine tasting starts at 5:15. Members of the NPH will select the wines for the evening in advance, allowing us to make sure they are chilled properly if required. Dinner will start around 6:15. Keith and Karen Dieroff will look after the ever popular bucket raffle (donations are still needed).

This will be an enjoyable evening so get your tickets now. The room can accommodate 42 people; 30 tickets are still available, priced at $20 for members and $25 for nonmembers. Call John Stevens or Mike Street to make arrangements for a ticket, or Keith Dieroff for a raffle donation - phone numbers are in the Executive listing elsewhere in this newsletter.

TENTH ANNUAL OPEN HOUSE FRIDAY, APRIL 21ST

NPH will again invite the public to view the migrating hawks when we hold our tenth annual Open House on April 21st. Let's hope for a good flight - and an improvement in the weather over last year's fog! This is the first time Open House day has fallen this late in April, so members are hoping for a good Broad-wing flight to show visitors what a big day is really like. In case of very bad weather, events will be postponed to Saturday, April 22nd.

Bruce, Laurie and Stuart Mckenzie have agreed to organize this year's Open House. Members of the Hawkwatch stationed in the centre of the circle and at the point will help visitors to see and identify raptors passing over Beamer. (Volunteers are needed - please contact the Mackenzies at Beamer or by phone at (905) 643-4526.) We are again trying to arrange a rehabilitated raptor to be released at the Open House.

The very welcome coffee truck will be parked in the circle and the special kids program with Carla Carlson of Niagara Nature Tours will run at 11am and noon. Bruce Duncan will again give his popular "Hawk Talks" for visitors on the hour from 11am - 2pm. As in past years, there will also be displays from birding and nature organizations, including our hosts, the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, and the Ontario Field Ornithologists.

Be sure to invite your family and friends; it should be a good day for them and for the birds too.

MORE WEEKDAY COUNTERS NEEDED

Counters are need on all weekdays, but especially Wednesdays and Fridays this season. If you can count on an extra weekday or two it will be a big help.

This year Marcie Jacklin will schedule Counters, assisting Paul Summerskill who is the overall Coordinator of Counters. If you did not count last year but can help this season, please call Marcie at (905) 892-3108 to schedule your 2000 hawkwatching day(s).

We especially need coverage at the beginning and end of the season. While early March can be slow, and in May most people want to head to the woods for warblers, our work also needs attention. If enough people offer to help, it should be easy to fill in all the dates.

If you are interested in learning to become a counter, be sure to let Marcie know. Many of our observers are glad to share the work and help newcomers, and we will also have our Hawk ID Workshop on weekends from March 25th through April 30th.

IN MEMORIAM - JOHN F. (JACK) RYAN

Jack Ryan, a very active member of the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch, passed away at West Lincoln Memorial Hospital in Grimsby on November 9, 1999 after a brief illness. He is survived by his brother Pat and sister-in-law Elda of St. Catharines.

Jack started as a counter under the guidance of Walter Klabunde and over the years developed a reputation as a skilled caller and patient teacher. In recent years Jack was Head Counter three days a week for the entire season at Beamer. Noted for his quiet sense of humour, he really enjoyed the raptors which fly over the Niagara Peninsula every spring.

Jack was a dear friend who will be sadly missed.

ROY BAKER MISSING IN AFRICA

NPH member and counter Roy Baker of Bolton, Ontario was reported missing September 12th, 1999 while on a birding trip in Gabon, West Africa. According to reports, Roy had been with an advance group of the party which was trying to find the elusive and rare Gray-necked Rock Fowl in a remote cave. After hurting his leg in a fall, Roy stayed behind on the trail to wait for the second group of birders. Only when the two parties reunited at the end of the day was it realized that he was not with either group, and a search started.

Despite great expense, spurred on by Roy's son and daughter who flew to the scene in an effort to get sluggish governments to help, no trace of him was found. The family continues to hope for some news.

Roy has been coming to Beamer to watch the raptors for many years, and has been an official counter since at least 1989. He was familiar, even to people who did not know his name, as the hawkwatcher with the huge 15x binoculars.

THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

by Mike Street

You know, it still amazes me how quickly the time goes between the close of the season on May 15th and the expected warm spell the following January. For me the first stirrings of the coming raptor season came on January 2nd when an adult Bald Eagle flew into view shortly after I started the daytime part of the Fisherville Christmas count. More "Beamer dreaming" was brought on by a nice day in the country south of Hamilton on January 8th, which produced Red-tails, Kestrels, Harriers and a couple of Rough-legs, including a beautiful dark phase bird which flew by only a few feet away. For hawkwatchers the Year 2000 really starts on March 1st!

As you will have read elsewhere in the newsletter, 1999 did not end well for the NPH. First Roy Baker disappeared while on a trip to Africa, and then a short time later Jack Ryan passed away suddenly. Jack, along with Tom Reavley, had been the Official Counter mainstay, covering three days a week for the past few seasons. Roy, a regular who drove over 100km one way to get to Beamer, acted as Official Counter and also helped out when he was not "on duty". We will miss Jack and Roy.

Last year, I pointed out to the membership that most NPH Executives have served for five years or more and that it was time for new people to come aboard and help. I also advised that I wanted to step down as President this year. Unfortunately, only a couple of members came forward to help. We have reshuffled some duties to lighten loads, but I and other Execs would like some relief. NPH work does take a little time and some dedication, but over a year the load is relatively light. Please consider giving some of your time to a good cause. If you can help, or would like more information, please talk to me or any other of the Execs at Beamer, or call me at the number in the next paragraph. Any help will be appreciated.

As in past years, we will again try to pass on our knowledge to others through the Hawk ID Workshop. Many people want to learn to identify raptors but are a bit intimidated by the weekend scrum around the official counter. Having a free service in the middle of the circle has proven popular, so we will repeat it again in 2000 on Saturdays and Sundays from March 25th through April 30th. Anyone who wants to learn about identifying raptors is welcome; just look for the sign. Experienced people willing to help the learners are needed. Please contact me at (905) 648-3737.

Thanks in advance to all our 2000 counters, especially Tom Reavley who will again cover three days a week, and to Paul Summerskill and Marcie Jacklin who will help coordinate things. I'm looking forward to seeing them and all of you at Beamer.

BEAMER - THE FIRST TEN YEARS 1975 - 1984 (PART II : 1980 TO 1984)

by Dave Copeland

1980

During the 1980 season, we made major upgrades in our hawkwatching facilities at the parking lot. The Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) installed a privy on the north side of the parking lot in the open. We had them move it into the woods later. A hawk migration sign was also added to the existing sign on Ridge Road. Our coverage also expanded with observers covering March 1st until May 30th.

Raptor numbers went up to 14,706 with the Turkey Vulture count exploding to 611 birds, twice as many as the previous spring. May sightings of a mature Red-shouldered Hawk suggested a nesting pair in the area. On April 25th and 26th, we recorded 3,600 Broad-wings.

During May, we encountered the local black fly hatch out. Despite the extended coverage in May, raptor numbers did not increase significantly over the previous year.

NEWSFLASH - Beamer parking lot; Walt establishes the "Klabunde Line" (coined by George Meyers). From hence forth, no hawk would be counted until it crossed the parking lot. On subsequent mornings, I would arrive and ask Walt what the count was. He would gingerly reply, "8!"

1981

Our 7th spring at Beamer was lucky indeed. Our count soared to 15,923, buoyed up by a spectacular Broad-wing flight of 6,904 individuals. Big days were the 19th with 2,199, the 26th with 1,729, and the 27th with 2,120. Coverage was once again started March 1st, which wasn't early enough as wintering owls and Red-tails had moved out in February. Although I had arranged, per Walt's request, to have the roadway plowed, it wasn't necessary this spring.

The outhouse survived the first winter, but required some repairs. The NPCA gave us permission to mark compass directions on a rock, advising us that any wind vane would last but only for a few days. We published our first newsletter, "The Grimsby Hawkwatcher", which appeared in The Wood Duck and was distributed at the parking lot.

On Sunday, January 25th, a group of us gathered at 8pm at my house to discuss future plans for the hawkwatch. The meeting was delayed about one hour due to a leaky rad and stranded hawk watcher. Bruce Duncan made the suggestion at this meeting that we closely monitor the age of Goshawks during the upcoming spring. After the business was concluded, Barry Cherriere put on an impressive slide show. The meeting finally concluded at 1am.. Our reporting of large numbers of Red-shouldered Hawks continued to draw flack which ultimately led to Al Wormington firing off a terse letter to the editor of American Birds.

NEWSFLASH - Beamer parking lot; the outhouse has survived the winter without being vandalized. But even after needed repairs were made, users could still see outside and Bruce Trail hikers could see in. "How's it goin' eh". Then we noticed you could see passing hawks through the cracks in the outhouse door, so we began keeping an outhouse list - total: 2 sharpies.

1982

Coverage in 1982 began on February 27th, a bit early. Numbers were off a bit over the previous seasons at 12,000, due mainly to low numbers of Broad-wings. Paul Wilson of the Hamilton Spectator interviewed Walt in early March. On a sad note, Walter lost his fellow observer, Jack Laughton of Grimsby, who had passed away during the winter.

Prior to the count, we had heard of a spectacular Goshawk migration during the previous fall. At Hawk Ridge in Duluth, Minnesota, they had counted several thousand. However, we were not sure what to expect at Beamer. The previous Goshawk incursion had been in the early '70's just prior to our early years at Beamer. During the previous spring, we had recorded eight Goshawks and only three in 1980. By the end of March, we had counted 23, mostly adults. The timing of the flight corresponded to the flight of adult Red-shouldered Hawks. Would the Goshawk flight continue through April? Yes! 25 more were tallied, including a spectacular tree top flight of eight immature on the 25th. This day turned out to be the big day for the '82 count with 1,800 birds tallied. The parking lot was jammed with hawkwatchers who enjoyed a flight of 11 different species.

At season's end, Goshawk numbers stood at 54, surpassing the total previous seven year count. Rough-legged Hawk numbers tripled and nearly 5,000 Sharpies had been counted. TV camera crews appeared from CHCH-TV Hamilton and we appeared on the 6pm and 11pm newscasts. We were famous! Experimenting continued at secondary sites with meager results.

NEWSFLASH - Beamer parking lot; John Vanhalen arrives on his Suzuki 500. He disembarks and joins the watch. There is nothing happening. John spots a distant bird through his 7x35 Karl Wetzlers. He has excellent eyesight. Excited ladies from the Grimsby Garden Club attending a club outing, led by George Meyers, stand by in great anticipation. After five minutes, no one else has seen the

bird. John still has it. Then, Roy Baker announces "I've got your bird, it's a Goldfinch". John, without taking his glasses down, sternly replies, "it's not a f------ Goldfinch, it's a Sharp-shinned Hawk". I slowly lowered my binos to witness astonished expressions on the faces of the ladies from the Grimsby Garden Club who were standing right beside us. As hawkwatch coordinator, I felt obligated to say something. I immediately redress Mr. Vanhalen, pointing out that this is a public park. John acknowledges and offers quiet apology. I then sought the shelter of a nearby van, behind which Barry Cherriere and Neil Byers were laughing uncontrollably.

1983

The 1983 Goshawk flight was even more spectacular than the previous year. A total of 73 Goshawks were recorded, although the March flight was off somewhat due to fog, rain and snow on several key dates. A brave handful of observers spotted nine Goshawks on April 2nd when skies were gray and the east wind was howling. These birds kited and tacked in the high wind. They were not observed flapping, soaring or gliding. On April 18th, we were treated to another wonderful Goshawk day with eight individuals, both adult and immature, flying low over the parking lot from the direction of the Hempine.

There were better things to come. We had out first big Eagle day on the 29th of April with four Golden and two Bald in a flight of 1,800 raptors that included 1,249 Broad-wings. There had been 1,916 Broad-wings the previous day. The Eagle procession started at 12:25pm EST and ended at 2:28pm EST. Our final '83 tally of 13,710 raptors included 3,150 Red-tails and 895 Turkey Vultures. Quote of the year was from Roy Baker during a Hamilton Spectator interview in which Mr. Baker, then age 50 of Bolton, exclaimed, "This is my Mecca."

NEWSFLASH - Beamer parking lot; we now record the hours of observation, as well as the weather and hawk sightings. During 1983, we average 24.2 hawks per hour of observation. However, this quickly dropped to two hawks per hour when Vern Evans was at the parking lot.

1984

This is our tenth year at Beamer and out best in terms of numbers! Over 18,300 raptors are counted including 67 Goshawks. Again, the flight was early with 236 Red-tails sighted on February 23rd and 24th. However, it soon shut down with snow emergencies being declared on March 1st. During the next three weeks, we recorded less than 100 raptors.

On the 24th of March, the migration finally got underway with a record 11 Goshawks among the 'tails and 'shoudereds. On April 3rd, a spectacular flight of 211 Red-shoudereds was observed. Big days were April 26th with 3,683 raptors counted, including two Golden Eagles and April 28th with 4,108 raptors counted, including 2,776 Broad-wings and 1,231 Sharpies. During the first decade at Beamer, we counted approximately 100,000 raptors.

The 1984 observers were: Roy Baker, Neil Byers, Barry Cherriere, Mike Clark, yours truly, Bob Curry, Jim Dowall, Vern Evans, Denys Gardiner, Walt Klabunde, Kevin McLaughlin, George Meyers, John Olmstead, and Peter Thoem.

NEWSFLASH - Beamer parking lot; there is much excitement at the parking lot today. Bob Curry has just arrived from Mud Lake over near the Welland Canal where he spotted a wild duck. Birders requesting details of the sighting immediately surround Bob. Walter notices the commotion and asks me what Bob has seen. I reply, I thought he had seen a wild duck. But, now I hear them talking about a European pigeon. I said in any case, it's probably an escapee Sharp-shin Walt.

2000 NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH EXECUTIVE

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NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH MIGRATION CALENDAR FOR BEAMER MEMORIAL CONSERVATION AREA

NOTES:

1. Species initials and Right (>) or Left (<) arrow:
   This combination indicates the start (>) or end (<) of the normal (at Beamer) migration period for that species. The same in **bold** type indicates the start or end of a noticeable peak period for that species. The box in which this combination is located indicates the day and month on which the period is likely to start or end.
2. A number, followed by species initial, followed by a slash (/) and a two-digit number:
   In this combination, the largest number of that species ever seen in one day is given first; the two-digit number following the / indicates the year in which this occurred. The box in which this combination is located indicates the day and month on which the event occurred. Example: 655 RS/94 in the March 23rd box indicates that the highest number of Red-shouldered Hawks recorded in one day was 655, seen on March 23rd, 1994.

TV - Turkey Vulture
BV - Black Vulture
OS - Osprey
SK - American Swallow-tailed Kite
BE - Bald Eagle
GE - Golden Eagle
NH - Northern Harrier
SS - Sharp-shinned Hawk
CH - Cooper's Hawk
NG - Northern Goshawk
RS - Red-shouldered Hawk
RT - Red-tailed Hawk
SW - Swainson's Hawk
RL - Rough-legged Hawk
FH - Ferruginous Hawk
AK - American Kestrel
ME - Merlin
PF - Peregrine Falcon
PR - Prairie Falcon
GF - Gyrfalcon
BW - Broad-winged Hawk

The following information, based on 24 years of data from the Beamer Hawkwatch, has been updated to show significant 1998 events.

Largest number of raptors in one season: 19,724 in 1985.

NH>, SS>, CH>, RT>, RL>, AK>, begin February 20.

MARCH

1 **RT**>NG>	2 GE>	3 RS>	4	5	6 BE>	7
8 TV>	9	10	11 **RL**>	12 **AK**>	13 **CH**>**RS**>	14 44 AK/90
15	16 744 RT/96	17	18 **BE**> 7 GE/86	19	20 **TV**>ME> PF>	21
22	23 **NH**> 9 BE/94 655 RS/94	24 11 NG/84	25	26 **SS**> 2 PF/91 7 GE/88 748 TV/88	27	28 2 PF/90
29	30	31 OS>				

Largest # of raptors in month: 5,670 in March 1988; largest # of raptors in one day in month: 2,080 on March 26th, 1988.

APRIL

1	2	3 2 PF/91	4 1 BV/91	5 50 CH/93 28 NH/93	6	7
8 **OS><RS** 706 RT/87	9	10 BW>	11	12 22 RL/91 16 OS/92	13 1 FH/92	14 28 NH/91
15 **BW>** 1 SK/94 1 SW/94*	16 **<BE** 2 PF/90	17	18 1 SW/96* 35 NH/96 1556 SS/76	19 1 PR/95**	20 1 GF/77 1 SW/93	21 1 SW/85 6,007 BW/85
22 1 SW/88	23	24 **<OS**	25 **<TV** 6 ME/96 2 PF/94 1 SW/94*	26	27 1 SW/93*	28 1 SW/98* 12 BE/96 4 GE/96
29 2 SW/98* 4 GE/83	30 **<RL**					

Largest # of raptors in month: 15,012 in April 1984; largest # of raptors in one day in month: 7,007 on April 21st, 1985.

* Sighting not reviewed/accepted by Ontario Bird Records Committee

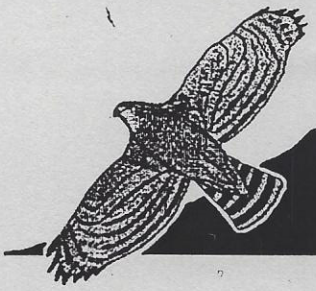
** First accepted Prairie Falcon record in Ontario

MAY

1	2	3	4 **<RT**	5 1 SW/89	6 <PF	7
8	9	10 <GE	11	12 **<NH<AK**	13 **<CH**<BE	14 **<SS**
15 **<BW** <RL<ME	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25 <OS	26	27	28
29	30	31 <TV<NH <SS<CH <NG<RS <AK				

BW and RT continue beyond May 31st.

Largest # of raptors in month: 2,695 in May 1980; largest # of raptors in one day in month: 1,492 on May 4th, 1989.



Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch

Newsletter

Newsletter No. 21, August 2000

2000 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & BANQUET

The NPH held its 10th Annual General Meeting and Banquet on April 15th at Puddicombe Farm in Winona. The meeting and banquet was well attended once again this year.

Many thanks to John Stevens and Paul Summerskill for securing an excellent variety of wines and cheeses for tasting. A special mention should be made regarding the cheeses, which were donated by M.D. Cheese in Brampton. Both the amount and variety of cheeses was outstanding, and proved very popular with those who attended the banquet. This was confirmed by the fierce bidding war that erupted during the impromptu auction of leftover cheese at the end of the evening's festivities.

This year's Guest Speaker, Brian Ratcliff, presented an informative and entertaining talk and slide show about nesting Peregrine Falcons in the Thunder Bay area. A former member of the NPH executive, Brian received a warm welcome from an eager and attentive audience.

After the presentation, Keith and Karen Dieroff ran the ever popular bucket raffle. Thanks to everyone who contributed prizes this year, especially Laurie Mackenzie, for donating more of her wonderful raptor artwork. ❖

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NPH MAKES DONATION TO PRONATURA VERACRUZ

In keeping with the Hawkwatch's mandate to educate people about hawks and work for the preservation of raptors in Ontario, a contribution has been made to Pronatura Veracruz in the amount of $1,000. The donation will be made over a period of three years: $500 the first year, $250 the second, and $250 in the third year.

Pronatura Veracruz is a Mexican nonprofit organization that jointly runs the Veracruz River of Raptors Project. During the fall hawk migration count, they see the largest hawk migration in the world. For example, during fall migration in 1999 alone, more than 3,288,000 hawks and vultures passed their lookout. That number included 750,000 Turkey Vultures, 127,000 Mississippi Kites, 1,746,000 Broad-winged Hawks, and 528,000 Swainson's Hawks.

A banding station has been established near the count site. Many of the hawks we see at Beamer undoubtedly pass by Veracruz at one time or another. Since Pronatura Veracruz tracks such an enormous number of birds, they are in a position to assess the health of many North American raptor populations. Our support of their banding operation will help them gather information and will eventually help us assess the health of Ontario's hawks.

The Veracruz River of Raptors Project is jointly run by the Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association, and HawkWatch International. Along with these joint partners, Pronatura Veracruz is promoting the conservation of migrating raptors and their habitats in central Veracruz, Mexico. For more information about the River of Raptors Project and/or Pronatura Veracruz, check the Internet. A search in Yahoo using the keywords "Pronatura Veracruz" will return a number of web sites with information about the River of Raptors Project. ❖

THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

by Mike Street

Did you realize that the NPH has a product? Neither did I - or at least I'd never thought of what we do in those terms. Simply put, our product is data, and it is important.

What caused this "revelation" was attendance at this year's HMANA Convention at Hawk Mountain, PA. Bruce Duncan and I heard speaker after speaker talk about different aspects of hawkwatching, but it always came back to the same thing - the more information hawkwatches collectively gather, and the higher the quality of that information, the more it can be used to help preserve and protect the birds of prey which are our special interest. In the next newsletter, I'll tell you more about HMANA's plans to help hawkwatches gather data and make it available quickly to those who need it to further our work.

The Year 2000 watch was again successful, with lots of birds for everyone - although we'd be happy to have more. Thanks to all our counters, especially Tom Reavley who once again served as our anchor. Thanks also to Brian Ratcliff for his very interesting Peregrine Falcon update at the annual banquet, and particularly to the members of the Executive, whose help is much appreciated.

I have mentioned previously that some of the NPH Executive, myself included, would like a change. The need for willing helpers remains. NPH work is not onerous, either physically or in terms of time required, but it does take a little time and some dedication. Please consider giving a portion of yours to a good cause. Contact me at the phone number listed elsewhere in the newsletter. Thanks. ❖

FOG SOCKS IN THE ANNUAL OPEN HOUSE - AGAIN!

by Keith Dieroff

In what can only be described as history repeating itself, the 10th annual NPH Open House was cloaked by fog for the second year in a row! The Open House, originally scheduled for Good Friday - April 21st, was postponed to Saturday in anticipation of inclement weather. The rain date proved no better, and the Official Counter for the day, was disappointed once again.

On the bright side, a total of 35 birds were counted despite the lack of cooperation from mother nature. All of the regular exhibitors were on hand, but understandably attendance was limited.

Optimism is high for next year's open house, and some great raffle prizes have already been lined up. See you there! ❖

SUMMARY OF THE 2000 MIGRATION

by John Stevens

As the millennium neared its conclusion and the hawkwatch at the Beamer Conservation Area (Beamer) completed its 26th season, a little middle-aged spread crept into the count data. The previous year had seen a verrry sloooww start and an abrupt end to the period of good flights of migrants but in 2000 that was not the case. In fact, the flight of 256 raptors on February 29th this year more than doubled the count for the first 17 days of March in 1999 put together!! There were also five days in May this year that had larger flights than the entire final week of the May 1999 season. Year to year, the counts were better almost every day in May 2000 relative to the previous year.

Despite these improvements, the total count of the flight this year (11,645) was still well below the long term (20 year) average of 13,957, although it was within 5% of the recent (5 year) average of 12,258.

The watch was covered for 527 hours which, for the 76 days of the count period, represents an average of 6.9 hours a day. This is very good considering eight days when snow, fog and rain resulted in almost no coverage (and no need for coverage). In recent years, we have lost Walter Klabunde, George Meyers and Jack Ryan as frequent weekday counters. Tom Reavley has stepped up his efforts to fill the void and, along with a host of others, enabled us to maintain a solid program in 2000.

The individual highlight of the year was our second Black Vulture which passed through around 1:00pm on March 31st. It was witnessed by seven lucky counters. It had taken 18 years for us to see the first Black Vulture and now a second has arrived only eight years later. This one came through on a good day for Turkey Vulture migration (454 birds) during the prime vulture migration period at Beamer. Chances are we'll probably see the next one within three to four years. Yes, I'll bet even money within four years.

April 24th had the largest count (1,408) of any day this year. In fact, there were more birds between noon and 1 o'clock EST on that day than on all but one other day during the season. Over 85% of the flight were Broad-winged Hawks. This was Easter Monday, the day following the Open House weekend when inclement weather had skunked the count on Thursday, Friday and most of Saturday. So if anyone asks you when is a good time to go to Beamer for hawks, you can say after a period of rainy weather. This is much easier to predict than the answer we used to give, before it rains.

One record high, species season total was set this year as seven Peregrine Falcons were counted. Offsetting this was a record low count of only 2 Northern Goshawks. We are just past the midpoint of their fluctuating cycle of 10-11 years and should begin to see more of these as we approach their expected peak in the year 2005.

Both Sharp-shinned Hawks and Red-tailed Hawks rebounded slightly from very poor counts in 1999. Greater numbers of Northern Harriers, American Kestrels, Golden Eagles, Broad-winged Hawks, Osprey, and Merlins were also recorded in 2000, relative to 1999. Only the Merlin and Golden Eagle counts were significantly above their 20 year averages.

Reduced numbers of Turkey Vultures, Cooper's Hawks, Bald Eagles, Rough-legged Hawks and Red-shouldered Hawks were counted relative to 1999. The Cooper's Hawk figure was the lowest since 1985, while the Red-shouldered Hawk total of 498 was the lowest since we began full coverage during the migration period in 1981. It represents 77% of the recent 5-year average and 59% of the long term average for this species. We had observed a steady increase in the numbers of this species until 1994 when 1,419 were counted. Since then the numbers have been trending downward. It is possible that we are seeing a cyclical change in population similar to that seen with Northern Goshawks but with a longer period. Beamer is *the* primary watch for this species and we are best placed to detect such a cycle. It is much too early to be able to draw any significant conclusions from our data.

Ever wondered about the ratio of light to dark morph Rough-legged Hawks? Some counters note the colour and this practice should be encouraged. The more information that can be

collected, the more useful it could be. Aging Eagles and noting the age and sex of Harriers has often been done while some watch sites also identify the sex of accipiters. We should make a point to begin noting the colour of the Rough-legged Hawks since there is never a large number of these in a day.

In 2000, we counted 49 Rough-legged Hawks and the counters noted the colour of 20 of them. There was an even split between the colours. This came as a surprise to me since my impression has been that light morphs are more common. Maybe some counters only note the dark ones and the data is skewed in their favour.

For 2001, consideration should be given to starting the watch a week earlier than has been our custom. The February 29th data this year demonstrates that good flights can occur if weather conditions are suitable. There are some older reports of 100 plus counts as early as February 22nd. With the evidence of milder winters that we have experienced recently, there is a strong likelihood that a significant number of migrants are passing before we normally start. The Conservation Authority would probably entertain the idea of allowing access through the gate before March 1st if we request it. At that time of the season, the flight would probably be concentrated to within three to four hours around noon so that it wouldn't place a big demand on anyone's time to cover a day.

Many thanks to Tom Reavley, Paul Summerskill, Marcie Jacklin, Dave Copeland and Mike Street for their help with the counting this year. Thanks also to Jim Dowall, Ian Rabenda, Jean Iron, Ann Gray, Bouwe Bergsma, Keith Dieroff, Terry Osborne, Denys Gardiner, Barry Cherriere, Geoff Carpentier, John Stevens, Bob Curry, Gordon Bellerby, Jerry Guild, Jim Coey, Dave Milsom, Rob Dobos, Kevin McLaughlin, John Olmsted, Stuart Mackenzie, Chris Escott, Gerry Shemilt, Bruce Duncan, and Alfred Adamo for serving as the official counters. To Jim Coey and Rob Dobos in particular, may you have better flights in 2001. ❖

FALL BIRDING OPPORTUNITIES - SIXTH ANNUAL TURKEY VULTURE FESTIVAL

The Kern Valley Turkey Vulture Festival, which takes place September 29th to October 2nd, 2000, celebrates the height of fall Turkey Vulture migration through California's Kern River Valley. One of the two largest known migration sites in North America (north of Mexico), 7,686 Turkey Vultures were counted during last year's 4-day festival. The entire 1999 count period from September 1st through October 20th, tallied a total of 29,690 Turkey Vultures. The magnitude of the migration over this southern Sierra Nevada site is awe inspiring!

The late September festival dates also correspond with what is historically one of the finest weekends for observing fall landbird migration in California. In addition to the presence of many western migrants attractive to eastern birders, there are excellent chances for observing eastern rarities at nearby desert oases. There's more! This is an excellent time of year to go on the Vulture Festival geology, moth and tree field trips. Other activities include: booths, exhibits, children's activities at the Kern River Preserve (most on Saturday only). ❖

For more info visit the Festival website at - http://frontpage.lightspeed.net/KRP/tvfestival.htm

Reproduced from Kern Valley Preserve website.

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH WORD SEARCH

Find all the words and reveal the hidden message.

Accipiter	Field	Lores
Accidental	Flank	Low
April	Flap	Malar
Aspen	Flight	May
Bald	Fly	Merlin
Beak	Fog	Migration
Beamer	Forest	Morph
Binoculars	Front	Mountain
Birds	Fun	Nape
Bluebird	Glide	Nest
Boreal	Golden	North
Buteo	Goshawk	Oak
Circle	Grimsby	Observers
Cliff	Gyrfalcon	Osprey
Clouds	Harrier	Owl
Cold	Hawks	Passerines
Common	Hazy	Peregrine
Conservation	Hempine	Phase
Count	High	Point
Covert	Hmana	Prey
Dark	Hover	Quarry
Dihedral	Hunter	Rain
Dive	Identify	Raptor
Duck	Immature	Rare
Eagle	Kestrel	Redtail
East	Kettle	Ridge
Elm	Kite	Rufous
Fall	Lake	Scavenger
Feather	Light	Scope
Feeder	Lookout	Shape
Ferruginous	Loon	Sky

T	R	I	D	G	E	B	Y	A	M
F	A	L	L	O	O	D	A	R	K
A	P	E	P	S	U	L	G	L	I
R	T	R	O	H	S	N	D	N	D
D	O	T	I	A	I	U	E	E	L
P	R	S	N	W	E	S	T	R	N
U	E	E	T	K	N	A	L	F	T
O	W	K	N	F	E	A	T	H	E
W	O	N	S	R	E	T	N	U	H
L	T	O	R	R	R	Y	T	S	A
O	N	H	F	S	M	E	R	L	I
O	A	E	E	E	S	P	M	F	E
K	P	M	R	R	N	O	L	A	E
O	S	P	R	E	Y	A	A	R	E
U	G	I	U	T	P	G	V	R	R
T	N	N	G	I	N	A	P	R	I
E	I	E	I	P	T	R	A	I	L
L	W	O	N	I	A	T	N	U	O
C	D	L	O	C	I	W	O	L	U
R	O	N	U	C	L	Y	B	S	M
I	M	M	S	A	S	P	E	N	Y
C	I	M	M	A	T	U	R	E	K
T	S	E	R	O	F	H	S	T	R
V	A	G	R	A	N	T	T	R	E
L	A	R	D	E	H	I	D	A	S

R	U	T	L	U	V	F	L	I	G
E	N	I	R	G	E	R	E	P	O
M	D	M	E	T	Y	R	H	E	N
D	H	T	R	O	N	R	O	G	K
G	A	E	B	O	F	T	I	A	F
B	I	U	I	R	A	E	H	L	T
A	L	O	N	F	L	D	M	E	E
E	R	T	N	O	D	C	I	N	O
S	O	C	U	O	L	O	L	R	M
E	O	U	C	N	G	I	C	A	P
N	L	L	K	B	U	T	E	O	E
S	E	P	A	N	F	R	A	I	W
A	R	R	I	E	R	N	O	A	N
E	E	I	G	F	L	Y	B	T	B
H	L	I	I	A	S	O	L	R	S
I	S	T	D	H	M	A	N	A	U
Q	U	A	R	R	Y	O	N	F	E
Y	A	E	R	A	R	E	O	V	B
W	I	N	G	U	R	I	I	P	R
H	T	S	E	E	P	R	H	E	I
I	T	N	E	D	I	S	E	V	I
E	B	U	O	N	B	T	L	O	R
K	T	E	O	A	K	S	H	A	W
T	L	U	D	A	B	U	S	H	A
I	B	M	Y	S	C	A	V	E	N

Slow	Streak	Thermal	Upperwing	Weather
Snow	Sudadult	Tower	Vagrant	West
Soaring	Sun	Trail	Valley	Wing
South	Tail	Tundra	Vane	Wingspan
Spring	Talon	Updraft	Vulture	

2000 NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH EXECUTIVE

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2000 NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH MONTHLY COUNTS

SPECIES	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	TOTALS
Black Vulture		1			**1**
Turkey Vulture	19	1,814	1,082	56	**2,971**
Osprey		2	37	7	**46**
Swallow-tailed Kite					
Mississippi Kite					
Bald Eagle		13	5	7	**25**
Northern Harrier	3	19	81	22	**125**
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	198	1,691	578	**2,468**
Cooper's Hawk	2	96	61	18	**177**
Northern Goshawk		1		2	**3**
Red-shouldered Hawk	2	449	42	5	**498**
Broad-winged Hawk			2,178	190	**2,368**
Swainson's Hawk			1		**1**
Red-tailed Hawk	224	1,585	701	106	**2,616**
Ferruginous Hawk					
Rough-legged Hawk	2	14	32	1	**49**
Golden Eagle		5	5	3	**13**
American Kestrel		26	57	12	**95**
Merlin		7	11	4	**22**
Peregrine Falcon			4	3	**7**
Gyrfalcon					
Prairie Falcon					
Unidentified Accipiter		9	7	5	**21**
Unidentified Buteo	1	38	38	13	**90**
Unidentified Eagle		4			**4**
Unidentified Falcon			3	1	**4**
Unidentified Raptor	2	9	27	3	**41**
Total Raptors	**256**	**4,290**	**6,063**	**1,036**	**11,645**
Hours Counted	**5**	**216.2**	**194.65**	**111.5**	**527.35**
Raptors/Hour	**51.2**	**19.8**	**31.1**	**9.3**	**22.1**

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH COUNTS - MARCH 2000

SPECIES	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	TOTAL
Black Vulture																															1	1
Turkey Vulture	2		1	2	3	11	6	17	37	2		1	6	21	3	6	18	5	18	61	4	5	17	17	127	606	4	152	10	198	454	1814
Osprey																				1						1						2
Swallow-tailed Kite																																0
Mississippi Kite																																0
Bald Eagle						4	1			1									1						2	4						13
Northern Harrier			1	2												1			3		1			1	4	2		2		1	1	19
Sharp-shinned Hawk				4	6	12	3	8	1		1		2	6			4	2	10	2	5	4	14	21	21	21	4	16		17	14	198
Cooper's Hawk			4		4	2	1	3					2	4		2	2	15	4	2	1	4	4	9	8	3	1	7	3	2	9	96
Northern Goshawk							1																									1
Red-shouldered Hawk				1	8	17	7	19	22	4	4		7	11	3	3	1	68	20	31	4	6	46	53	57	12	2	19		5	19	449
Broad-winged Hawk																																0
Swainson's Hawk																																0
Red-tailed Hawk	3		49	32	226	178	29	32	25	43	34	5	16	12	1	4	45	115	45	126	48	29	62	72	85	59	2	77	1	49	81	1585
Ferruginous Hawk																																0
Rough-legged Hawk				1	1												1		1	1			2	5	2							14
Golden Eagle														1				1		3												5
American Kestrel				1					2	1				4					3		1			2	7	3		1			1	26
Merlin											2									1	1				2	1						7
Peregrine Falcon																																0
Gyrfalcon																																0
Prairie Falcon																																0
Unidentified Accipiter						1	1							1										5						1		9
Unidentified Buteo						12	1	1					1					7	4						2	5		2		3		38
Unidentified Eagle					1	1	1																	1								4
Unidentified Falcon																																0
Unidentified Raptors			5																				1	1				2				9
Total Raptors	**5**	**0**	**60**	**43**	**249**	**238**	**51**	**80**	**87**	**51**	**41**	**6**	**34**	**60**	**7**	**16**	**71**	**213**	**109**	**228**	**65**	**48**	**146**	**187**	**317**	**717**	**13**	**278**	**14**	**276**	**580**	**4290**
Hours Counted	6.5	6	6.3	8	8	7	7.5	8	6.5	6	6.5	4	6	8.3	6	5	8	7.5	7	6.5	7.1	5	8	8.5	8	9	7	6	7	7	9	216.2
Birds Per Hour	0.8	0.0	9.5	5.4	31.1	34.0	6.8	10.0	13.4	8.5	6.3	1.5	5.7	7.2	1.2	3.2	8.9	28.4	15.6	35.1	9.2	9.6	18.3	22.0	39.6	79.7	1.9	46.3	2.0	39.4	64.4	19.8
Wind Direction	SW	NW	W	SW	W/N	SW/E	SW	SW	SW	SN0W	E/NE	N/NW	SW/SE	SW	SW	NE	E/NE	SW/N	E/SE	E	W/E	NE	VAR	E/NE	S/SW	W/SW	SW	NE/N	NW	NW/N	NE/N	

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH COUNTS - APRIL 2000

SPECIES	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	TOTAL
Black Vulture																															0
Turkey Vulture	196			25	11	97	156		115	1	20	58	111	10	90	31			32			1	17	4		17	7	15	17	51	1082
Osprey							1				1	1	1	3	1				6			1	11	4	4	2	1				37
Swallow-tailed Kite																															0
Mississippi Kite																															0
Bald Eagle	1															1			1							1			1		5
Northern Harrier	1						1		1			3	5	7	4	1			11					17	8	3	6	1	9	3	81
Sharp-shinned Hawk	62			12	2	15	38		10			22	94	165	455	46			301			22	112	117	51	15	52	13	42	45	1691
Cooper's Hawk	12					1	2		5			3	8	7	2	2			2				1	1	1	3	3	2		6	61
Northern Goshawk																															0
Red-shouldered Haw	3					1	2						10	1	1				16				1	2	2	2				1	42
Broad-winged Hawk													4	6	13	1			54			8	9	1204	182	58	197	10	25	407	2178
Swainson's Hawk																											1				1
Red-tailed Hawk	40			9	5	1	84		25	2	1	26	166	21	46	6			55			2	22	46	38	18	29	8	22	29	701
Ferruginous Hawk																															0
Rough-legged Hawk	1						1		1			1	5	1	2				2			1	1	1	3	1	3			8	32
Golden Eagle																								1	2	2					5
American Kestrel	5				1	2	4					1	5	2	11	1			2				5	8		2	3	1	1	3	57
Merlin						2									2								1	2			1		1	2	11
Peregrine Falcon												1			1				1							1					4
Gyrfalcon																															0
Prairie Falcon																															0
Unidentified Accipiter	1								1		1	2				2															7
Unidentified Buteo	1						24						3		2				3				1			4					38
Unidentified Eagle																															0
Unidentified Falcon																										2			1		3
Unidentified Raptors													2			1							9						5	10	27
Total Raptors	**323**	**0**	**0**	**46**	**19**	**119**	**313**	**0**	**158**	**3**	**23**	**118**	**414**	**223**	**630**	**92**	**0**	**0**	**486**	**0**	**0**	**35**	**190**	**1407**	**291**	**131**	**303**	**50**	**124**	**565**	**6063**
Hours Counted	7.5	2.75	3	5	7	8.25	8.5	0	9	7	3	6.75	7.5	8	9.5	8.5	1.5	4	7	1.5	6.5	8	8	7	8	8	8	9	7.2	9.7	194.65
Birds Per Hour	43.1	0.0	0.0	9.2	2.7	14.4	36.8	0.0	17.6	0.4	7.7	17.5	55.2	27.9	66.3	10.8	0.0	0.0	69.4	0.0	0.0	4.4	23.8	201.0	36.4	16.4	37.9	5.6	17.2	58.2	31.1
Wind Direction	SE/S	RAIN	FOG	NONE	W	W	N/NE	SNOW	NW	SNOW	E	NW/SW	S/NE	SW	SW	NE	RAIN	FOG	S	N/FOG	E/FOG	E/NE	NW/NE	NE	NE/E	NE/EN	NE/EN	SE/S	N/NE	N/S	

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH COUNTS - MAY 2000

SPECIES	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	TOTAL
Black Vulture																																0
Turkey Vulture		14	4		3	16	12			1		1	1		4																	56
Osprey					1	2		3			1																					7
Swallow-tailed Kite																																0
Mississippi Kite																																0
Bald Eagle		2				1	1	2				1																				7
Northern Harrier	2	1	2	3	1	2	1	3	1		3	2			1																	22
Sharp-shinned Hawk	17	37	35	68	79	108	70	34	27	29	13	18	21	4	18																	578
Cooper's Hawk		4	2	2		2			2		2	2	1	1																		18
Northern Goshawk			1									1																				2
Red-shouldered Hawk		2				1						1			1																	5
Broad-winged Hawk	8	62	33	9	20	27	4	9		3	3	2			10																	190
Swainson's Hawk																																0
Red-tailed Hawk		15	4	1	16	11	8	6	2	1	10	16		2	14																	106
Ferruginous Hawk																																0
Rough-legged Hawk					1																											1
Golden Eagle		1									1				1																	3
American Kestrel	1	2			1	3	1		1	1			1		1																	12
Merlin						2		1		1																						4
Peregrine Falcon		1					1	1																								3
Gyrfalcon																																0
Prairie Falcon																																0
Unidentified Accipiter			2			1					2																					5
Unidentified Buteo		3	10																													13
Unidentified Eagle																																0
Unidentified Falcon		1																														1
Unidentified Raptors		2			1																											3
Total Raptors	**28**	**147**	**93**	**83**	**123**	**176**	**98**	**59**	**33**	**36**	**35**	**44**	**24**	**7**	**50**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1036**
Hours Counted	5.5	8	6.5	7.5	10	8.5	8.5	8	7	7	7.5	6	7.5	7	7																	111.5
Birds Per Hour	5.1	18.4	14.3	11.1	12.3	20.7	11.5	7.4	4.7	5.1	4.7	7.3	3.2	1.0	7.1																	9.3
Wind Direction	WSW	NE	S/NE	W/SW	SW	SW	S/SW	S	S/SW	SSE	W/S	N/VAR	SW/W	W/SW	N/VAR																	

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH
Annual Summaries 1980 - 2000

SPECIES	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	TOTAL	AVG
Black Vulture	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	**1**	**0**
Turkey Vulture	620	671	521	895	616	948	837	977	2331	1406	1463	1785	1990	1852	3189	2151	2946	3092	3277	3376	2971	**37914**	**1805**
Osprey	24	19	27	20	38	36	33	30	41	36	40	46	64	45	69	47	56	28	42	43	46	**830**	**40**
Swallow-tailed Kite	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**	**0**
Mississippi Kite	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	**1**	**0**
Bald Eagle	8	1	7	7	5	10	14	7	16	17	15	17	22	14	40	24	33	17	32	30	25	**361**	**17**
Northern Harrier	72	102	131	125	127	113	143	217	162	175	194	219	209	126	177	177	172	125	84	91	125	**3066**	**146**
Sharp-shinned Hawk	4614	4095	4880	3931	4683	4480	3549	2831	3108	3576	7004	3767	3418	3475	4846	2136	3290	3047	2816	1983	2468	**77997**	**3714**
Cooper's Hawk	135	179	121	160	190	152	196	199	229	180	311	220	199	209	263	256	295	221	187	240	177	**4319**	**206**
Northern Goshawk	3	8	51	73	67	25	21	31	27	14	24	20	34	28	73	15	37	16	14	6	3	**590**	**28**
Red-shouldered Hawk	684	528	638	624	838	764	901	876	861	1102	1341	761	1187	1030	1419	705	694	796	549	678	498	**17474**	**832**
Broad-winged Hawk	4914	6904	2305	4118	7844	8239	3823	1628	2910	2304	4428	2063	2761	1963	2335	1779	1550	1849	3886	1833	2368	**71804**	**3419**
Swainson's Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	2	0	1	2	3	0	1	**14**	**1**
Red-tailed Hawk	2848	2604	2607	3150	3105	3410	2852	3265	3567	2615	3482	2023	3861	2684	2890	2861	3584	2572	2235	2216	2616	**61047**	**2907**
Ferruginous Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	**2**	**0**
Rough-legged Hawk	37	41	131	59	85	48	45	77	87	45	127	145	128	35	62	87	98	44	32	69	49	**1531**	**73**
Golden Eagle	3	4	4	8	6	12	7	6	3	7	10	8	12	6	10	4	13	6	6	10	13	**158**	**8**
American Kestrel	101	114	102	71	56	150	126	85	148	132	207	180	92	93	122	70	61	84	77	69	95	**2235**	**106**
Merlin	1	2	5	2	2	5	5	12	5	4	9	11	12	9	23	14	22	14	15	10	22	**204**	**10**
Peregrine Falcon	1	3	3	0	0	2	1	1	4	2	6	5	6	2	4	1	2	2	4	1	7	**57**	**3**
Gyrfalcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**	**0**
Prairie Falcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	**1**	**0**
Unidentified Raptors	509	647	435	467	640	880	1504	266	634	592	552	2681	681	534	452	480	249	189	227	340	160	**13149**	**626**
Total Raptors	14574	15922	11968	13710	18302	19275	14057	10508	14134	12208	19243	13951	14677	12107	15977	10808	13103	12105	13487	10995	11645	**292756**	**13941**
Hours Counted	529	562.6	583.1	565	564.6	608.5	576.2	681.5	608.2	499.3	574.5	548.5	541.5	538.5	531	555.7	454.5	508.35	491	502.81	527.35	**11551.71**	**550**
Birds Per Hour	27.6	28.3	20.5	24.3	32.4	31.7	24.4	15.4	23.2	24.5	33.5	25.4	27.1	22.5	30.1	19.4	28.8	23.8	27.5	21.9	22.1	**25.3**	**25.3**

Highest Total & Date

Black Vulture	1	Apr 4/92 & Mar 31/00	Cooper's Hawk	50	April 5, 1993	Golden Eagle	4	Apr 29/83 & Apr 28/96
Turkey Vulture	748	March 26, 1988	Northern Goshawk	11	March 24, 1984	American Kestrel	44	March 14, 1990
Osprey	16	Apr 12/92 & May 6/00	Red-shouldered Hawk	655	March 23, 1994	Merlin	6	April 25, 1996
Swallow-tailed Kite	1	April 15, 1994	Broad-winged Hawk	6007	April 21, 1995	Peregrine Falcon	3 dates with 2 birds	
Mississippi Kite	1	May 11, 1997	Swainson's Hawk	2	May 2, 1997	Gyrfalcon	1	April 20, 1977
Bald Eagle	12	April 28, 1996	Red-tailed Hawk	744	March 16, 1996	Prairie Falcon	1	April 19, 1995
Northern Harrier	35	April 18, 1996	Ferruginous Hawk	1	Apr 13/92 & Apr 23/98			
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1556	April 18, 1976	Rough-legged Hawk	24	April 2, 1982			

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch

Newsletter

Newsletter No. 22, February 2001

STEVE HOFFMAN TO SPEAK AT APRIL 28TH AGM & BANQUET

The 2001 NPH Annual General Meeting and banquet will again be held at Puddicombe Farms on Highway 8 in Winona. Mark April 28th on your calendar as the guest speaker will be Steve Hoffman, founder of Hawkwatch International, and current director of the Pennsylvania Audubon Society.

At this year's meeting, members will be able to sample Puddicombe Farm's brand new vintages. After discontinuing its relationship with Peller Estates, Puddicombe agreed to not sell its own wine for a period of three years. The wait is over and the wines are ready for your enjoyment!

Socializing will begin at 5:00pm. The before supper wine tasting starts at 5:15, and a brave volunteer has been dispatched to determine if the outstanding variety of cheeses can be secured for this year's event. Dinner will start around 6:15, followed by the guest speaker, and last but not least, the bucket raffle.

Tickets are now on sale, priced at $20 for members and $25 for non-members. Call John Stevens or Mike Street for tickets.

Prizes are needed for the bucket raffle, please call Keith Dieroff to make a donation. All phone numbers are listed in the Executive directory on page 4 of this newsletter. ❖

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GOOD NEWS FROM VERACRUZ

The August 2000 issue of this newsletter announced NPH's sponsorship of the Veracruz River of Raptors Project. Our original plan was to donate $1,000 over a three year period: $500 the first year, and $250 in the proceeding two years. Just how important is the project? It is believed that 95% of the world population of Swainson's and Broad-winged Hawks are funneled through the Veracruz region of Mexico. The fall 2000 numbers are staggering: 1.8million Turkey Vultures, 1.5million Broad-wings, and 650,000 Swainson's Hawks. The total number of raptors seen at Veracruz during fall 2000 was over 4.2million birds!

The project is not just about numbers. Important data is collected by the counters and banders. For example, counters at Veracruz noted that this year was the earliest Broad-winged Hawk peak since the count began. The average is usually around October 1st, this year the migration peaked on September 22nd. Banders at Veracruz have already recovered birds banded at Long Point.

The mandate of the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch is to promote the conversation of hawks in Ontario and the enjoyment of hawk watching. To this end, we have increased our sponsorship from $250 to $500 this year and next, to match our year 2000 contribution. The NPH executive believes the River of Raptors project will help promote the conservation of hawks, so future generations can enjoy hawks at Beamer CA. ❖

11th ANNUAL OPEN HOUSE FRIDAY, APRIL 13th

The NPH will once again hold its annual Open House on Good Friday, April 13th. It seems unlikely the event could be impaired by inclement weather three years in a row, so invite your family and friends; it should be a good day for them and the birds too! ❖

THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

by Mike Street

Did you ever stop to think how portable a hobby hawkwatching is? I don't mean heading out for a day at Hawk Cliff or Holiday Beach. You can hawkwatch almost anywhere in the world just by paying attention; it's not necessary to find specific habitat or a migration hot spot. I realized this fully last summer when I worked for almost a month overseas in Jordan. On weekends (Thursday afternoon and Friday there) I tried to see as much of the country as possible. This was sightseeing, not birding, although my binoculars were usually close by.

One afternoon I stopped for a quiet coffee at Umm Qais, an abandoned desert castle built partly on the still visible ruins of an even more ancient Roman town. One of the highest locations in the country, the site overlooks not only the northern mountains of Jordan but also the Jordan River, the Sea of Galilee in Israel and the Golan Heights in Syria. While enjoying the view of so much past and present history through my glasses I noticed two raptors soaring miles away over the valleys below. I'm not sure that I identified them correctly, but as far as I could make out one was a Golden Eagle and the other either a Lesser Spotted Eagle or an Imperial Eagle. The following week, as I was finding out for myself how buoyant the water of the Dead Sea really is, a Peregrine, or its local cousin the Barbary Falcon, flew over. No binoculars this time, of course, but still a nice sight. My hawkwatching knowledge added a lot of pleasure to this trip to a fascinating country and part of the world. Driving the 401 or 403 and noting Red-tails and Kestrels on the way will never again be just a diversion.

Closer to home, we were very pleased to learn that the stewardship of the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority and work of the NPH was recognized late last year when the Beamer site was designated as an Important Bird Area (IBA). See the article elsewhere in this issue for more about this honour, earned through the efforts of everyone who has contributed over the years to the Hawkwatch.

The 27th season of counting raptors at Beamer is almost upon us. Preparations are well under way, and our hope is for a big season to restore some of the long-term averages which have fallen with the lower counts of the last few years. I'm sure the report of 30 Bald Eagles on the north shore of Lake Erie near Nanticoke in the last week of January led NPHers who heard about it to mentally invite them all to swing by Grimsby on their way north!

As always, running the Hawkwatch takes work. Help is needed with counting, maintaining the site, our Open House and helping visitors. If you have a bit of time to spare please get in touch with me in person at Beamer, by phone or by e-mail (see the NPH Executives' list for details). Thanks all. ❖

2001 COUNT - STARTING ONE WEEK EARLY, TRAINING FOR NEW COUNTERS

With the relatively warm winters in the last few years, a few of our members ventured up to Beamer in late February just to see if anything was happening. It was. Raptors, mostly Red-tails, were moving, with 80-odd seen in a few hours one afternoon. This year the NPH Executive have decided to keep an eye on the situation by starting the Hawkwatch early and having one or more counters at Beamer between 11am and 2pm for the last week of February. (This is not exactly new – some counting was done in February during the first few years of the Grimsby hawkwatch, but had to be dropped due to lack of counters.)

If you are a regular counter, by the time you see this newsletter you should have heard from Tom Reavely, who has agreed to look after scheduling this year. If for some reason you haven't connected, please call Tom at 905-664-2091.

Anyone who would like to learn to be a counter should give Mike Street a call at (905) 648-3737. We will have training workshops on two weekends this season, from 10am to 3pm on Saturday and Sunday, March 24-25, and again on Saturday and Sunday, April 14-15. ❖

BEAMER IDENTIFIED AS AN IMPORTANT BIRD AREA (IBA) SITE

The BirdLife International partnership is working to identify and document sites, called Important Bird Areas (IBAs), that are vital to the long-term conservation of the world's birds. As the Canadian copartners of BirdLife, Bird Studies Canada (BSC) and the Canadian Nature Federation (CNF) are coordinating the Important Bird Areas in Canada program.

BirdLife International started the IBA program in Europe in 1985; the Canadian effort was launched in 1996. BirdLife partners in over 100 countries have joined together to build the global IBA network. Today the Canadian partners are identifying and conserving hundreds of IBAs across the country.

The Canadian IBA program has two major components: site inventory and site conservation. BSC is taking the lead in technical activities including the compilation and evaluation of site inventory data. CNF is taking the lead in activities associated with advocacy, communications and the development of site conversation strategies.

The official IBA description for Beamer CA reads, in part, "Over a period from 1981 to 2000, an average of about 14,000 raptors passed over Beamer CA during each spring migration. Of this total, at least two species are generally recorded in numbers greater than 1% of their estimated national population. These species are Turkey Vulture and Red-shouldered Hawk (nationally vulnerable). The two decade average for Turkey Vulture is 1,895 birds, while the 1996-2000 average is 3,312 birds. This is likely a reflection of the recent population increase of Turkey Vulture in Canada. Other species recorded in large numbers include Sharp-shinned Hawk (avg. of 3,668 birds), Broad-winged Hawk (avg. of 3,344 birds), and Red-tailed Hawk (avg. of 2,959 birds). Diurnal migrant water birds and passerines, which use the escarpment as a flight line, are seen in some numbers. Beamer CA is significant as a concentration point migrating raptors because of its physiography." A link to Beamer's full IBA description is provided below.

Internet References:

Bird Studies Canada main IBA web page: **http://www.bsc-eoc.org/ibamain.html**

Canadian Nature Federation main IBA web page: **http://www.cnf.ca/bird/birds_iba.html**

Ontario IBA sites: **http://www.bsc-eoc.org/~bsc/lba/ontmain.html**

Official IBA description of Beamer CA: **http://www.bsc-eoc.org/~bsc/lba/ibasites/On023.html**

GOLDEN EAGLE MIGRATION AND CONSERVATION

Ron Pittaway, Ministry of Natural Resources

Ontario hawkwatchers often ask me where our Golden Eagles are coming from and nesting. The short answer is that most of the migrant Golden Eagles seen in southern Ontario and southern Michigan probably originate from northern Quebec east of Hudson Bay. This immense and remote region of Quebec north of the 55th parallel is about the size of France with a tiny population of mostly Inuit in coastal communities. It borders Labrador (part of Newfoundland) on the east. Northern Quebec has numerous high cliffs for nesting Golden Eagles. Their prey includes hares, other small mammals, Canada Geese, ducks, ptarmigan, grouse and carrion. Much of the above information comes from "The Breeding Birds of Quebec" (Atlas 1996). The Atlas also reports that the mountainous Gaspe Peninsula probably supports several pairs of Golden Eagles making it the species' stronghold in southern Quebec.

Very few Golden Eagles nest in Ontario. Three nest locations reported in Peck and James (1983) in the "Breeding Birds of Ontario" were all within 75km (46mi) of one another and within 95km (60mi) of Hudson Bay. Golden Eagles are usually cliff nesters; the lowlands of northern Ontario around Hudson Bay generally lack the numerous high cliffs found in Quebec. As Golden Eagles keep increasing, it is possible that a thin breeding population will establish itself on the rugged Canadian Shield where there are more

cliffs, but this area also has fewer open areas for hunting. Godfrey (1986) in "The Birds of Canada" says that Golden Eagles historically nested in southern Ontario near Bancroft and at Mazinaw Lake now part of Bon Echo Provincial Park. I expect that there will be a gradual increase of breeding Golden Eagles throughout Ontario in suitable habitat. Most of the Goldens seen in Ontario are migrants from Quebec. For example, a fall migrant Golden Eagle was tracked by satellite from its nest near Hudson Bay in Quebec. It crossed the mouth of James Bay from Quebec into Ontario. This water crossing is about 200km or 120 miles. Later this Golden apparently crossed mid-Lake Ontario into New York State.

Why are eastern Golden Eagles increasing?

- DDT: Bald Eagles were devastated by DDT, but it is less clear what effect DDT had on Golden Eagles in eastern Canada. DDT was banned in Canada in 1971 and in the United States in 1972.
- Until the late 1960's, strychnine poison was used commonly in Ontario to kill wolves. Many woodsmen routinely carried this poison with them. Dead deer and moose killed by wolves were laced with strychnine to kill the wolves. When the ravens and eagles returned to eat the leftovers of the wolves, they too were often poisoned. The sale of strychnine and poisoning of wildlife are now prohibited in Ontario. It is a little known fact that many Golden Eagles (mainly adults) winter in central Ontario and southern Quebec in areas of deer concentrations. After a wolf pack kills a deer and the wolves feed, the ravens, eagles and foxes eat the leftovers. Because wolves kill deer at regular intervals, the eagles always have a regular food supply in winter in areas of deep snow cover and extreme cold.
- Trapping: many people legally trap fur bearing animals in Ontario. These fur bearers include wolf, coyote, fisher, marten and many other species valued for their fur. Formerly, Golden Eagles were sometimes caught in leg hold and Conibear traps because the eagles were attracted to the meat used as bait. Fortunately, fewer eagles are caught now because there are more restrictions on leg hold traps and trappers are better trained to set traps to minimize incidental catches. On several occasions I have seen or heard about Golden Eagles being caught in neck snares set for wolves. A few years ago, we released an adult Golden Eagle unharmed from a wolf snare.
- Shooting: both Bald and Golden Eagles are protected in Ontario under the provincial Endangered Species Act. It is not clear whether firearms contributed to the decline of eagles, and I am not implying that responsible hunters were ever shooting eagles. Nevertheless, today there are more restrictions on when, where, and how firearms are used.

In summary, I attribute the increase in Golden Eagles to the combination of banning DDT, laws prohibiting poisons such as strychnine, less use of leg hold traps and better education of trappers to avoid incidental catches, public appreciation of birds of prey, and greater restrictions and higher penalties for shooting eagles. ❖

Editor - in my experience, hawk humour is difficult to come by, this one is courtesy of Bruce Harschnitz...

As migration approached, two elderly vultures doubted they could make the trip south, so they decided to go by airplane. When they checked their baggage, the attendant noticed that they were carrying two dead raccoons. "Do you wish to check the raccoons through as luggage?" she asked. "No, thanks," replied the vultures. "They're carrion." ❖

2001 Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Executive

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NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH MIGRATION CALENDAR FOR BEAMER MEMORIAL CONSERVATION AREA

NOTES:

1. Species initials and Right (>) or Left (<) arrow:
   This combination indicates the start (>) or end (<) of the normal (at Beamer) migration period for that species. The same in **bold** type indicates the start or end of a noticeable peak period for that species. The box in which this combination is located indicates the day and month on which the period is likely to start or end.
2. A number, followed by species initial, followed by a slash (/) and a two-digit number:
   In this combination, the largest number of that species ever seen in one day is given first; the two-digit number following the / indicates the year in which this occurred. The box in which this combination is located indicates the day and month on which the event occurred. Example: 655 RS/94 in the March 23rd box indicates that the highest number of Red-shouldered Hawks recorded in one day was 655, seen on March 23rd, 1994.

TV - Turkey Vulture
BV - Black Vulture
OS - Osprey
SK - American Swallow-tailed Kite
BE - Bald Eagle
GE - Golden Eagle
NH - Northern Harrier
SS - Sharp-shinned Hawk
CH - Cooper's Hawk
NG - Northern Goshawk
RS - Red-shouldered Hawk
RT - Red-tailed Hawk
SW - Swainson's Hawk
RL - Rough-legged Hawk
FH - Ferruginous Hawk
AK - American Kestrel
ME - Merlin
PF - Peregrine Falcon
PR - Prairie Falcon
GF - Gyrfalcon
BW - Broad-winged Hawk

The following information, based on 25 years of data from the Beamer Hawkwatch, has been updated to show significant 2000 events.

Largest number of raptors in one season: 19,724 in 1985.

NH>, SS>, CH>, RT>, RL>, AK>, begin February 20.

MARCH

1 **RT>**NG>	2 GE>	3 RS>	4	5	6 BE>	7
8 TV>	9	10	11 **RL>**	12 **AK>**	13 **CH>RS>**	14 44 AK/90
15	16 744 RT/96	17	18 **BE>** 7 GE/86	19	20 **TV>**ME> PF>	21
22	23 **NH>** 9 BE/94 655 RS/94	24 11 NG/84	25	26 **SS>** 2 PF/91 7 GE/88 748 TV/88	27	28 2 PF/90
29	30	31 OS> 1 BV/00				

Largest # of raptors in month: 5,670 in March 1988; largest # of raptors in one day in month: 2,080 on March 26th, 1988.

APRIL

1	2	3 2 PF/91	4 1 BV/91	5 50 CH/93 28 NH/93	6	7
8 **OS><RS** 706 TR/87	9	10 BW>	11	12 22 RL/91 16 OS/92	13 1 FH/92	14 28 NH/91
15 **BW>** 1 SK/94 1 SW/94*	16 **<BE** 2 PF/90	17	18 1 SW/96* 35 NH/96 1556 SS/76	19 1 PR/95**	20 1 GF/77 1 SW/93	21 1 SW/85 6,007 BW/85
22 1 SW/88	23	24 **<OS**	25 **<TV** 6 ME/96 2 PF/94 1 SW/94*	26	27 1 SW/93*	28 1 SW/98* 12 BE/96 4 GE/96
29 2 SW/98*	30 **<RL**					

Largest # of raptors in month: 15,012 in April 1984; largest # of raptors in one day in month: 7,007 on April 21st, 1985.

* Sighting not reviewed/accepted by Ontario Bird Records Committee

** First accepted Prairie Falcon record in Ontario

MAY

1	2	3	4 **<RT**	5 1 SW/89	6 <PF	7
8	9	10 <GE	11	12 **<NH<AK**	13 **<CH**<BE	14 **<SS**
15 **<BW** <RL<ME	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25 <OS	26	27	28
29	30	31 <TV<NH <SS<CH <NG<RS <AK				

BW and RT continue beyond May 31st.

Largest # of raptors in month: 2,695 in May 1980; largest # of raptors in one day in month: 1,492 on May 4th, 1989.

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch

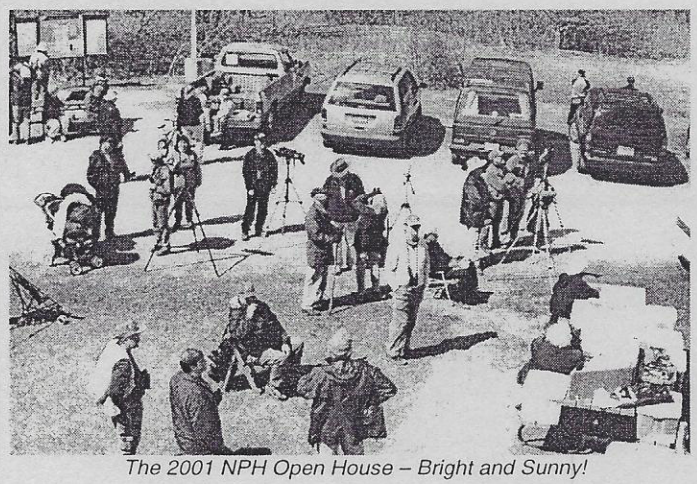
Newsletter

August 2001 Newsletter #23

2001 Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Open House

After two straight years of fog and rain, Mother Nature finally cooperated, serving up a cool but sunny day for the 2001 Open House. Highlights of the day included one Bald Eagle, one Golden Eagle and seven Osprey. Perhaps the biggest news was the largest Broad-winged Hawk flight in more than 10 years that occurred the day after the Open House.

Nevertheless, attendance was good and the voluntary admission charge/raffle introduced this year raised over $500 for Hawkwatch projects. Special thanks to David and Eleanor Wood of *Wildbirds Unlimited*, located at 3350 Fairview Street in Burlington, for donating Celestron Binoculars as the grand prize for the raffle. The only thing missing from this year's event was the coffee vendor - after two years of poor attendance due to fog and rain, he decided to take his chances elsewhere!



The 2001 NPH Open House – Bright and Sunny!

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Wanted! – Information on Sightings of Colour-Marked Red-tailed Hawks

Information is needed regarding sightings of Red-tailed Hawks with colour-markings on the outermost secondary feathers (one to four). Birds will be marked in eastern Pennsylvania, but could appear anywhere throughout their range, possibly through the summer of 2002. Possible colours include pink, yellow, and green. Please provide the following information about any sighting:

- Your name, address, phone number and/or E-mail address
- The date (including year)
- Time of day
- Location of the sighting (city, state, province, country)
- Age of bird (adult/immature)
- Dye colour
- Behaviour of the bird when sighted (migrating south or north, hunting, perching, nesting, etc.)

Report all sightings by phone, fax, E-mail or letter to:

Wildlife Information Center
P.O. Box 198
Slatington, PA 18080
Phone/Fax (610) 760-8889
wildlife@fast.net

Thanks to reports from volunteers like you, we had 16 sightings of colour-marked Red-tailed Hawks in our first year of marking. We begin the second year of the study this August. We will again be colour-marking birds as described in this article.

PLEASE TAKE A SECOND LOOK AT THOSE RED-TAILS, beginning now and continuing through to next spring. Please report any sightings as indicated. Thank you! ❖

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN
by Mike Street

Time really does fly, doesn't it? I'm sure that it was only yesterday that I was writing the column for the spring issue of the Newsletter, but here it is August already!

After waiting many years for a really big day, we finally got one on April 14 when nearly 3500 raptors, most of them Broad-wings, were counted. Many at Beamer that day came away with a dazed look in their eyes - they had heard how sometimes hawks can almost fill the sky, and now they had seen a bit of it! Mother Nature gave us a break with the Open House, and we were rewarded with good attendance. The Banquet went well too, with an excellent talk by Steve Hoffman. Several new counters took turns at Beamer, a trend we hope to see continue.

Where does the NPH go from here? I think we are heading in the direction of obtaining better data. Over time some people in the ornithology world have questioned the validity of hawkwatch data as a measure of raptor population trends. Some of them, in my opinion, base their views on a snobbish, "Well, those people are not professionals" attitude, ignoring the information, which is right in front of them.

Others, much more thoughtful, have rightfully asked about the consistency of hawkwatch data, and it is in this area that there is movement in the fraternity. If we all tighten up on our procedures and processes, doubt about the numbers will have to diminish. As you will see in another article in this newsletter, NPH is in the process of developing a site protocol to address some of the consistency issues. Do we count the same species the same way year after year? Have we made sure that all counters are aware of developments in identification, say for immature Bald Eagles? Do we have a set procedure for counting when we get lucky enough to have birds all over the sky? Does every counter start at the same time of day? These and other questions will be addressed. One of the first steps will be to have a meeting of all counters before the next season starts. Details of this will be in the spring newsletter.

Last, but never least, a sincere 'Thank You' once again to our counters (see the full list elsewhere in this issue), especially Tom Reavley who not only anchored the team three days a week but also organized everyone - We'll give you a break on that next year, Tom! - and Paul Summerskill who filled in when counters were unable to make it.

If you can, get out to one of the fall hawkwatches in our area to keep in practice for next year. It's only six months until March 1! ❖

2001 Banquet and Annual General Meeting

The Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch's Banquet and Annual General Meeting took place Saturday, April 28, 2001 at a new location, the Knights of Columbus Hall in Grimsby. The change in venue was made due to cost increases, which made our previous location too expensive.

Members and guests started off with wine and cheese while checking out and buying tickets on the many interesting items in the bucket raffle. This was followed by a very nice roast beef dinner provided by our caterer, D.J. Meredith.

After dinner the normal short Annual General Meeting saw the Treasurer's Report read and accepted, all the Officers returned to their posts for another year, and President Mike Street's brief 'State of the Hawkwatch' address [The 2001 count was shaping up to be the best in many years. Thanks to the counters, especially Tom Reavley. Everything continues to go well. More volunteers are needed].

The evening's Guest Speaker was Steve Hoffman, Founder of Hawkwatch International, who spoke on Raptor Migration in Western North America.

In 1977, Steve began the work which led to the founding of Hawkwatch International - identifying raptor flyways, developing credible long-term raptor population trends for western North America, making the results known to the environmental community and natural resource managers, and educating the public about raptors. The first study site was located in the Wellsville Mountains of northern Utah, where each fall up to 5,000 raptors are documented migrating south along the range from late August to late October.

In 1980, the Goshute Mountains Raptor Migration Project was initiated. At this Nevada fall migration site up to 25,000 raptors of 16 species are recorded each year, and more than 40,000 raptors have been banded.

Since 1985, monitoring and banding have been conducted in the Sandia Mountains (spring) and Manzano Mountains (fall) of New Mexico. Up to 15,000 migrating raptors are recorded each year along this flyway, and more than 10,000 birds have been banded at these two sites since 1990. The newest sites, both on the south face of the Grand Canyon, are also proving to be very interesting locations.

Steve's most interesting talk was accompanied by really terrific slides showing the birds and the mountains of the west. You could almost hear people thinking, "I want to go there and see this for myself!"

Thanks again to Steve for making the trip from Pennsylvania on a rushed schedule. Thanks also to the many Bucket Raffle donors, especially Jane Hamilton, Laurie Mackenzie and John Stevens; to Keith and Karen Dieroff for organizing the raffle; and particularly to John Stevens for all his hard work arranging this most enjoyable evening.❖

Book Review: Hawkwatching in the Americas
by Mike Street

Hawkwatching in the Americas: Proceedings of the 25th Anniversary Meeting of the Hawk Migration Association of North America, June 2000; Edited by Keith L. Bildstein and Daniel Klem, Jr.; Hawk Migration Association of North America. Paperback, 277 pages $22.95US. Available from Jack McCormack, 94 Cheyenne Rd., Lafayette, NJ, USA 07848.

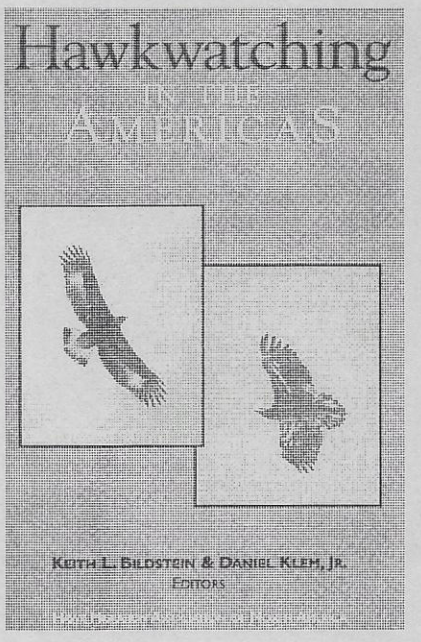
If you want to find out what's happening in Hawkwatching the best place to go is the regular convention of HMANA, the Hawk Migration Association of North America. Last year's gathering at the Split Rock Resort in Pennsylvania, celebrating HMANA's 25th Anniversary, was no exception. People who were unable to attend will find most of the information, and some of the flavour, in this book.

The first of the four sections, *Migrating Raptors: Reports and Techniques*, features papers on subjects ranging from 'Migrating Raptors and Vultures at Cedar Grove, Wisconsin, 1936-1999: An Index of Population Changes' through 'Preliminary Survey of Autumn Hawk Migration in the Inner Piedmont of Virginia', and 'New Full-season Autumn Hawkwatches in Coastal Texas', to 'Osprey Migration through Cuba' and 'Raptor Migration along the Mesoamerican Land Corridor'. For me, the three most interesting articles were in the techniques area, 'Ageing Eagles at Hawk Watches: What is Possible and What is Not' (by Bill Clark), 'How to Use Doppler Weather Surveillance Radar to Study Hawk Migration' and 'More Than One Way to Count a Hawk: Toward Site-specific Documentation of Raptor-migration Count Field Methods'.

Section two, *Ecology and Conservation of Migratory Raptors*, covers topics such as 'Why Migratory Birds of Prey Make Great Biological Indicators', 'Bald Eagles on the Upper Mississippi River in Northwestern Illinois and East central Iowa' and 'Altering Forest Management Plans to Accommodate Rare or Endangered Species: A Positive Example and Approach'. These reports, though somewhat dry, are examples of the hard work required - an important fact, which those of us who simply watch or count hawks may tend to forget - if raptors are to be preserved and protected.

There are two papers in the next section, *Other Migrant Reports*, 'Waterbird Migration Monitoring at a Raptor Migration Watchsite: Whitefish Point, Michigan' and 'The History of the Avalon Seawatch'. Both detail how hawkwatchers at established sites, realizing that other bird species were also using the area for migration, decided to monitor those birds as well. Ducks, grebes, shorebirds and loons are counted in Michigan, while the same species and some seabirds were counted in New Jersey.

In *Hawkwatching History* you will find 'In the Beginning: The Origins and Early Years of HMANA' and 'Turmoil and Triumph: The Early History of Hawk Mountain Sanctuary'. Both are transcriptions of talks by people, Paul Roberts and Jim Brett respectively, who 'were there' when much of the activity described was taking place. Hawkwatching, like most other hobbies/avocations, has its share of characters. What also comes out here is the amount of work and co-operative effort by many people, something which we see as we go about our part of all this at Beamer CA.❖



Observer Site Manual In Preparation For The NPH
By Alfred Adamo

Why Do We Need A Site Manual?

1. To ensure that raptor counts are conducted and recorded in a consistent manner by all observers despite the weather, migration conditions, etc. More consistent and thorough counts increase the statistical validity of the data, i.e. its use in monitoring the rise and fall of raptor populations.
2. To consolidate into one manual existing procedures e.g. "Rules and Guidelines for Monitoring Secondary Flights", etc. which are presently scattered among several documents.
3. To serve as a training manual for new counters and a reference for veterans. Counters are our most valuable resource – we wish to maximize their contribution!
4. To assist everyone to have more fun by reducing the amount of confusion and headaches that can occur when faced with problematic situations such as:
   - ❑ How do we avoid double-counting raptors?
   - ❑ How best can we differentiate between local and migratory raptors?
   - ❑ How best can we count (a) large kettle(s) when multiple qualified observers are present?
   - ❑ When a questionable sighting is called out, how should it be verified and who makes the final decision on whether it is included in the official count?
   - ❑ When should the count expand to alternate site(s) if it appears that a large flight may be occurring at these sites?

At the request of the Executive I am currently developing the first draft of the site guide that will address all these items, and many others. Once completed, we will make it available to the membership for review. Site manuals for such watches as Holiday Beach, Hawk Mountain and the Hawkwatch International sites will be consulted to select "best practices" that would be suitable for Beamer. As well as incorporating procedures that we have already established for the NPH, we will formalize and document existing informal procedures and provide direction where none currently exists. While we do have procedures already established for some of the more challenging situations, now is the time to revisit and improve on them.

We are seeking your input on how different situations should best be addressed, what should be contained in the site manual, and how it should be presented. These procedures are not meant to substitute for a counter's common sense and judgment – just to complement it.

Below is a proposed list of topics that we plan to cover in this manual:

1. *Table of Contents*
2. *Introduction*
3. *Conducting the Count*
   - *3.1 Count Location*
     - *3.1.1 Main site*
       - *3.1.1.1 Use of the Tower*
     - *3.1.2 Alternate site(s)*
   - *3.2 Equipment*
     - *3.2.1 Viewing*
     - *3.2.2 Weather*
   - *3.3 Daily Observation Times*
   - *3.4 Flight Path*
   - *3.5 Scanning for Raptors*
     - *3.5.1 General*
     - *3.5.2 Kettles*
     - *3.5.3 Migrants vs. Non-migrants*
4. *Recording Data*
   - *4.1 Official Observers*
   - *4.2 Weather*
   - *4.3 Flight Line and Altitude*
   - *4.4 Recording the Count*
   - *4.5 Age, Sex, and Plumage Characteristics*
   - *4.6 Rare Bird Reporting Criteria and Procedures (raptors and non-raptors)*
   - *4.7 Hourly and Daily Forms*
   - *4.8 Submission of Data*
5. *Volunteer Management*
   - *5.1 Site Coordinator*
   - *5.2 Observers*
   - *5.3 Recruitment*
   - *5.4 Qualifications and Training*

Please contact me, or any member of the executive with your comments and suggestions; our addresses are elsewhere in this newsletter. Our intention is to hold a meeting of all counters to review the first draft prior to the start of the 2002 season.❖

2001 Migration Summary
by Keith Dieroff

What a great way to start the new millennium! The total raptors counted during this year's spring migration was well above the recent (5-year) average, and even surpassed the long term (20-year) average. Digging a little deeper, monthly counts for February, March, and May were actually down about 40%, but this was more than made up for in April when the total number of raptors counted jumped from 6,062 to 11,619, an increase of over 90%. April's numbers are largely the result of cool weather in March and a strong Broad-wing flight on April 14th.

The watch was covered for a total of 545 hours in 2001. This year's the count was started a week early, making the average number of hours counted per day 6.6, down slightly from last year's 6.9. A total of 6 days were almost without coverage due to snow, fog, and rain.

The highlight of the year was the largest Broad-winged Hawk flight at Beamer Conservation Area in more than 15 years. The last significant flight of Broad-wings was back in 1985 when over 8,000 passed through during the count period.

Two species reached record highs this year. The 70 Osprey counted were one better than the previous record of 69 set in 1994. Turkey Vultures continued their upward trend, surpassing 1999's high count of 3,376 by 26 birds. Both Osprey and Turkey Vulture numbers were well above their recent and long term averages. Other species that fared well compared to recent and long-term averages include Bald Eagle and Broad-winged Hawk.

High counts in 2001 were offset by ten species below their recent and long-term averages:

- Northern Harrier numbers declined slightly from 125 last year to 108 in 2001.
- Sharp-shinned Hawks were below average at 2,551.
- Red-shouldered Hawks continued a troubling, but possibly cyclical trend, declining to 459 this year from an all time high of 1,341 ten years ago.
- Cooper's Hawks were slightly lower at 167.
- Northern Goshawks, though still below average, appear to be back on an upward swing in their cycle, increasing from just 3 in 2000 to 14 in 2001. The most recent cyclical high was 37 back in 1996.
- Red-tailed Hawks were down despite an early start to the count. One of the reasons the watch was started a week early this year was to count species that tend to move early in the season, including Red-tailed Hawks, Rough-legged Hawks, and Eagles.
- Golden Eagle numbers were down from a record high of 13 last year to just 6 this year. Golden Eagle numbers tend to vary considerably from year to year, so this number does not reflect any significant trend.
- All three falcon species (American Kestrel, Merlin, and Peregrine Falcon) were below their recent and long-term averages. Kestrel and Merlin numbers tend to fluctuate from year to year, but the 2 Peregrines seen this year were down from a record high of 7 just last year.

Seemingly absent from this year's count was a rarity - no Black Vultures or Swainson's Hawks recorded this spring. Nevertheless, when all is said and done, it was a good news/bad news kind of year. The good news was the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch had its best count in more than five years, and Osprey, Bald Eagle and Broad-wing numbers were up. The bad news is ten species had counts below their recent and long term averages. These ten represent two-thirds of the 15 species regularly seen at Beamer Memorial Conservation Area.❖

Thanks very much to our counters: Alfred Adamo, Don Barnett, Bouwe Bergsma, Barry Cherriere, Jim Coey, Dave Copeland, Tom Crooks, Geoff Carpentier, Bob Curry, Willie D'Anna, Keith Dieroff, Rob Dobos, Dave Don, Bruce Duncan, Chris Escott, Denys Gardiner, Ann Gray, Jerry Guild, Jane Hamilton, Brandon Holden, Eric Holden, Jean Iron, Norm Jackson, Bruce Mackenzie, Stuart Mackenzie, Kevin McLaughlin, Gord McNulty, Dave Milsom, George Naylor, John Olmsted, Tom Reavley, Gerry Shemilt, Art Slaughter, Maggie Smiley, John Stevens, Mike Street, Paul Summerskill, Bill Wilson. (If anyone's name has been omitted, our apologies. Please let Mike Street know that this has happened.)

2001 Hawkwatch Executive

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2001 NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH MONTHLY COUNTS

SPECIES	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	TOTALS
Black Vulture					
Turkey Vulture	1	841	2436	124	**3402**
Osprey			66	4	**70**
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite					
Mississippi Kite					
Bald Eagle		13	13	4	**30**
Northern Harrier	1	10	90	7	**108**
Sharp-shinned Hawk	2	75	2185	289	**2551**
Cooper's Hawk	1	71	89	6	**167**
Northern Goshawk		7	7		**14**
Red-shouldered Hawk		350	107	2	**459**
Broad-winged Hawk			5145	84	**5229**
Swainson's Hawk					
Red-tailed Hawk	40	1100	1169	49	**2358**
Ferruginous Hawk					
Rough-legged Hawk	3	12	51	5	**71**
Golden Eagle		2	4		**6**
American Kestrel	1	4	69	3	**77**
Merlin		2	4		**6**
Peregrine Falcon			2		**2**
Gyrfalcon					
Prairie Falcon					
Unid. Accipiter		7	29		**36**
Unid. Buteo		65	99	7	**171**
Unid. Eagle			1		**1**
Unid. Falcon		2	1		**3**
Unid. Raptor		15	52	3	**70**
Total Raptors	**49**	**2576**	**11619**	**587**	**14831**
Hours Counted	**25**	**181**	**243**	**96**	**545.00**
Raptors/Hour	**1.9**	**14.2**	**47.9**	**6.1**	**27.2**

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH COUNTS - FEBRUARY 2001

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	Totals
Black Vulture																													0
Turkey Vulture																								1					1
Osprey																													0
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite																													0
Mississippi Kite																													0
Bald Eagle																													0
Northern Harrier																									1				1
Sharp-shinned Hawk																									2				2
Cooper's Hawk																									1				1
Northern Goshawk																													0
Red-shouldered Hawk																													0
Broad-winged Hawk																													0
Swainson's Hawk																													0
Red-tailed Hawk																								19	10	2	1	8	40
Ferruginous Hawk																													0
Rough-legged Hawk																									1		2		3
Golden Eagle																													0
American Kestrel																									1				1
Merlin																													0
Peregrine Falcon																													0
Gyrfalcon																													0
Prairie Falcon																													0
Unid. Accipiter																													0
Unid. Buteo																													0
Unid. Eagle																													0
Unid. Falcon																													0
Unid. Raptor																													0
Total Raptors	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	16	2	3	8	49
Hours Counted																						0	4.5	3.5	5	4	3.25	5	25.25
Wind Direction																						NCA	SW	W	SW	N	N/ SNO	NW/ W	

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH COUNTS - MARCH 2001

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Totals
Black Vulture																																0
Turkey Vulture															45			25	56	10		7	424	19	6	10	12	23	118		86	841
Osprey																																0
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite																																0
Mississippi Kite																																0
Bald Eagle									1						1	1		2	2	1					2				2		1	13
Northern Harrier															2				1				2					1	3		1	10
Sharp-shinned Hawk									1		1	1			9	4		2	3	10	1	3	10	2		1	3	2	17		5	75
Cooper's Hawk		1					2		1	1	2	2		1	5	2		2	5	8	2	6	5	2	4	1		2	12		5	71
Northern Goshawk															1			1		1				1	1				2			7
Red-shouldered Hawk										1					1	8		6	34	48	4	11	35	2	12	4	5	11	98		70	350
Broad-winged Hawk																																0
Swainson's Hawk																																0
Red-tailed Hawk	6		19	1	1		11	2	18	37	4	65		3	108	117		36	131	88	1	59	109	4	31	15	5	25	93		111	1100
Ferruginous Hawk																																0
Rough-legged Hawk		1								2		1		1		2			1						1				3			12
Golden Eagle																			2													2
American Kestrel							2													1									1			4
Merlin																															2	2
Peregrine Falcon																																0
Gyrfalcon																																0
Prairie Falcon																																0
Unid. Accipiter														1						1			1					1	3			7
Unid. Buteo										1					4				1	3		9	11		8			13	11		4	65
Unid. Eagle																																0
Unid. Falcon															1											1						2
Unid. Raptor															8							1			2			1	3			15
Total Raptors	6	2	19	1	1	0	15	2	21	42	7	69	0	6	185	134	0	74	236	171	8	96	597	30	67	32	25	79	366	0	285	2576
Hours Counted	5.5	4.5	6.3	4	1	0	5.25	6	7.5	7	3	8	1	5.75	8	7	2.5	8.1	7.5	7	5.5	5	9	7	7.5	7	6.5	6.5	7	6.2	8.7	180.8
Wind Direction	NW	SW/ NE	E	NE	SNO	SNO	W	SW/ W	NW	W	NW/ NW/	S/ NE	VAR RAIN	W	N/ NE	NE/ NE/	NE/ SNO	NW/ SW	-/ SW	N/ NE	N	NE	NW	NW/ W	W/ SW	N/ W	W	SW	W	NE	NE	

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH COUNTS - APRIL 2001

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	Totals
Black Vulture																															0
Turkey Vulture	63	8	455	462	73			244	198	80	36	37	148	176	27	85	7	9	8	6	7	120	9		91	25	18	24	10	10	2436
Osprey	1		1	2				5	2	4	4	11	7	8		2	1		2	1		6	3	1	2	1		2			66
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite																															0
Mississippi Kite																															0
Bald Eagle			1						1				1	3					1	1					4			1			13
Northern Harrier	1	2	8	7	6			22	2			6	2	10		2	1	1	1			5	4		9			1			90
Sharp-shinned Hawk	5	1	21	25	32			178	32	84	19	316	63	438	85	113	5	3	19	43	61	101	218	7	66	140	14	25	44	27	2185
Cooper's Hawk	1		10	1	9			2		13	3	5	2	10	3	6		1		3		4	4	1	4	2	2	1		2	89
Northern Goshawk			1	1					2							1						1	1								7
Red-shouldered Hawk	14	3	34	16	5			6	1	18				5	1	1						1			1				1		107
Broad-winged Hawk										3		7	9	2672	254	324			17	7	1	817	194	7	730	27	24	43	6	3	5145
Swainson's Hawk																															0
Red-tailed Hawk	55	1	153	168	53			40	28	115	9	35	47	150	16	75	10	5	12	9		42	8	2	78	10	6	32	4	6	1169
Ferruginous Hawk																															0
Rough-legged Hawk	1		3	7	1			2	1	3		2	4	6	4	4		1				6	1		3				2		51
Golden Eagle													1	1								1			1						4
American Kestrel	1	1	1		1			20	1	3	2	6	2	8	1	4		1	1			8	1		2	2		3			69
Merlin					1											1						1			1						4
Peregrine Falcon				1										1																	2
Gyrfalcon																															0
Prairie Falcon																															0
Unid. Accipiter		1		3	1			2		9			1			2			1			1	1		2	2			3		29
Unid. Buteo			36	16	4			3		4		2	1		2	13	1	1	3				2	1	2		2	2	3	1	99
Unid. Eagle																									1						1
Unid. Falcon												1																			1
Unid. Raptor					1					2					2	37			1			1			2		6				52
Total Raptors	142	17	724	709	187	0	0	524	268	338	73	428	288	3488	395	670	25	22	66	70	69	1115	446	19	999	209	72	134	73	49	11619
Hours Counted	7	8	8	10	8	6	5	9	7.5	8	7	7	9.25	9	9.5	8	7	6	8	8.5	10	10.25	10	8	10	8	7	9.7	7	7	242.7
Wind Direction	NE	W	N	N	W	NW FOG	ENE RAIN	W	E/ NE	NE	N/ NE	S/ SW	SW	SW	N/ NE	W/ SE	N	NE	S	N/ NW	S/ SSW	SW	SW	W	W/ NW	S	N/ NE	E/ N	W/ NE	WSW	

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH COUNTS - MAY 2001

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Totals
Black Vulture																																0
Turkey Vulture			40	23	11	39	4		6		1																					124
Osprey		1		2		1																										4
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite																																0
Mississippi Kite																																0
Bald Eagle	1				1		2																									4
Northern Harrier	1	2					1		2		1																					7
Sharp-shinned Hawk	45	89	51	60	6	13	6		6	6	7																					289
Cooper's Hawk	3	1			1	1																										6
Northern Goshawk																																0
Red-shouldered Hawk	1					1																										2
Broad-winged Hawk	7	36	11	13	8	7	2																									84
Swainson's Hawk																																0
Red-tailed Hawk	2	2	2	5	5	11	5		16					1																		49
Ferruginous Hawk																																0
Rough-legged Hawk			3	1	1																											5
Golden Eagle																																0
American Kestrel			3																													3
Merlin																																0
Peregrine Falcon																																0
Gyrfalcon																																0
Prairie Falcon																																0
Unid. Accipiter																																0
Unid. Buteo		1		1	3	2																										7
Unid. Eagle																																0
Unid. Falcon																																0
Unid. Raptor	3																															3
Total Raptors	63	132	110	105	36	75	20	0	30	6	9	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	587
Hours Counted	8.5	7.5	8.5	10	8	9	6.25	1	7.5	6.5	4.5	7		8	4																	96.25
Wind Direction	WSW	SSW	WSW	SW/ W	NE/ E	NE/ E	SW/ NE	RAIN OUT	SW	SW	S	NW/ N		N/ VAR	NE																	

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH MONTHLY SUMMARIES

Years	February			March			April			May			Year Total		
	# Birds	Hours	#/Hr	# Birds	Hours	#/Hr	# Birds	Hours	#/Hr	# Birds	Hours	#/Hr	# Birds	Hours	#/Hr
1975	0	0	0.0	821	27.5	29.9	2285	55.75	41.0	317	6	52.8	3423	89.25	38.4
1976	80	5	16.0	1543	36	42.9	4954	64	77.4	142	7	20.3	6719	112	60.0
1977	0	0	0.0	2546	--	--	6543	--	--	927	--	--	10016	--	--
1978	0	0	0.0	2565	--	--	2613	--	--	2114	--	--	7292	--	--
1979	0	0	0.0	2266	--	--	8873	--	--	1732	--	--	12871	310	41.5
1980	0	0	0.0	2681	--	--	9208	--	--	2685	--	--	14574	529	27.6
1981	22	4.5	4.9	2957	181.9	16.3	11185	202.5	55.2	1758	173.7	10.1	15922	562.6	28.3
1982	40	8	5.0	2699	179	15.1	7259	223.7	32.4	1970	172.4	11.4	11968	583.1	20.5
1983	49	10.3	4.8	2301	164.8	14.0	8991	210	42.8	2369	179.9	13.2	13710	565	24.3
1984	258	10.4	24.8	1674	151	11.1	15012	232.8	64.5	1358	170.4	8.0	18302	564.6	32.4
1985	0	0	0.0	4059	202	20.1	14818	242.2	61.2	398	164.3	2.4	19275	608.5	31.7
1986	19	8	2.4	5361	210.3	25.5	7894	207.4	38.1	783	150.5	5.2	14057	576.2	24.4
1987	81	23	3.5	3943	213.4	18.5	4719	233	20.3	1765	212.1	8.3	10508	681.5	15.4
1988	6	2	3.0	5670	216.9	26.1	6344	205.4	30.9	2114	183.9	11.5	14134	608.2	23.2
1989	0	0	0.0	2951	179.25	16.5	6699	241.8	27.7	2558	78.25	32.7	12208	499.3	24.5
1990	0	0	0.0	5065	220	23.0	12801	234.5	54.6	1377	120	11.5	19243	574.5	33.5
1991	0	0	0.0	4308	215.8	20.0	9291	223.2	41.6	1352	109.5	12.3	14951	548.5	27.3
1992	0	0	0.0	3480	193.5	18.0	9710	236	41.1	1488	112	13.3	14678	541.5	27.1
1993	0	0	0.0	2014	176	11.4	8836	227	38.9	1257	135.5	9.3	12107	538.5	22.5
1994	0	0	0.0	5194	201.8	25.7	10149	233.4	43.5	634	95.8	6.6	15977	531.0	30.1
1995	0	0	0.0	4231	214.6	19.7	5801	230.75	25.1	776	110.3	7.0	10808	555.7	19.5
1996	0	0	0.0	3378	182	18.6	8650	187.1	46.2	1075	85.4	12.6	13103	454.5	28.8
1997	0	0	0.0	4304	181.85	23.7	6712	221.25	30.3	1089	105.25	10.3	12105	508.35	23.8
1998	80	8	10.0	4432	167	26.6	6847	223	30.7	2128	101.0	21.0	13487	499.0	27.0
1999	0	0	0.0	4190	200	20.9	6538	206	31.7	267	96.0	2.8	10995	502.8	21.9
2000	256	5	51.2	4290	216	19.8	6062	195	31.1	1036	112.0	9.3	11644	527.4	22.1
2001	49	25.25	1.9	2576	180.8	14.2	11619	242.7	47.9	587	96.25	6.1	14831	545	27.2
TOTAL 1975-2001	940	109.45		91499	4111.4		220413	4778.45		36056	2777.4		348908	12615.9	
TOTAL 1982-2001	838	99.95		76120	3866		174752	4456.2		26381	2590.7		278091	11013.01	
AVERAGE 1982-2001				3806	193	19.7	8738	223	39.2	1319	130	10.2	13905	551	25.3

NOTES: 1) Totals include 891 birds seen during occasional counts during February from 1976 to 2000.
2) Averages are for 1982-2001 only due to missing data in earlier years.
3) 2001 count officially begun in February.

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH

Annual Summaries 1982-2001

	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	1977-2001 TOTALS	1982-2001 TOTALS	1982-2001 Average	Highest Total & Date	Earliest Date
Black Vulture											1								1		2	2	0	1-Apr 4/92	Mar 31/00
Turkey Vulture	521	895	616	948	837	977	2331	1406	1463	1785	1990	1852	3189	2151	2946	3092	3277	3376	2971	3402	42353	40025	2001	748-Mar 26/88	Feb 23/84
Osprey	27	20	38	36	33	30	41	36	40	46	64	45	69	47	56	28	42	43	46	70	934	857	43	16-Apr 12/92	Mar 20/00
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite													1								1	1	0	1-Apr 15/94	Apr 15/94
Mississippi Kite																1					1	1	0	1-May 11/97	May 11/97
Bald Eagle	7	7	5	10	14	7	16	17	15	17	22	14	40	24	33	17	32	30	25	30	396	382	19	12-Apr 28/96	Feb 26/86
Northern Harrier	131	125	127	113	143	217	162	175	194	219	209	126	177	177	172	125	84	91	125	108	3359	3000	150	35-Apr 18/96	Feb 19/84
Sharp-shinned Hawk	4880	3931	4683	4480	3549	2831	3108	3576	7004	3767	3418	3475	4846	2136	3290	3047	2816	1983	2468	2551	90771	71839	3592	1556-Apr 18/76	Feb 11/87
Cooper's Hawk	121	160	190	152	196	199	229	180	311	220	199	209	263	256	295	221	187	240	177	167	4728	4172	209	50-Apr 5/93	Feb 11/87
Northern Goshawk	51	73	67	25	21	31	27	14	24	20	34	28	73	15	37	16	14	6	3	14	618	593	30	11-Mar 24/84	Feb 28/88
Red-shouldered Hawk	638	624	838	764	901	876	861	1102	1341	761	1187	1030	1419	705	694	796	549	678	498	459	19524	16721	836	655-Mar 23/94	Feb 23/84
Broad-winged Hawk	2305	4118	7844	8239	3823	1628	2910	2304	4428	2063	2761	1963	2335	1779	1550	1849	3886	1833	2368	5229	84876	65215	3261	6007-Apr 21/85	Apr 4/85
Swainson's Hawk				1			1	1				2	2		1	2	3				13	13	1	2-May 2/97	Apr 15/94
Red-tailed Hawk	2607	3150	3105	3410	2852	3265	3567	2615	3482	3023	3861	2684	2890	2861	3584	2572	2235	2216	2616	2358	72051	58953	2948	744-Mar 16/96	Feb 11/87
Ferruginous Hawk											1						1				2	2	0	1-Apr 13/92, Apr 23/98	Apr 13/92
Rough-legged Hawk	131	59	85	48	45	77	87	45	127	145	128	35	62	87	98	44	32	69	49	71	1802	1524	76	24-Apr 2/82	Feb 11/87
Golden Eagle	4	8	6	12	7	6	3	7	10	8	12	6	10	4	13	6	6	10	13	6	170	157	8	4-Apr 29/83,Apr 28/96	Feb 24/84
American Kestrel	102	71	56	150	126	85	148	132	207	180	92	93	122	70	61	84	77	69	95	77	2508	2097	105	44-Mar 14/90	Feb 25/87
Merlin	5	2	2	5	5	12	5	4	9	11	12	9	23	14	22	14	15	10	22	6	213	207	10	6-Apr 25/96	Mar 1/94
Peregrine Falcon	3			2	1	1	4	2	6	5	6	2	4	1	2	2	4	1	7	2	61	55	3	3 dates with 2 birds	Mar 12/88
Gyrfalcon																					1	0	0	1-Apr 20/77	Apr 20/77
Prairie Falcon														1							1	1	0	1-Apr 19/95	Apr 19/95
Unid. Raptors	435	467	640	880	1504	266	634	592	582	2681	681	534	452	480	249	189	227	340	160	281	14381	12274	614		
Total Raptors	11968	13710	18302	19275	14057	10508	14134	12208	19243	14951	14678	12107	15977	10808	13103	12105	13487	10995	11644	14831	338766	278,091	13,905		
Hours Counted	583.1	565	564.6	608.5	576.2	681.5	608.2	499.3	574.5	548.5	541.5	538.5	531.0	555.7	454.5	508.4	499.0	502.8	527.4	545.0	12414.65	11,013	551		
Birds per Hour	20.5	24.3	32.4	31.7	24.4	15.4	23.2	24.5	33.5	27.3	27.1	22.5	30.1	19.4	28.8	23.8	27.0	21.9	22.1	27.2	27.29	25.25	25.25		

* Only 1981-2000 averages are calculated due to missing data or low coverage in previous years

Last Updated:
February 28, 2001

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch

Newsletter

February 2002 Newsletter #24

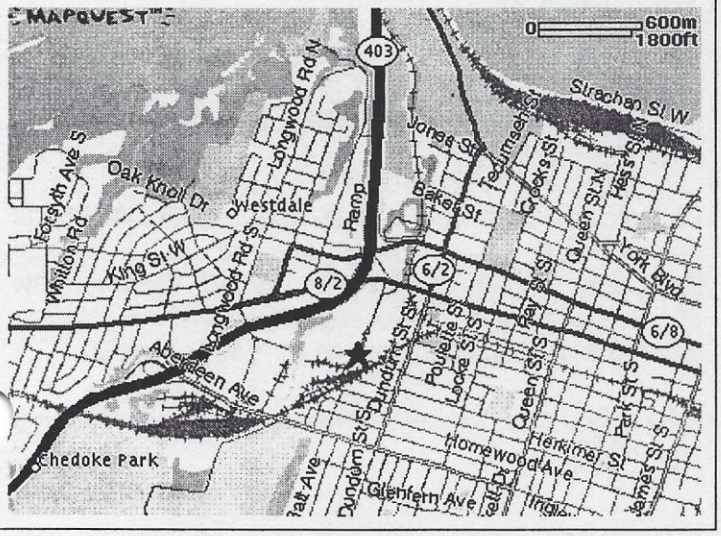
COUNTERS MEETNG SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 16TH

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Members/Counters are asked to mark their calendars and attend an important meeting on Saturday, February 16th from 1:30pm to 3:30pm. Anyone interested in becoming a Counter is welcome.

The purpose of the meeting is to introduce the new draft Counter's Guide, get feedback on the Guide and discuss other aspects of our activities at Beamer CA. Key sections of the Counter's Guide which will be reviewed include ways of organizing the count if a major flight occurs, such as the 3,500 bird day last April, and expanding the count to other locations if a significant flight develops away from Beamer. It is important that as many people as possible attend, so please make every effort to be there.

Those attending will also be treated to a talk/slide presentation on the history of the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch by Dave Copeland and Barry Cherriere, as well as a brief slide review of the differences between Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks. If you know some who might be interested in becoming a Counter please ask him or her to come too. For further information, please call Mike Street at (905) 648-3737

The meeting will be help in the Auditorium of the Hamilton Spectator, 44 Frid Street, Hamilton (see map below).



WANTED! – INFORMATION ON SIGHTINGS OF COLOUR-MARKED RED-TAILED HAWKS

Information is needed regarding sightings of Red-tailed Hawks with colour-markings on the outermost secondary feathers (one to four). Birds will be marked in eastern Pennsylvania, but could appear anywhere throughout their range, possibly through the summer of 2002. Possible colours include pink, yellow, and green. Please provide the following information about any sighting:

- Your name, address, phone number and/or E-mail address
- The date (including year)
- Time of day
- Location of the sighting (city, state, province, country)
- Age of bird (adult/immature)
- Dye colour
- Behaviour of the bird when sighted (migrating south or north, hunting, perching, nesting, etc.)

Report all sightings by phone, fax, E-mail or letter to:

Wildlife Information Center
P.O. Box 198
Slatington, PA 18080
Phone/Fax (610) 760-8889
wildlife@fast.net

PLEASE TAKE A SECOND LOOK AT THOSE RED-TAILS, beginning now and continuing through this spring. Please report any sightings as indicated. Thank you! ❖

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KIRK MOULTON TO SPEAK AT APRIL 27TH AGM & BANQUET

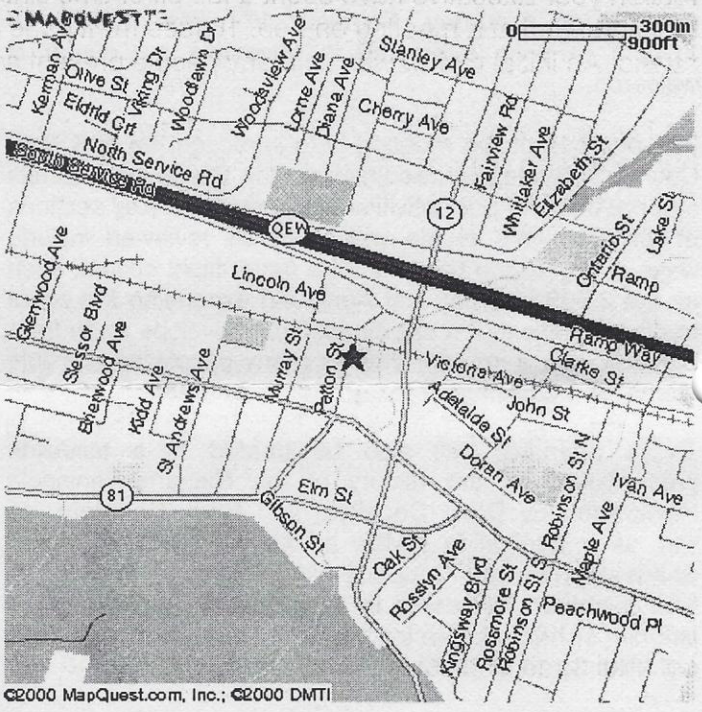
This year's Annual General Meeting and Dinner (aka the Banquet) will be held on Saturday, April 27, 2002 at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Grimsby. The new location was first used last year and proved to be excellent, with the additional advantage that we are no longer limited on the number of people who can attend.

This year's guest speaker will be Kirk Moulton, current Chairman of the Hawk Migration Association of North America (HMANA). Kirk's topic will be the BroadwingSEPT project, a transect line of seven hawk watches in south-eastern Pennsylvania that he coordinates for two weeks during September's Broad-winged Hawk migration. Since 1994 over 202,000 raptors of 16 species have been counted, clearly documenting an important raptor flyway below the ridges. Kirk will also tell us how he uses weather information to project the subsequent movement of the birds from Pennsylvania to and through Texas into Mexico. His talk will be accompanied by a slide presentation.

Socializing and the bucket raffle begin at 5PM. The pre-supper wine and cheese tasting starts at 5:15. Members of the NPH will select the wines for the evening in advance, allowing us to make sure they are chilled properly if required. Dinner will start around 6:15. Keith and Karen Dieroff will look after the ever popular bucket raffle (donations are still needed).

Plan to join your fellow members of the Hawkwatch for a most enjoyable evening. Tickets are priced at $25 for members and spouses/partners, and $30 for non-members. Call John Stevens or Mike Street to make arrangements for tickets, or Keith Dieroff for a raffle donation - phone numbers are in the Executive listing elsewhere in this newsletter. The Knights of Columbus Hall is located at 16 Patton Street, Grimsby. Patton St. is one block west of the Christie St./Mountain Ave. and Main St. intersection (TD Canada Trust corner) and runs north from Main St. toward the QEW (see map below)

Mark your calendars. See you there! ❖



WALTER KLABUNDE TURNS 95

One of the pioneers of hawkwatching, our Honourary President, Walter Klabunde, will turn 95 in January 2002. Walter's son Phil reports that he is generally in good health, aside from the usual trappings of old age.

After having cataract surgery, Walter can read large print, or regular print using a magnifying glass. He pores over the various birding reports that he receives. Walter still enjoys three meals a day, and Phil insists he tackle the 5 steps in their split-level house several times each day to maintain his strength. Walter also gets to see his three married grandchildren, and seven great grandchildren fairly regularly.

Phil reports that while he snoozes a lot, Walter is amiable and not a burden to care for. In typical Klabunde fashion, when Phil asked Walter "how things are going", so he could let us know, Walter gave one of his pat responses of "you tell me".

Happy Birthday, Walter - congratulations on reaching your 95th year! ❖

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

By Mike Street

We are all aware of the seemingly constant encroachment and/or outright attacks on birds, animals and nature in general. After the June 2000 Hawk Migration Association of North America (HMANA) Convention in Pennsylvania I wrote, "... the more information hawkwatches collectively gather, and the higher the quality of that information, the more it can be used to help preserve and protect the birds of prey which are our special interest." We can and should assist in this effort.

'Quality' of data comes down to consistency. If all of us are careful to identify each bird correctly, record all data in the right place, start/end the day at the proper time and so on, researchers who use our numbers will have more confidence in them.

One way to maintain consistency is to ensure that every counter has the same information to begin with. For this reason your Executive have spent a fair bit of time since last season preparing a Counter's Guide. The Guide will be introduced at a meeting on Feb. 16 (see front page of this NL) and I strongly urge all members and counters to attend. An initial review with as many people present as possible will in itself contribute a lot towards consistency.

As I write this note the 28th year of counting raptors at Beamer is just five weeks away. Our hope is for another big season to restore some of the long-term averages. If you have a bit of time to spare to help with our work, please get in touch with me in person at Beamer, by phone or email (see the NPH Executives' list for details). Thanks everyone. See you at the Hawkwatch! ❖

2002 COUNT TO AGAIN TO START IN LATE FEBRUARY

If the very warm weather of this winter persists into the second half of February it is quite likely that an early flight of Red-tailed Hawks and Bald Eagles will develop. If counters are available we will again try to have someone at Beamer from at least 10AM-2PM for the last 7-10 days of the month to monitor this activity. If you are a regular counter, within a few days of receiving this newsletter you should have heard from Mike Street, who will look after scheduling this year. Please let him know if you can help in the last part of February. If for some reason you haven't connected, please call Mike at 905-648-3737.

Anyone who would like to learn to be a counter should also give Mike a call. We plan to have training workshops on two weekends this season, from 10AM to 3PM on Saturday and Sunday March 23-24, and again on Saturday and Sunday, April 13-14. Everyone is welcome. ❖

BOOK REVIEW: RAPTOR WATCH – A GLOBAL DIRECTORY OF MIGRATION SITES

By Mike Street

Raptor Watch: A Global Directory of Raptor Migration Sites; 2000; Zalles J.I. and Bildstein, K.L., eds.; Cambridge, England: BirdLife International and Kempton, PA, USA: Hawk Mountain Sanctuary; (BirdLife Conservation Series No. 9); ISBN 0-946888-38-8. Hardcover, 419pp., $58US. Available through the Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Bookstore, 1700 Hawk Mountain Road, Kempton, PA USA 19529-9379.

A geographically organized look at raptor migration, Raptor Watch is the product of nearly ten year's work by hundreds of people around the world. It describes 388 globally significant sites in 89 countries ranging from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe. A brief summary states the problem - raptor populations are difficult to monitor, and the opportunity - migration hot spots and bottlenecks allow both monitoring and public education, then gives key results and recommendations of the study.

For each region, essentially the continents, maps show the major raptor migration pathways and monitoring sites, while tables and boxes detail important facts ranging from endangered species seen in each country and at specific sites, to watchsites with ongoing education, to priority points of future inquiry for raptor-migration science. Threats

to raptors such as the annual shooting sprees in some parts of southern Europe and the captive bird trade elsewhere are also discussed concisely.

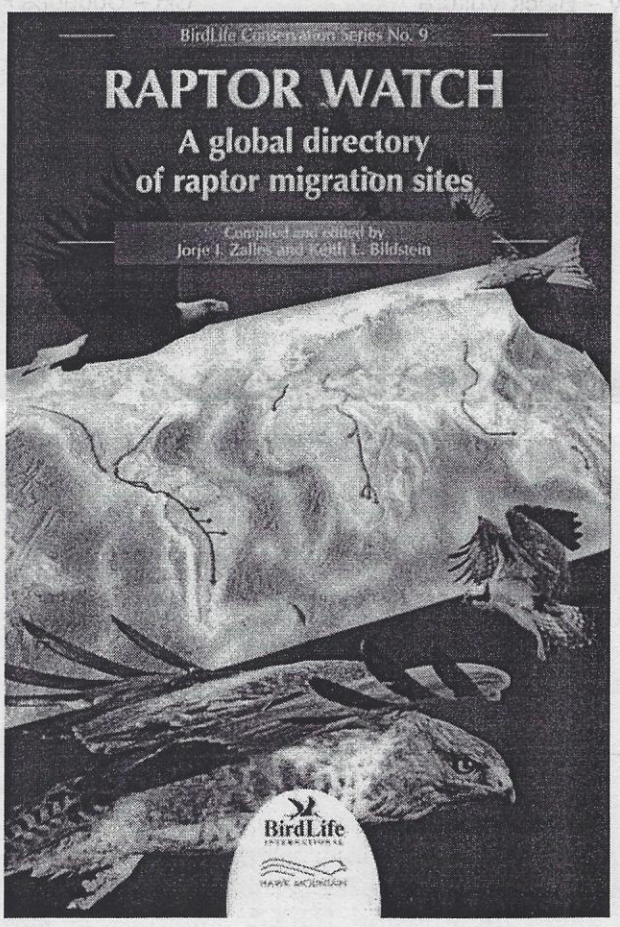
The following information is given for each country: size in km^2, coastlines if any, neighbouring countries, human population, population growth, per capita GNP if available, land use, international wildlife law, biogeography, raptor migration and raptor conservation references in the literature. Countries with significant raptor migration but no watchsites are included.

Details provided for each site include: location, altitude, biogeographical province, site description, land tenure, protection, land-use, threats, monitoring activity, raptor species seen, other fauna, research and conservation, compiler and contacts, criteria for inclusion in the book and references in the literature.

This is a book for the traveling birder and the armchair traveler alike. A month after obtaining my copy I was given an assignment which required me to travel to Jordan for almost a month. Since my trip was in the fall, well away from the famous multi-million bird spring migration across the Gulf of Aqaba, Raptor Watch proved invaluable. Not only did it tell me about the six watchsites in Jordan, it also gave me the broader picture on resident and migratory raptors and especially the terrain. My reward came with views of a Short-toed Eagle near the ancient city of Petra, Imperial and Golden Eagles while sitting in an outdoor café overlooking the Sea of Galilee and the Golan Heights, and Common Buzzard at the Azraq Oasis. Since returning from that trip I often read the book with an atlas handy, learning more about raptors in different parts of the world.

Some readers will be a bit disconcerted to find that the only the Latin names of species are given in the site and country accounts, with English names appearing only in some tables. This was necessary because there are different common names for the same species in different parts of the world; if both common and Latin names were given everywhere it would have swollen the book well beyond its already hefty 419 pages. That said, however, a table giving Latin names in alphabetical order with Common names adjacent, possibly in a pull-out format, would have been a very smart addition to help the average reader who does not know the birds by their Latin names.

All in all, this is a valuable book for anyone who wants to extend their knowledge beyond about the raptors of the world. ❖



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NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH MIGRATION CALENDAR FOR BEAMER MEMORIAL CONSERVATION AREA

NOTES:

1. Species initials and Right (>) or Left (<) arrow:
   This combination indicates the start (>) or end (<) of the normal (at Beamer) migration period for that species. The same in bold type indicates the start or end of a noticeable peak period for that species. The box in which this combination is located indicates the day and month on which the period is likely to start or end.
2. A number, followed by species initial, followed by a slash (/) and a two-digit number:
   In this combination, the largest number of that species ever seen in one day is given first; the two-digit number following the / indicates the year in which this occurred. The box in which this combination is located indicates the day and month on which the event occurred. Example: 655 RS/94 in the March 23rd box indicates that the highest number of Red-shouldered Hawks recorded in one day was 655, seen on March 23rd, 1994.

TV – Turkey Vulture	SS – Sharp-shinned Hawk	FH – Ferruginous Hawk
BV – Black Vulture	CH – Cooper's Hawk	AK – American Kestrel
OS – Osprey	NG – Northern Goshawk	ME – Merlin
SK – American Swallow-tailed Kite	RS – Red-shouldered Hawk	PF – Peregrine Falcon
BE – Bald Eagle	RT – Red-tailed Hawk	PR – Prairie Falcon
GE – Golden Eagle	SW – Swainson's Hawk	GF – Gyrfalcon
NH – Northern Harrier	RL – Rough-legged Hawk	BW – Broad-winged Hawk

The following information, based on 25 years of data from the Beamer Hawkwatch, has been updated to show significant 2000 events.

Largest number of raptors in one season: 19,724 in 1985.

NH>, SS>, CH>, RT>, RL>, AK>, begin February 20.

MARCH

1 **RT>**NG>	2 GE>	3 RS>	4	5	6 BE>	7
8 TV>	9	10	11 **RL>**	12 **AK>**	13 **CH>RS>**	14 44 AK/90
15	16 744 RT/96	17	18 **BE>** 7 GE/86	19	20 **TV>**ME> PF>	21
22	23 **NH>** 9 BE/94 655 RS/94	24	25	26 **SS>** 2 PF/91 7 GE/88 748 TV/88	27	28 2 PF/90
29	30	31 OS> 1 BV/00				

Largest # of raptors in month: 5,670 in March 1988; largest # of raptors in one day in month: 2,080 on March 26th, 1988.

APRIL

1	2	3 2 PF/91	4 1 BV/91	5 50 CH/93 28 NH/93	6	7
8 **OS><RS** 706 RT/87	9	10 BW>	11	12 22 RL/91 16 OS/92	13 1 FH/92	14
15 **BW>** 1 SK/94 1 SW/94*	16 **<BE** 2 PF/90	17	18 1 SW/96* 35 NH/96 1556 SS/76	19 1 PR/95**	20 1 GF/77 1 SW/93	21 1 SW/85 6007 BW/85
22 1 SW/88	23	24 **<OS**	25 **<TV** 6 ME/96 2 PF/94 1 SW/94*	26	27 1 SW/93*	28 1 SW/98* 12 BE/96 4 GE/96
29 2 SW/98*	30 **<RL**					

Largest # of raptors in month: 15,012 in April 1984; largest # of raptors in one day in month: 7,007 on April 21st, 1985.
*Sighting not reviewed/accepted by Ontario Bird Records Committee
**First accepted Prairie Falcon record in Ontario

MAY

1	2	3	4 **<RT**	5 1 SW/89	6 <PF	7
8	9	10 <GE	11	12 **<NH<AK**	13 **<CH**<BE	14 **<SS**
15 **<BW** <RL<ME	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25 <OS	26	27	28
29	30	31 <TV<NH <SS<CH <NG<RS <AK				

BW and RT continue beyond May 31st.
Largest # of Raptors in month: 2,695 in May 1980; largest # of raptors in one day in month: 1,492 on May 4th, 1989.

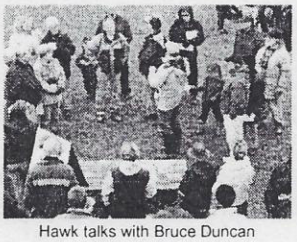
Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch

Newsletter

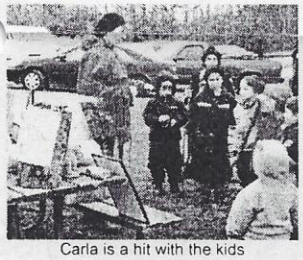
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NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH OPEN HOUSE

The 2002 Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Open House was held on Friday, March 29th and Mother Nature cooperated again this year with clear but cool weather. Between four and five hundred people attended the 2002 Open House. Bruce Duncan's "hawk talks" were popular, as always, as was the children's program provided by Carla Carlson.



Hawk talks with Bruce Duncan



Carla is a hit with the kids

The hawk flight was excellent, providing visitors with the opportunity to see many species well. A total of 666 raptors, mostly vultures, were counted during the Open House, and highlights of the day included six Bald Eagles, six Northern Harriers, and one Rough-legged Hawk.



Visitors at the NPH table

Thanks once more to Dave & Eleanor Wood of Wild Birds Unlimited, 3350 Fairview Street, Burlington for donating a pair of binoculars for the Open House. And thanks again to everyone who attended…see you next year! ❖

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2002 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & BANQUET

The 2002 Annual General Meeting & Banquet was held on Saturday, April 27th at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Grimsby. This year's banquet was perhaps the most cosmopolitan, with guests from several other hawkwatches in Canada and the United States in attendance.

After the wine and cheese, a delicious meal, and the traditional "State of the Hawkwatch" address by NPH President Mike Street, the floor was turned over to Kirk Moulton, current Chairman of the Hawk Migration Association of North America (HMANA). Kirk gave a computer slide presentation about BroadwingSEPT.

BroadwingSEPT, which was started in order to learn how Broad-wings transit southeastern Pennsylvania, is a transect line of seven hawkwatches. Data is collected from all seven sites to determine the routes the birds take, the length of time required to cross the state, and how wind and weather affects the migration through this flyway.

The notion of using weather data to predict the time and location of hawk migration has been talked about in hawkwatching circles for many years. Using estimated hawk migration vectors, then factoring in wind speed, wind drift, and natural obstacles, Kirk has been able to predict, with some accuracy, the time and location of Broad-wing migration beyond Pennsylvania all the way to Texas.

The evening ended with the bucket raffle, which seems to get bigger and better every year. This year's prizes included lithographs by John James Audubon and Roger Tory Peterson. Special thanks to everyone who donated prizes for this year's banquet. Your generosity is greatly appreciated. Thanks also to everyone who attended the banquet and made it a successful and enjoyable evening. ❖

PLAN TO ATTEND THE 2003 HMANA CONFERENCE IN CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS MARCH 27th to 30th, 2003

The Hawk Migration Association of North America holds its conferences once every three years. One of the main purposes of the HMANA Conference is to provide a venue for the presentation of papers from individuals and organizations from all over North America. Papers cover such topics as raptor migration site reports, long-term trends, banding results, migration ecology, owl migration, hawk watching history, and education with raptors to name just a few. In addition to the paper sessions there will be talks by representatives of other raptor organizations and many invited speakers, including Scott Weidensaul (author - *Living on the Wind*), Pete Dunne (co-author - H*awks in Flight*), and Bill Clark (co-author - *Peterson Guide to the Hawks, Photographic Guide to North American Raptors*). There will also be speakers and workshops on new initiatives such as HAWKCOUNT, the on-line electronic database provided by HMANA, satellite telemetry, and the use of NEXRAD radar.

The theme for the 2003 HMANA Conference will be 'A Celebration of Flight'. Without forgetting the importance of collecting data or the work that needs to be done for the environment, conference goers will take time to appreciate the phenomenon of hawk migration and the joys of hawk watching. Add in the Corpus Christi Area and King Ranch conference field trips, with the possibility of seeing a wide variety of birds and large numbers of raptors, and you have the makings of an exciting conference. Corpus Christi offers excellent weather and a beautiful venue with great facilities in the Ramada Bayfront Inn.

HMANA relies on local co-hosts to help organize, fund, and run its conferences. The two excellent partner organizations in 2003 are HawkWatch International (HWI) and the Audubon Outdoor Club of Corpus Christi (AOC). National sponsors are Swarovski Optik and Eagle Optics. Local corporate sponsors are American Electric Power/Central Power and Light and VALERO. Bill Clark, Mike Overton, and Joel Simon are putting together the pre and post-conference tours.

Conference Field Trips

The Corpus Christi Area field trip will focus on seeing hawks, but will be flexible. Among scheduled sites are Blucher Park, a well-known neotropic migrant trap maintained by the AOC, Indian Point on the bay for shorebirds, Polywog Pond for Texas specialties like Green Jay, Great Kiskadee, and Least Grebe, and of course Hazel Bazemore Park, home of the Corpus Christi Hawk Watch. Scouts will be in the field during the conference looking for set-downs of large numbers of Broad-winged Hawks. If hawks are found the previous afternoon this tour will first witness the lift-off on the following morning and then visit as many of the scheduled stops as time allows.

The King Ranch field trip will tour the Laureles Division, the largest and most north-eastern section of this historic ranch. Extensive coastal shoreline, fresh water marshes and an incredible abundance of brushy and open grassy areas attract a wide variety of wintering, migratory, and resident birds of prey. Some of the raptors that may be encountered during this tour are Osprey, White-tailed Kite, Harris' Hawk, White-tailed Hawk, Crested Caracara, Merlin, Prairie and Peregrine Falcons and Broad-winged Hawks. Aplomado Falcons have even been seen on this part of the ranch as well. Other bird species possible include Snowy Plover, Greater Roadrunner, Golden-fronted Woodpecker, Vermilion Flycatcher, Couch's Kingbird, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Green Jay, and Sprague's Pipit.

Conference Schedule

- *March 22nd to 27th – Pre-Conference Raptor Tour:* In addition to the migrants seen at most HMANA hawk watch sites, birders on this trip will travel with Bill Clark to see all or most of: White-tailed, Hook-billed and Swallow-tailed Kites, White-tailed, Ferruginous, Swainson's, Common Black and Zone-tailed Hawks, Crested Caracara and Aplomado Falcon! What more could a hawk watcher ask for? See the HMANA Web Site (address below) for full details.
- *Wednesday, March 26th:* Early registration. Transportation from the airport is available.
- *Thursday, March 27th:* Morning – pre-field trip buffet breakfast, field trips (7:00 AM -12:30 PM), main registration, Vendor room. Afternoon – 2003 HMANA Conference General Meeting, invited speakers. Evening – mixer with cash bar, Mexican food buffet and program featuring a talk by Pete Dunne, all in the 10th floor La Vista room with its spectacular view of Corpus Christi Bay.
- *Friday, March 28th:* Morning – pre-field trip buffet breakfast, field trips (7:00 AM -12:30 PM). Afternoon – Vendor room plus breakout paper sessions, workshops and poster sessions in up to three different venues. Evening – dinner on your own (visit one of the many excellent restaurants nearby) followed by a program, 'The Corpus Christi Hawk Watch at Hazel Bazemore Park, its past, present, and future'.
- *Saturday, March 29th:* Morning – breakout sessions followed by a general session. Afternoon – breakout sessions followed by the HMANA membership meeting in the main meeting room. Evening – banquet preceded by a social

hour and silent auction at 6:00 PM. The evening program includes a talk by Scott Weidensaul and the presentation of HMANA awards.

Sunday, March 30th: Morning – pre-field trip buffet breakfast, field trips (7:00 AM -12:30 PM). Transportation to the airport is available.

- *March 30th to April 6th:* Post Conference South Texas Birding Tour: South Padre Island, Laguna Atascosa NWR, Sabal Palm Grove Sanctuary (Brownsville), Santa Ana NWR, Bentsen State Park, Rio Grande River and Falcon Dam, Zapata, San Ygnacio! Join Mike Overton and Joel Simon to visit all these hot spots and more. See the HMANA Web Site (address below) for full details.

Whooping Cranes

A visit to Corpus Christi provides an excellent opportunity to see Whooping Cranes in their winter home at Aransas National Wildlife Refuge. The best way to see the cranes is by boat from the town of Rockport. The time required to travel between Corpus Christi and Rockport plus the boat is a bit too long for a conference field trip, so it is suggested that visitors make their own arrangements. Note: the pre-conference trip will visit Aransas to see the cranes.

Mark Your Calendar!

The deadline for submitting an abstract for a paper session is December 15, 2002. A detailed program for the conference will be published in January 2003 and mailed to all those who sign up for the conference. The program will give a detailed description of all programs, paper sessions, workshops, and poster sessions with specific times of presentations.

HMANA Conference 2003 promises to be an excellent opportunity to see and talk hawks, meet interesting new people, and to visit Texas and see its birds. Why not think about attending? For further information, visit the HMANA web site at: www.hmana.org ❖

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Mike Street

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatchers were rewarded for their efforts again this year, with the largest flight since 1994 and three rarities as well. Mother Nature once more co-operated with the Open House, as did the birds. Visitors had really good opportunities to see many different species, including six Bald Eagles. The Annual General Meeting and Dinner (aka the Banquet) also went well, with an excellent talk by Kirk Moulton and the largest number of participants - many of them visitors from other hawk watches - ever. More new counters took turns at Beamer, and several became members.

As part of our effort to improve the quality and consistency of our data I became personally involved in making sure that our data was being managed well and put to good use once it leaves our hands. As a result, I am now on the Board of Directors of the Hawk Migration Association of North America (HMANA), the group to which we feed our numbers and information. You will be seeing more about their activities in our newsletter, starting in this one with an article about HMANA's conference next March in Corpus Christi, Texas. If you're interested in raptors you owe it to yourself to check this out.

The NPH Counter's Guide introduced last February was well received, with many compliments received on its quality and the amount of work which went into producing it. We hope that ALL counters will read it thoroughly at least once, and then browse it at the beginning of each season. One result of having the Guide was that this season we have formal reports of observations made at some of the auxiliary sites. We know that not all the raptors which migrate over the Niagara Peninsula during spring are seen from the Beamer parking lot. The goal is to get a handle on how many more pass through the area each spring. I think the number is at least 20,000, and possibly as many as 25,000.

A sincere 'Thank You' once again to our counters (see the greatly expanded list following the spring summary), especially to Tom Reavley who again anchored the team three days a week and also helped fill in when counters were unable to make it. We can't do this without your help.

Two members of the Executive have gone on to other things. First, Thank You to Alfred Adamo, chief compiler of the Counter's Guide, whose efforts will be seen in our work for a long time to come.

Mary Ellen Hebb, who coordinated all hawkwatch activity at Beamer for many years prior to the founding of the NPH, deserves a special word. Although work has taken her away from this area for the last few years, Mary Ellen has always been a source of valuable information and good advice to me and to others, and her help has been appreciated. Thanks a lot M.E. and Good Luck in your new career! ❖

RARE BIRDS AT BEAMER MEMORIAL CONSERVATION AREA IN 2002

By Mike Street

In addition to the excellent numbers of raptors seen at Beamer CA this season, watchers were rewarded with three rarities - Swainson's Hawk, Ferruginous Hawk and dark-phase Broad-winged Hawk - plus a strong possibility of a second Ferruginous Hawk.

Around 11:30EDT on April 18th, while getting a first look at an incoming kettle of 15-20 Broad-winged Hawks, I noticed a much larger bird among them. My immediate reaction was dark-phase Rough-leg, but something wasn't quite right. This bird's wings were very long and seemed somewhat thin, with a noticeable taper toward the tips. Dave Copeland and Verne Evans picked up the bird and followed it until it was out of sight. After some discussion and elimination of other possible species, we agreed on dark-phase Swainson's Hawk. In addition to the length and shape of the wings, dark secondaries on the underwings were a key part of the identification.

A similar scenario presented itself at 14:15EDT on April 24th when a large buteo, significantly larger than the 20-25 Broad-winged Hawks it was kettling with, came into view. The bird's wing length appeared longer than that of a Red-tailed Hawk, with darkening at the tips of 4 or 5 of the outer primaries. Noted first were an all white tail with no evidence of colour or banding, and a dark body and wing linings, extending to the wrists, which appeared to be a deep brown colour. The most striking feature was a translucent white area, from below the dark wing lining down to the trailing edges of the wing and extending from the wrist to the inner edge of the wing tips, which almost seemed to be luminescent. After eliminating similar species, the conclusion reached was Ferruginous Hawk. (Thanks to Cheryl Edgecombe for forwarding a copy of the Ontario Bird Records Committee (OBRC) report she prepared with the help of Bob Stamp, John Olmsted, Verne Evans and John Niewiadomski).

Although a bit late, April 27th proved to be an excellent Broad-winged Hawk day, with 963 recorded. In the morning most of the BWs came in low, with the lighting conditions allowing observers even better views. Around Noon EDT several BWs came through together and low, but on a wide front. Out of the corner of my eye I noticed one which seemed a bit different, but had trouble finding it when I turned around for a better look. When I picked it up again, just as it was heading over the trees to the west, the big white tail band and all dark body and wing linings stuck out a mile. My first ever dark-phase Broad-Wing, and the second for the NPH (the first was on April 30th, 1997 seen by Dave Copeland, Walter Klabunde, and Eric Single).

The one that got away provides a cautionary tale - don't let your guard down!! On April 5th, while watching a group of birds well out over the Grimsby plain, I noticed one with a white tail, advised the others present that I might have a Bald Eagle, and kept watching. The bird seemed larger than the others, which were all Red-tails, but I was concentrating on trying to see its head and didn't really make mental notes of size. When the bird finally turned a bit I saw a white belly, concluded that it was another Red-tailed Hawk but with an unusually coloured tail, and moved on to other birds. Only after the dark-phase Ferruginous Hawk came through on the 24th did it dawn on me (and a few others) that this bird might have been another Ferruginous Hawk, but a light-phase one. We'll never know because I stopped looking too soon. I've learned my lesson - if another white-tailed buteo turns up the word 'Ferruginous' WILL come to mind quickly!

2002 MIGRATION SUMMARY

By Keith Dieroff

The 2001 spring flight was notable because it passed without a rarity, but things were different in 2002! Hawkwatchers at Beamer Memorial Conservation Area in Grimsby, Ontario counted both Swainson's Hawk and Ferruginous Hawk in the same week during April, and a week later a dark-phase Broad-winged Hawk turned up. Also worth noting is that more raptors were counted this spring than in 2001, even though there was a smaller Broad-wing flight. In summary, the total number of raptors counted during this year's spring migration was well above the recent (5-year) average, and even surpassed the long-term (22-year) average.

The watch was covered for a total of 556 hours in 2002. After a very mild winter this year's count was started ten days early in hopes (not realized) of catching earlier than normal migrants, bringing the average number of hours counted per day to 6.5, down slightly from last year's 6.6. The birds-per-hour number was 26.7, down from the last two years but still above the long-term average.

Two species reached record highs this year. A total of 54 Bald Eagles were counted, shattering the old record of 40 set in 1994. Turkey Vultures continued their upward trend, surpassing last year's high count of 3,402 by more than 600 birds. Both BE and TV numbers were well above their recent and long-term averages. Other species that fared well compared to recent and long-term averages include Cooper's Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Merlin, and Peregrine Falcon.

The following species were above their recent 5-year average, but below their long-term 20-year average:

- Osprey numbers were down from 71 last year to 48 this year.
- Northern Harriers rebounded from 108 in 2001 to 135 in 2002.
- The 3,134 Sharp-shinned Hawks counted this spring was well above the recent average and represents the highest count since 1996.
- Red-shouldered Hawks increased by more than 100 birds, from 459 last year to 566 this year.
- The number of American Kestrels reached 99 this spring, the highest count since 1994.

Only 3 species were at or below their recent and long-term averages:

- Red-tailed Hawk numbers were down again, even with the early start to the count. The 2002 count of 2,033 birds was the lowest since 1976; however, this past winter was one of the warmest on record. It is possible that as Ontario winters get warmer, fewer Red-tailed Hawks are compelled to migrate south.
- At 22 birds, the Rough-legged Hawk count was the lowest on record, possibly for the same reasons as for the Red-tail.
- Not surprisingly, only 9 Northern Goshawks were counted. Goshawk numbers appear to oscillate through a 10 year cycle. The last peak was in 1994, suggesting another peak won't occur until 2004.

Rounding out this year's count, Golden Eagle numbers were very close to the recent and long-term averages. Also worth noting was the number of unidentified raptors. The total of 761, including 6 unidentified eagles, was the highest since 1991. Two factors may have contributed to this result – weather and counter experience. Weather and associated lighting conditions had a negative impact on several days, frustrating counters and creating much debate about the identification of some birds. A good number of new counters were enlisted this year and did an admirable job under sometimes difficult conditions.

In addition to the counts from the Beamer CA parking lot, this year we actively sought written count reports from auxiliary sites. For the 2002 season we have reports for 6 days from 3 different locations, the lookouts at Beamer Point and the intersection of Kemp and Allen Roads. By comparing reports from these locations with those from the parking lot, we were able to determine that at least an additional 633 raptors passed by unseen from the parking lot in the same periods.

When all is said and done, it was a good year. The only negative aspect to the 2002 count was the weather. Snow, fog or rain shut down or severely limited the count on 10 different days. On the bright side, the total overall count – the highest tally since 1994 – was above both the recent and long-term averages. Only 3 of the 15 species regularly seen at Beamer were below their recent and long-term averages, and these low numbers appear to be the result of cyclical population or weather related trends. With some rarities – Swainson's and Ferruginous Hawks – it adds up to a successful season!

Thanks very much to our counters: Alfred Adamo, Don Barnett, Glenn Barnett, Bouwe Bergsma, John Black, Bill Brown, Geoff Carpentier, Barry Cherriere, Linda Cherriere, Jim Coey, Dave Copeland, Mark Cranford, Tom Crooks, Bob Curry, Ian Dalton, Willie D'Anna, Keith Dieroff, Jerry Dixon, Rob Dobos, Dave Don, Bruce Duncan, Chris Escott, Tim Foran, Denys Gardiner, Ann Gray, Brian Gray, Jerry Guild, Bruce Harschnitz, Brandon Holden, Eric Holden, Colin Horstead, Jean Iron, Bruce Mackenzie, Stuart Mackenzie, Kevin McLaughlin, Gord McNulty, Dave Milsom, George Naylor, John Niewiadomski, John Olmsted, Terry Osborne, Don Peuramaki, Betsy Potter, Tom Reavley, Leslie Robinson, Gerry Shemilt, Dave Sked, Art Slaughter, Glenda Slessor, Maggie Smiley, Terry Smith, John Stevens, Mike Street, Paul Summerskill, Tom Thomas, Phil Waggett and Bill Wilson. (If anyone's name has been omitted, our apologies. Please let Mike Street know that this has happened.) ❖

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2002 NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH MONTHLY COUNTS

SPECIES	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	TOTALS
Black Vulture					**0**
Turkey Vulture		2,472	1,448	145	**4,065**
Osprey		2	40	6	**48**
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite					**0**
Mississippi Kite					**0**
Bald Eagle	1	21	14	18	**54**
Northern Harrier	1	26	96	12	**135**
Sharp-shinned Hawk	2	258	2,560	314	**3,134**
Cooper's Hawk		133	113	26	**272**
Northern Goshawk		4	4	1	**9**
Red-shouldered Hawk		458	106	2	**566**
Broad-winged Hawk			3,404	264	**3,668**
Swainson's Hawk			1		**1**
Red-tailed Hawk	17	1,125	795	96	**2,033**
Ferruginous Hawk			1		**1**
Rough-legged Hawk	1	6	15		**22**
Golden Eagle		2	4	2	**8**
American Kestrel	1	28	67	3	**99**
Merlin		4	11	4	**19**
Peregrine Falcon		4	2		**6**
Gyrfalcon					**0**
Prairie Falcon					**0**
Unid. Accipiter		38	15	3	**56**
Unid. Buteo		361	140	13	**514**
Unid. Eagle		1	2	3	**6**
Unid. Falcon		2	8		**10**
Unid. Raptor		85	39	27	**151**
Total Raptors	**23**	**5,030**	**8,885**	**939**	**14,877**
Hours Counted	**28**	**223**	**213**	**93**	**556.28**
Raptors/Hour	**0.8**	**22.6**	**41.7**	**10.1**	**26.7**

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH COUNTS - MARCH 2002

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Totals
Black Vulture																																0
Turkey Vulture	1								12		2	2	1	3	1	5	10		2				17	192	14		36	176	492	626	880	2472
Osprey																														2		2
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite																																0
Mississippi Kite																																0
Bald Eagle												3			1	3	1					1					1	6	2	3	21
Northern Harrier	1								1		1	1	2	1							1			1				6	4	7	26
Sharp-shinned Hawk							1	1	7			3	6	7	6	9	6		5			1	3	11			1	16	31	18	126	258
Cooper's Hawk					1		1		4			8	2	2	2	3	3		8				2	10	2			4	14	19	48	133
Northern Goshawk											1						1							2								4
Red-shouldered Hawk									2		4	19	5	30	10	37	64		25					73	5		2	37	38	15	92	458
Broad-winged Hawk																																0
Swainson's Hawk																																0
Red-tailed Hawk	7	2		2	7	3	4	2	31	2	8	68	18	92	23	158	67		78			3	3	142	15		5	94	69	49	173	1125
Ferruginous Hawk																																0
Rough-legged Hawk																1	1							1					1		2	6
Golden Eagle																									1						1	2
American Kestrel													1	1	2	1			1					1					3	10	8	28
Merlin															2				1											1		4
Peregrine Falcon														1					1											1	1	4
Gyrfalcon																																0
Prairie Falcon																																0
Unid. Accipiter													1			2	8		1					4					2	1	19	38
Unid. Buteo											1	6	1	4	7				3					32				25	4	6	272	361
Unid. Eagle																												1				1
Unid. Falcon																1															1	2
Unid. Raptor												1	1	2					10					4				8			59	85
Total Raptors	9	2	0	2	8	3	6	3	57	2	17	111	38	143	54	220	161	0	135	0	1	5	25	473	37	0	44	362	666	754	1692	5030
Hours Counted	7.5	8	6.2	7	7.5	6	5.2	8	7.5	5.83	7	7.5	8.08	7.5	6.92	8.83	8	6.25	8	4.75	7.5	8	7.75	8	7	1	7.5	7.67	9	9.25	8.5	222.73
Wind Direction	SW	E/SW	SW	W/NW SNO	W	ENE	E/NE	NW	SW/S	SW	W/SW	SW	S	NE	VAR	N/NE	E/NE	W	E	E/NW RAIN	WSW RAIN	NW	W	NW	NE/ NNW	NNE SNO	VAR	SW	SW	SW	S/ SSW	

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH COUNTS - APRIL 2002

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	Totals
Black Vulture																															0
Turkey Vulture	74			31	42	349	81	27	116	122	68	17		4	17	47	64	161	50	15	12		1	66	12	25	31		13	3	1448
Osprey	1							1	1	7	3			1	3	6	1	3	1	1	2		2	2	1	1	2			1	40
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite																															0
Mississippi Kite																															0
Bald Eagle								3	1									3					1	4			2				14
Northern Harrier				1	2	1	1	2	1	9	5	2			9	20	5	6			2			3		1	6			20	96
Sharp-shinned Hawk	7			6	4	22	83	89	47	99	348	145		5	291	260	270	222	152	85	40		25	143	10	19	180		8		2560
Cooper's Hawk	4			1	1	7	6	1		9	8	4			1	5	9	23	8	3	5			8			10				113
Northern Goshawk						2			1		1																				4
Red-shouldered Hawk	1			1	3	25	7	14		8	13	4			7	7	7	8		1											106
Broad-winged Hawk															1	15	344	1217	121	100	20		6	569	41	4	963		1	2	3404
Swainson's Hawk																		1													1
Red-tailed Hawk	6			18	18	84	41	20	21	93	60	36			20	24	30	118	5	51	43		17	34	2	7	43		3	1	795
Ferruginous Hawk																								1							1
Rough-legged Hawk					1	2				2	1				2	1	4			1				1							15
Golden Eagle							1																	1			2				4
American Kestrel							2	3		6	11				3	7	6	20	2	1				3			3				67
Merlin									1	1					2	1	1	2		1				1			1				11
Peregrine Falcon				1														1													2
Gyrfalcon																															0
Prairie Falcon																															0
Unid. Accipiter						2	1		1							2	2	1			3		1	2							15
Unid. Buteo				2		1	12			4	4	2				2	20	17	10	11			11	20		4	20				140
Unid. Eagle					1						1																				2
Unid. Falcon							1				1	1					2	1	1				1								8
Unid. Raptor					1	3	4			4	2					4	7	4		5	3		1	1							39
Total Raptors	**93**	**0**	**0**	**61**	**73**	**498**	**240**	**160**	**190**	**364**	**526**	**211**	**0**	**10**	**356**	**401**	**772**	**1808**	**350**	**275**	**130**	**0**	**66**	**859**	**66**	**61**	**1263**	**0**	**25**	**27**	**8885**
Hours Counted	8	6	1	8	7.5	9	8.5	6.5	7.92	8.5	9	6.5	4.75	7	9.33	8	8	10.5	7.5	9	8.25	2	7	9	7.17	8	8	0	7	6	212.92
Wind Direction	NW	E/NE SNO	SNO/ RAIN	NNW SNO	SW/ NW	NE	SSW	SW	W	W/N	NW/ N	SW	N	NE FOG	SW	SW	SW	E/ SE	SW	NNE	NE	RAIN SNO	NW	S/ E	N/ W	NW	E/ NE	RAIN	NNW	SW/ N	

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH COUNTS - MAY 2002

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Totals
Black Vulture																																0
Turkey Vulture	25		1	47	12			10		5	21			3	21																	145
Osprey	3		2								1																					6
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite																																0
Mississippi Kite																																0
Bald Eagle	4			12							1				1																	18
Northern Harrier				4	3	1		2	1	1																						12
Sharp-shinned Hawk	57		11	83	75	40	7	4		8	12				17																	314
Cooper's Hawk	3		2	8	13																											26
Northern Goshawk															1																	1
Red-shouldered Hawk					1						1																					2
Broad-winged Hawk	167			85	3			1		1	4				3																	264
Swainson's Hawk																																0
Red-tailed Hawk	22		1	31	7	1	1	8			6			2	17																	96
Ferruginous Hawk																																0
Rough-legged Hawk																																0
Golden Eagle				1							1																					2
American Kestrel										2					1																	3
Merlin	2		1			1																										4
Peregrine Falcon																																0
Gyrfalcon																																0
Prairie Falcon																																0
Unid. Accipiter	2				1																											3
Unid. Buteo	5			7	1																											13
Unid. Eagle											3																					3
Unid. Falcon																																0
Unid. Raptor	3		1	14	1						8																					27
Total Raptors	293	0	19	292	117	43	8	25	1	17	58	0	0	5	61	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	939
Hours Counted	8	0	7	10	8	7	7	7	6	10.25	7	0.5	0	7	7.8																	92.55
Wind Direction	SW/ NW	FOG/ RAIN	WNW	WSW /NE	S	SW	SW/ N	E	S/ RAIN	WSW /W	NE/ E	FOG/ RAIN	RAIN	NW	W																	

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH
Annual Summaries 1983-2002

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	1983-2002 TOTALS	1998-2002 TOTALS	Highest Total & Date	Earliest Date
Black Vulture										1								1			2	1	1-Apr 4/92	Mar 31/00
Turkey Vulture	895	616	948	837	977	2331	1406	1463	1785	1990	1852	3189	2151	2946	3092	3277	3376	2971	3402	4065	43569	17091	748-Mar 26/88	Feb 23/84
Osprey	20	38	36	33	30	41	36	40	46	64	45	69	47	56	28	42	43	46	71	48	879	250	16-Apr 12/92	Mar 20/00
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite												1									1	0	1-Apr 15/94	Apr 15/94
Mississippi Kite															1						1	0	1-May 11/97	May 11/97
Bald Eagle	7	5	10	14	7	16	17	15	17	22	14	40	24	33	17	32	30	25	30	54	429	171	12-Apr 28/96	Feb 26/86
Northern Harrier	125	127	113	143	217	162	175	194	219	209	126	177	177	172	125	84	91	125	108	135	3004	543	35-Apr 18/96	Feb 19/84
Sharp-shinned Hawk	3931	4683	4480	3549	2831	3108	3576	7004	3767	3418	3475	4846	2136	3290	3047	2816	1983	2468	2551	3134	70093	12952	1556-Apr 18/76	Feb 11/87
Cooper's Hawk	160	190	152	196	199	229	180	311	220	199	209	263	256	295	221	187	240	177	167	272	4323	1043	50-Apr 5/93	Feb 11/87
Northern Goshawk	73	67	25	21	31	27	14	24	20	34	28	73	15	37	16	14	6	3	14	9	551	46	11-Mar 24/84	Feb 28/88
Red-shouldered Hawk	624	838	764	901	876	861	1102	1341	761	1187	1030	1419	705	694	796	549	678	498	459	566	16649	2750	655-Mar 23/94	Feb 23/84
Broad-winged Hawk	4118	7844	8239	3823	1628	2910	2304	4428	2063	2761	1963	2335	1779	1550	1849	3886	1833	2368	5229	3668	66578	16984	6007-Apr 21/85	Apr 4/85
Swainson's Hawk			1			1	1				2	2		1	2	3				1	14	4	2-May 2/97	Apr 15/94
Red-tailed Hawk	3150	3105	3410	2852	3265	3567	2615	3482	3023	3861	2684	2890	2861	3584	2572	2235	2216	2616	2358	2033	58379	11458	744-Mar 16/96	Feb 11/87
Ferruginous Hawk										1						1				1	3	2	1-Apr 13/92, Apr 23/98	Apr 13/92
Rough-legged Hawk	59	85	48	45	77	87	45	127	145	128	35	62	87	98	44	32	69	49	71	22	1415	243	24-Apr 2/82	Feb 11/87
Golden Eagle	8	6	12	7	6	3	7	10	8	12	6	10	4	13	6	6	10	13	6	8	161	43	4-Apr 29/83,Apr 28/96	Feb 24/84
American Kestrel	71	56	150	126	85	148	132	207	180	92	93	122	70	61	84	77	69	95	77	99	2094	417	44-Mar 14/90	Feb 25/87
Merlin	2	2	5	5	12	5	4	9	11	12	9	23	14	22	14	15	10	22	6	19	221	72	6-Apr 25/96	Mar 1/94
Peregrine Falcon	0	0	2	1	1	4	2	6	5	6	2	4	1	2	2	4	1	7	3	6	59	21	3 dates with 2 birds	Mar 12/88
Gyrfalcon																					0	0	1-Apr 20/77	Apr 20/77
Prairie Falcon													1								1	0	1-Apr 19/95	Apr 19/95
Unid. Raptors	467	640	880	1504	266	634	592	582	2681	681	534	452	480	249	189	227	340	160	281	737	12576	1745		
Total Raptors	13,710	18,302	19,275	14,057	10,508	14,134	12,208	19,243	14,951	14,678	12,107	15,977	10,808	13,103	12,105	13,487	10,995	11,644	14,833	14,877	281,002	65,836		
Hours Counted	565	564.6	608.5	576.2	681.5	608.2	499.3	574.5	548.5	541.5	538.5	531.0	555.7	454.5	508.4	499.0	502.8	527.4	545.0	556.3	10986	2630		
Birds per Hour	24.3	32.4	31.7	24.4	15.4	23.2	24.5	33.5	27.3	27.1	22.5	30.1	19.4	28.8	23.8	27.0	21.9	22.1	27.2	26.7	25.58	25.03		

Last Updated:
June 25th, 2002

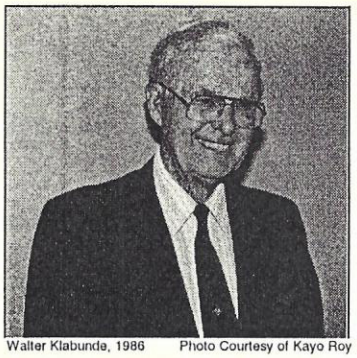
Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch

Newsletter

February 2003 Newsletter #26

WALTER KLABUNDE (1907-2002)

by Mike Street



Walter Klabunde, 1986 Photo Courtesy of Kayo Roy

Walter Klabunde, Dean of Hawkwatching in the Niagara Peninsula, passed away December 4, 2002 at Christiana Hospital in Newark, Delaware, at the age of 95. He was Honourary President of the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch and a past-President of the Buffalo Ornithological Society.

Walt was born January 11, 1907 in Kenosha, Wisconsin to Otto & Toni Klabunde. As only German was spoken at home he first learned English in elementary school, but this did not hold him back. Graduating a year early from high school, he went on to the University of Illinois where he received a B.Sc. (1928) and Ph.D. (1933) in Chemistry, and met his future wife Harriette in Chem Lab. After hitchhiking around the country looking for a job, he arrived back in Ohio (where Harriette and son Charles were staying) with only loose change in his pockets but bringing good news. He had been offered a job with DuPont in Niagara Falls, NY, where he worked for over 35 years, retiring in 1969.

Walt and Harriette started birding shortly after WWII when they took courses offered by Winston Brockner of the Buffalo Ornithological Society. Walt and son Phil, with Charles' help, assembled and collimated three pairs of 7x50 B & L binoculars from war surplus kits supplied by Edmond Scientific Co. (Buying the metal and glass parts separately allowed them to avoid the 10% luxury tax on optical items). Walt was also architect and general contractor for the Lewiston, NY home the family built in 1950, doing all of the electrical work, painting, landscaping and some of the carpentry.

Eventually, birding led Walt to raptors. George Meyers of Grimsby, Ontario remembers watching the migration from a lookout at the local Beamer Conservation Area one day in 1974-75 when a tall stranger - Walt - came up and asked, "Is this a good place to watch hawks?" George recalls, laughing, that Walt said he was part of an 'ad hawk' committee of Buffalo area birders who were trying to determine the spring migration route of raptors that turned west when they reached the south shore of Lake Ontario. Gradually working their way along the Niagara Escarpment from the Niagara River the group, represented by Walt on this day, had arrived at Beamer CA.

Dave Copeland, the original hawk count Coordinator at Grimsby, remembers meeting Walt at HMANA Conference II in Duluth, Minnesota in September 1976 and seeing him at Grimsby the following spring. Walt first counted hawks at Beamer CA in 1979. The following year he began counting Monday through Friday from March 1 to May 15, making the one-hour trip across the border to Grimsby from Lewiston and back every day. He continued doing five days a week until 1987, covered three days a week from 1988-93, and after that came to Grimsby regularly until moving to Wilmington, Delaware in 1997.

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In 1986, his work and dedication to the hawks at Grimsby earned Walt the Niagara Falls Nature Club's R. W. Sheppard Award for worthy achievement in the conservation, research, education and preservation of nature. Following its formation in 1990, Walt was named Honourary President of the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch. Even after spending thousands of hours at Beamer, he could still get excited by raptors. One day in April 1991, I arrived at Beamer about 08:45 to find a wide-eyed Walt just itching to tell someone something. To my "What did I miss?" he replied, "Three Golden Eagles traveling together, right overhead, 100 feet up!!!!" His feet hardly touched the ground for the rest of the day.

Walt will be missed, but the knowledge he passed on and the data he gathered during his time at Beamer will remain as part of his legacy to hawkwatchers in particular and birdwatchers generally. He and Harriette, who passed away in 1996, are survived by Charles, Phil and their sister Suzanne, and by 5 grandchildren and 6 great grandchildren.

My thanks to Gordon Bellerby, Dave Copeland, Bruce Duncan, Mary Ellen Hebb, Phil Klabunde, George Meyers and Kayo Roy for their help in preparing this note about Walter. ❖

GLENN BARRETT TO SPEAK AT APRIL 26TH AGM & BANQUET

This year's Annual General Meeting and Dinner (aka "the Banquet") will be held on Saturday, April 26th, 2003 at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Grimsby. The guest speaker will be Glenn Barrett.

The immediate Past-President of the Hamilton Naturalists' Club, in his professional life Glenn is a Wildlife Toxicologist with the Canadian Wildlife Service, based at the Canada Centre for Inland Waters in Burlington, but working all over the province. (When Mike Street called one time, Glenn answered his cell phone while standing in a wetland on the shore of Manitoulin Island!) One of Glenn's current projects is monitoring nest boxes occupied by American Kestrels in southern Ontario, including a few in the Grimsby area. Glenn will tell us a bit about the different things the CWS looks for and does to keep an eye on possible toxic dangers to kestrels and other species, and will also bring us up to date on other ongoing raptor studies in the province.

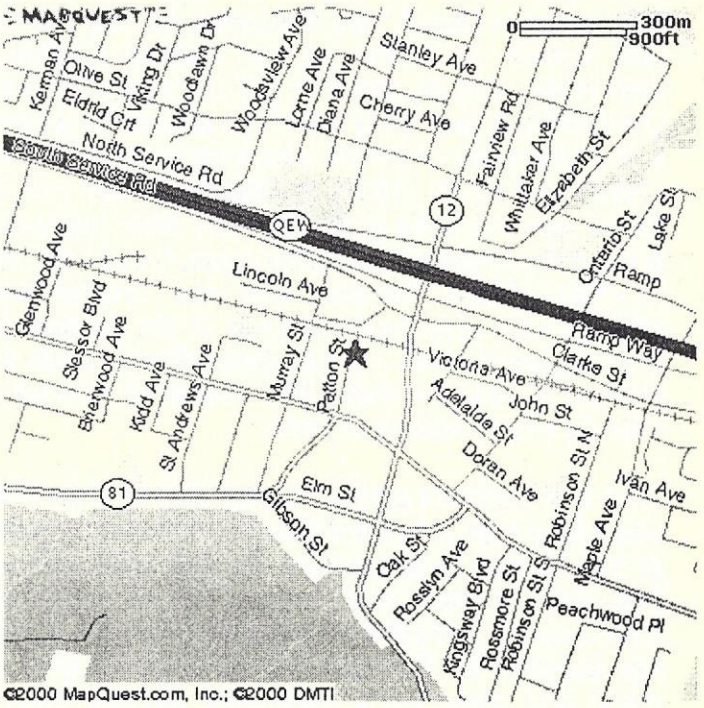
Socializing and the bucket raffle begin at 5:00pm. The pre-supper wine and cheese starts at 5:15, and as per tradition, members of the NPH will select the wines for the evening in advance. Dinner will start around 6:15. Donations are still needed for the bucket raffle – please contact Keith Dieroff at (905) 545-5859.

Tickets are priced at $25 for members and their spouses/partners, and $40 for non-members (includes annual membership to the NPH).

Call John Stevens or Mike Street to make arrangements for tickets.

The Knights of Columbus Hall is located at 16 Patton Street, Grimsby. Patton Street is one block west of the Christie Street/Mountain Avenue and Main Street intersection, and runs north from Main Street toward the QEW (see map below).

Mark your calendars. See you there! ❖



PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

by Mike Street

If it's not one thing, it's another. Osprey, Peregrines, Bald Eagles (and Merlin?) are all well on the road to recovery from the devastating effects of DDT, thank goodness, but now there are new threats - one well known courtesy of almost non-stop media coverage, the other less so.

Everyone has heard of West Nile Virus (WNV). From its apparent arrival in the New York City area a mere three years ago, it has now spread as far west as Saskatchewan and at least as far south as Louisiana. After several Canadians died from the disease, many media sources gave full attention to the subject. Unfortunately, the fact that birds are dying (and in larger numbers) from WNV has largely been missed or ignored. Crows and jays have been most visibly affected but other species, including some raptors, have as well.

There has been a lot of speculation about how badly raptors have been involved in the WNV explosion, but so far very little if any solid evidence. This is where we can help. Over the next few years the numbers tallied at our hawkwatch and others will contribute to a body of data which can be used to evaluate the situation. A word of caution, however. Numbers from one season, or even two or three, do not necessarily make a trend. We have all seen a species' numbers drop one year and come roaring back the next, and vice versa. If in contact with the media, please be careful not to fuel the fires by speculating on what happens - or doesn't - at Beamer over the next few seasons. Let's all wait a bit to see what develops.

The other danger to the birds is the rapid spread across the continent of turbines that produce electricity from the wind. One has been proposed for the edge of the escarpment at Vinemount, only a few kilometres from Beamer. There is a problem, however. Raptors and other birds have been killed and injured by wind turbines in some places, yet not affected at others. The industry is telling all who will listen about the favourable reports, while negative results are ignored or downplayed. NPH certainly favours generating power from renewable resources, but only if valid, on-site research is carried out before any approvals are given for a turbine at that location. If proper studies are conducted at Vinemount and prove that our birds will not be affected, we will support the proposal. If not, we may be called on to protest to the authorities.

Finally, special thanks to Dave Copeland for designing the new raptor migration information panel at Beamer. Education of the public is part of our mandate, but we are only at the conservation area for 75 or so days a year. The sign will continue our work year round. ❖

2003 COUNT MAY START IN LATE FEBRUARY

The winter of 2002-2003 has been so cold in the northern part of the continent that it is hard to predict what the 2003 raptor flight will be like at Beamer C.A. A few years ago, after seeing significant Red-tailed Hawk flights during very warm weather in late February, we asked some counters to spend the hours from 10:00am to 2:00pm at Beamer if conditions seemed favourable for a flight.

In 2001, we did see a good number of birds, but 2002 results were poor. Should warm weather occur after February 15th the count will begin early. If Mother Nature does not co-operate, the count will begin as usual on March 1st, 2003.

See you at Beamer! ❖

WANT TO BE A COUNTER?

The NPH is always in need of more people to count hawks. Anyone who would like to learn to be a counter should get in touch with Mike Street by e-mail (mikestreet@hwcn.org) or by telephone at (905) 648-3737. We plan to have training workshops on two weekends this season, from 10:00am to 3:00pm on Saturday and Sunday, March 22nd and 23rd, and again on Saturday and Sunday, April 12th and 13th. Everyone is welcome. ❖

NEW HAWK MIGRATION SIGN TO BE UNVEILED AT APRIL 18TH OPEN HOUSE

The NPH will once again hold it's annual Open House on Good Friday, April 18th. This year's expanded activities include displays, nature groups, "hawk talks" by Bruce Duncan, a live bird display (Red-tailed Hawk and Great Horned Owl), as well as the children's program presented by Carla Carlson of Niagara Nature Tours.

In addition, as part of an upgrade program the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority is changing the display signs at Beamer Conservation Area. The new signs will be officially unveiled at the Open House. One panel will tell visitors more about the raptor migration witnessed at Beamer.

The NPH is paying for this panel from donations received during the viewing tower fundraising campaign and other sources. Designed by the NPH's own Dave Copeland, the panel illustrates the routes raptors take traveling from South and Central America and the southern United States past Grimsby on their way to their breeding grounds elsewhere in Ontario. Insets show how weather affects the birds along the escarpment. Silhouettes of the three main raptor families seen at Beamer are also prominent.

So, invite your family and friends...it should be a good day for them, and the birds too! ❖

DISTRIBUTED WIND POWER GENERATION FOR NIAGARA ESCARPMENT?

by Keith Dieroff

If you've driven to downtown Toronto on the Gardiner Expressway recently, you probably noticed a large wind turbine on the waterfront near the exhibition grounds. The wind turbine is 98 metres high, with blades 29 metres long. It is part of a distributed wind power generation project by Toronto Hydro Energy Services Inc. Distributed wind power generation consists of individual wind turbines at different locations which are connected directly to the utility transmission system. The Toronto turbine is capable of generating enough electricity each year to power 250 residential homes, while displacing 1,800 tons of carbon dioxide, 8,400kg of sulphur dioxide, and 5,600kg of nitrous oxide emissions. Great news for the environment.

As mentioned in the President's Corner, a similar renewable energy project is being proposed for the Niagara Escarpment. The concern, of course, is that wind turbines could be a hazard to migrating raptors. The first wind power generation projects in the California desert were lethal for birds, raptors in particular. Over a two year period, more than 570 hawks, eagles, and falcons: collided with wind turbine towers or their support wires; were electrocuted; or were hit by spinning rotor blades. Most of these problems have been addressed through design improvements, but the danger still remains. Of particular concern for the NPH are updrafts created by the Niagara Escarpment, which raptors use to conserve energy during migration. What would happen if these updrafts lifted migrating raptors right into the path of a spinning wind turbine? The result could be disastrous.

No need to panic yet, as discussions regarding the Niagara Escarpment project are very preliminary. But in Ripley, New York, wind turbines are already on the agenda at local town council meetings, and understandably, members of the Ripley Hawkwatch are concerned. To this end, your NPH President, Mike Street, has sent a letter to the town of Ripley urging caution and further study before proceeding with a full scale distributed wind power generation project. Stay tuned – there will be more about the Ripley situation and the Niagara Escarpment project in future newsletters. ❖

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NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH MIGRATION CALENDAR FOR BEAMER MEMORIAL CONSERVATION AREA

NOTES:

1. Species initials and Right (>) or Left (<) arrow:
   This combination indicates the start (>) or end (<) of the normal (at Beamer) migration period for that species. The same in bold type indicates the start or end of a noticeable peak period for that species. The box in which this combination is located indicates the day and month on which the period is likely to start or end.
2. A number, followed by species initial, followed by a slash (/) and a two-digit number:
   In this combination, the largest number of that species ever seen in one day is given first; the two-digit number following the / indicates the year in which this occurred. The box in which this combination is located indicates the day and month on which the event occurred. Example: 655 RS/94 in the March 23rd box indicates that the highest number of Red-shouldered Hawks recorded in one day was 655, seen on March 23rd, 1994.

TV – Turkey Vulture
BV – Black Vulture
OS – Osprey
SK – American Swallow-tailed Kite
MK – Mississippi Kite
BE – Bald Eagle
GE – Golden Eagle
NH – Northern Harrier
SS – Sharp-shinned Hawk
CH – Cooper's Hawk
NG – Northern Goshawk
RS – Red-shouldered Hawk
RT – Red-tailed Hawk
SW – Swainson's Hawk
RL – Rough-legged Hawk
FH – Ferruginous Hawk
AK – American Kestrel
ME – Merlin
PF – Peregrine Falcon
PR – Prairie Falcon
GF – Gyrfalcon
BW – Broad-winged Hawk

The following information, based on 25 years of data from the Beamer Hawkwatch, has been updated to show significant events up to the year 2002.

Largest number of raptors in one season: 19,724 in 1985.

NH>, SS>, CH>, RT>, RL>, AK>, begin February 20.

MARCH

1 **RT**>NG>	2 GE>	3 RS>	4	5	6 BE>	7
8 TV>	9	10	11 **RL>**	12 **AK>**	13 **CH>RS>**	14 44 AK/90
15	16 744 RT/96	17	18 **BE>** 7 GE/86	19	20 **TV>**ME> PF>	21
22	23 **NH>** 9 BE/94 655 RS/94	24	25	26 **SS>** 2 PF/91 7 GE/88 748 TV/88	27	28 2 PF/90
29	30	31 OS> 1 BV/00*				

Largest # of raptors in month: 5,670 in March 1988; largest # of raptors in one day in month: 2,080 on March 26th, 1988.

APRIL

1	2	3 2 PF/91	4 1 BV/91	5 50 CH/93 28 NH/93	6	7
8 **OS><RS** 706 RT/87	9	10 BW>	11	12 22 RL/91 16 OS/92	13 1 FH/92	14
15 **BW>** 1 SK/94 1 SW/94*	16 **<BE** 2 PF/90	17	18 1 SW/96* 1 SW/02* 35 NH/96 1556 SS/76	19 1 PR/95**	20 1 GF/77 1 SW/93	21 1 SW/85 6007 BW/85
22 1 SW/88	23 1 FH/98*	24 **<OS** 1 FH/02*	25 **<TV** 6 ME/96 2 PF/94 1 SW/94*	26	27 1 SW/93* 1 SW/00*	28 1 SW/98* 12 BE/96 4 GE/96
29 2 SW/98*	30 **<RL**					

Largest # of raptors in month: 15,012 in April 1984; largest # of raptors in one day in month: 7,007 on April 21st, 1985.

MAY

1	2 2 SW/97*	3	4 **<RT** 12 BE/02	5 1 SW/89	6 <PF	7
8	9	10 <GE	11 1 MK/97*	12 **<NH<AK**	13 **<CH**<BE	14 **<SS**
15 **<BW** <RL<ME	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25 <OS	26	27	28
29	30	31 <TV<NH <SS<CH <NG<RS <AK				

BW and RT continue beyond May 31st.

Largest # of Raptors in month: 2,695 in May 1980; largest # of raptors in one day in month: 1,492 on May 4th, 1989.

** Sighting not reviewed/accepted by Ontario Bird Records Committee*

***First accepted Prairie Falcon record in Ontario*

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch

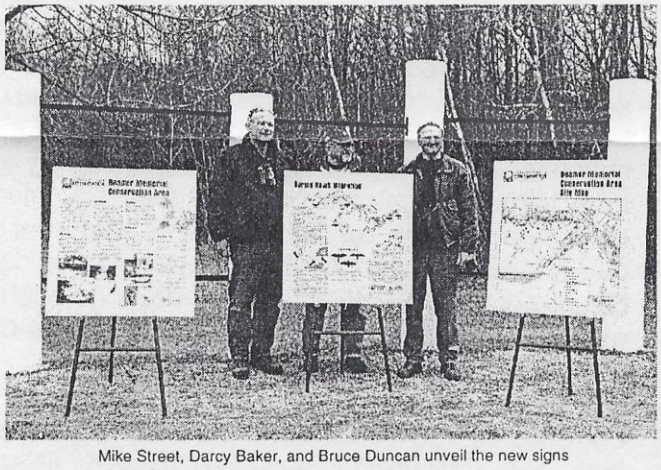
Newsletter

August 2003 Newsletter #27

NEW SIGNS UNVEILED AT 2003 OPEN HOUSE

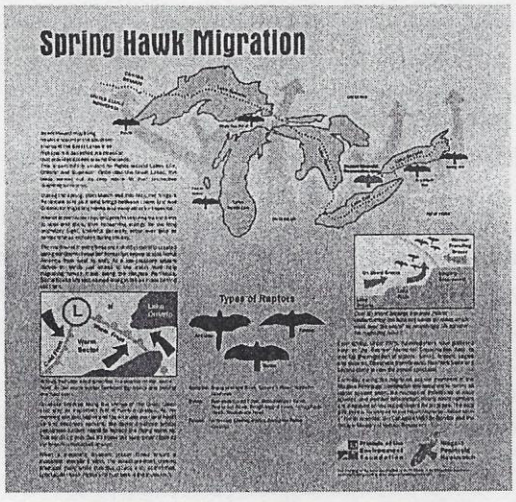
The 2003 Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Open House was, once again, a great success. Despite cool temperatures for mid-April, the event was well attended and remarkably, the first Broad-winged Hawks of the season arrived as if on cue.

The highlight of the Open House was the unveiling of new signs, which will reside at Beamer to provide visitors with information about hawks and hawk migration.



Mike Street, Darcy Baker, and Bruce Duncan unveil the new signs

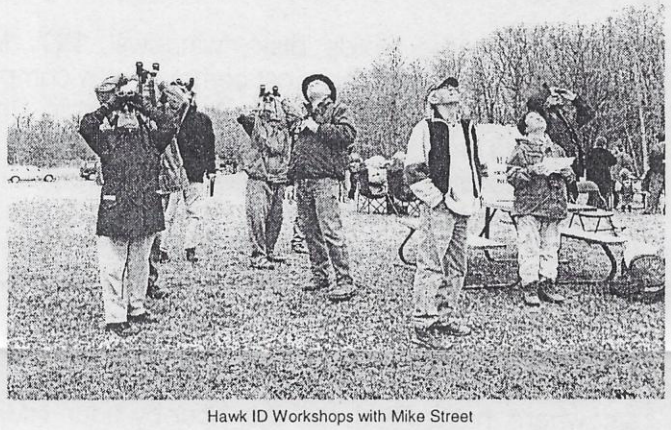
The signs feature full-colour design with artwork provided by Dave Copeland.



'Spring Hawk Migration' with artwork by Dave Copeland

(Photos courtesy of Bill Brown)

Other activities throughout the day provided education and information for visitors. Mike Street conducted Hawk Identification Workshops.



Hawk ID Workshops with Mike Street

Carla Carlson of Niagara Nature Tours delivered the children's program to the delight of the young hawkwatchers in attendance.

Bruce Duncan provided listeners with an explanation of the mechanics of hawk migration, and the reasons why Beamer is such a great place to watch hawks.

The Official Counter, Glenn Barnett, was moderately busy, tallying 467 raptors over the course of the day, including 235 Sharp-shinned Hawks, four Osprey, four Northern Harriers, and a Merlin.

Thanks to everyone who participated in this year's Open House. See you again next year! ❖

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

INTO THE 21ST CENTURY – MORE THAN 1600 RECEIVE BEAMER DAILY COUNT E-MAILS!

By Mike Street

Ain't technology wonderful? Only a few years ago computers were huge things that lurked in glass-enclosed rooms at universities and large companies. Today you can fit in your shirt pocket a computer that is hundreds of times more powerful than some of those hulks. The Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch has been pretty computer literate - witness this newsletter - since it's inception in 1990, but compared to today what we did even a dozen years ago was horse and buggy stuff.

In addition to the words 'disk', 'windows', 'PC', 'Mac' and 'e-mail', probably the most common new computer generation word is 'database'. A database is simply (well, not so simply!) a way to store information so that it can be used to operate virtually any enterprise, from monsters like the Government of Canada to peanuts such as the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch. Just as important, databases can also store the kind of information we gather every spring at Grimsby.

Since 1975 hawkwatchers at Beamer CA and elsewhere have filled out the hour-by-hour HMANA (Hawk Migration Association of North America) data sheets we still use today. The NPH has also been keeping track of the daily species counts in a small computer database since its formation in 1990. Along the way many in the hawkwatching community have also been saying, "Wouldn't it be nice if we could get all the hawkwatch data gathered over the years into one big database? What could we learn by doing so?"

A few years ago our friends at Holiday Beach Migration Observatory near Amherstburg commissioned one of their members to build a database that could accept all the data recorded on a daily sheet since they started counting. From this not so modest beginning came HAWKCOUNT, HMANA's database intended to store data from any and all hawkwatches in North America.

Imagine the work, coordination and money needed if the thousands of daily hawkwatch sheets prepared by all sites each season were sent to one place to be entered into a database. Then imagine what could happen if that work was spread out and shared by all the hawkwatches. It was a logical step when HMANA, taking advantage of the power and availability of the Internet, made it possible for hawkwatches to enter their own data directly into HAWKCOUNT.

This spring the NPH decided to enter hourly data from Beamer into HAWKCOUNT. An effort was made to have the keying done by Grimsby High School students as a way of helping them meet the requirement to perform 40 hours of volunteer work in order to graduate. Just as the students started, member Bill Brown asked me by e-mail if NPH was thinking of using HAWKCOUNT! I told Bill what was happening, and asked if he would be interested in helping next year if things didn't work out in 2003. Bill replied, "Yes".

Within a few weeks it became obvious that the students' schedules would not allow data entry in time for us to post updates every 10 days or so during the season as is our practice. When I asked Bill if he could take over this year, he jumped in with both hands. Th counters' sheets were soon heading Bill's way in the mail. Within a week we began to take advantage of one of the system's built in features - if data for a given day is entered into HAWKCOUNT within three days of being recorded, an email with that day's numbers and other information is automatically generated and sent out.

For 2003 NPH chose to send the automatic emails to both the ONTBIRDS and BIRDHAWK listserves. Allowing for duplication between the two lists, more than 1600 hawkwatchers and birders received emails carrying less than three-day old Beamer information.

Between April 18, when Bill started, and the end of the season, a total of ten different automatic Beamer e-mails were sent to all these people. In addition, during the 2003 season, totals for another five days were posted to ONTBIRDS by the Designated Counter. Talk about getting the word out! Next year we hope that sheets will arrive in time to have HAWKCOUNT post emails for more than half of the days we count.

Over and above the automatic emails, daily Beamer counts for 2002 and 2003 are available online at the HAWKCOUNT site (www.hawkcount.org). NPH

members can access the current year's data anytime during the season with a password available from myself. Because NPH members are paying the bill for our activities, we do not make the current season's numbers available to the general public until after the Summer newsletter with the full set of season counts has been mailed to the membership. If you would like to view cumulative 2004 data between March 1 and mailing of the Summer 2004 newsletter, please email me and I will return your password.

That's it for this season. Thanks to everyone who helped in any way. Without you the volunteers the NPH would not, could not, function. Your efforts are greatly appreciated. When I talk to you next we will be starting our thirtieth (yes, 30th) year. Amazing! ❖

2003 HMANA CONFERENCE EXCELLENT

By Mike Street

More than 125 hawkwatch enthusiasts attended the Hawk Migration Association of North America's 2003 Conference in Corpus Christi, Texas at the end of March. The local committee, HMANA and Hawkwatch International went all out to bring in good speakers and organize great field trips. The papers were about evenly split between what I would call hawkwatch organization, biology of specific species or groups and analysis of data from watch sites.

Topics in the 'hawkwatch organization' area ranged from the importance of site manuals in obtaining consistent results through HMANA's Raptor Population Index project, which will make long term use of the data gathered at hawkwatches, to the value of Important Bird Areas in protecting raptor populations. A talk on the way Harris' Hawks work together in groups was very interesting, as was one on the natural history of the White-tailed Hawk. Two data analysis subjects of particular interest to NPH members were the post-fledging dispersal of Red-tailed Hawks seen during August at Braddock Bay, and flight patterns of raptors passing through the Detroit area in the fall. A conclusion reached in the latter paper, presented by Southern Michigan Raptor Research, is that virtually all of the raptors being counted there are migrating out of Ontario, with only a very few arriving via the northern Michigan peninsula.

Among other topics of discussion were the effect of wind turbines on raptors, satellite tracking of Red-tailed Hawks and Peregrine Falcons by different projects, and the HAWKCOUNT database system. Bill Clark presented beautiful slides of the raptors of the Rio Grande Valley. Other highlights were after-dinner talks by Pete Dunne on the first 48 hours of official hawkwatching at Cape May Observatory and Scott Wiedensaul's 'Celebration of Flight' at the closing banquet.

One of the field trips took us to the waterfront and park areas of Corpus Christi where we saw species from Clapper Rail (at 10 feet!!!), Black-necked Stilt, Long-billed Curlew and Black-bellied Whistling Duck to Great Kiskadee, White-tipped Dove and Vermillion Flycatcher. The second trip visited part of the immense King Ranch just south of the city. In addition to Texas birds such as Couch's Kingbird, Golden-fronted Woodpecker, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Northern Bobwhite and Cave Swallow we had excellent views of Harris', White-tailed and Swainson's Hawks and Crested Caracaras in their normal habitat. On this trip we also got to see a small part of the Broad-winged Hawk migration, as hundreds of them (and one Swallow-tailed Kite!) glided northward high overhead until an approaching thunderstorm shut the flight down. Many attendees took advantage of the conference location, visiting Aransas National Wildlife Refuge to see Whooping Cranes and other water birds which winter in Texas, and the Rio Grande Valley for species like Olive Sparrow, Green Jay and Plain Chachalacha.

This was my fourth HMANA conference and I'm already planning to go to the next one when it is scheduled. In addition to spending time with other hawkwatchers, the dedication of the people who spend their lives working with and for raptors shines through and is worth supporting. ❖

IN MEMORIAM – GERRY DIXON

The Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch regrets to announce the passing of Gerry Dixon on Wednesday, July 2nd, 2003. Gerry and his faithful companion Trixie were mainstays at the hawkwatch for the past several years. When not birding or watching hawks, Gerry also worked at a local law firm. He will be remembered by his family, coworkers, and, of course, his friends at the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch. ❖

2003 MIGRATION SUMMARY

By Keith Dieroff

April 20th, 2003 was day to remember for Paul and Tina Summerskill. The Summerskills were the official counters on one of the busiest days in recent history for the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch. When the dust settled, over 2,045 raptors of 10 different species had been counted, including almost 1,300 Broad-winged Hawks and over 550 Sharp-shinned Hawks.

2003 was also the year of the Mississippi Kite. Why you ask? For a number of reasons... First, Mississippi Kite was the only rarity counted by the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch this spring. Second, it was the only bird counted by George Meyers on the second to last day of the count, May 14th, 2003. Third, it was inevitable. Mississippi Kites were reported at other locations in Ontario during May, including Point Pelee National Park and Rondeau Provincial Park. That a Kite should appear at Beamer Memorial Conservation Area in May and be counted seems only logical. On a lighter note, George Meyers has been waiting almost 30 years to see a Mississippi Kite at Beamer. After this year's sighting, his emotions were mixed – he was elated to finally see a Kite at Beamer, but also disappointed that he was the only person there to see it.

The other story of 2003 was the weather. March's weather persisted into April and April's weather spilled over into May. The result was a record number of eight days with no birds counted, including two shutouts in the second week of April. Many thanks to the counters who persisted on these difficult days.

Picking up where we left off last year, Turkey Vultures and Bald Eagles once again set record highs this spring. The 5,026 Turkey Vultures counted bested the previous year's total by almost 1,000 birds, and the 59 Bald Eagles counted were 11 more than 2002. Other species with counts above their short-term (5-year) and long-term (20-year) averages were Osprey at 65, Cooper's Hawk at 219, and Peregrine Falcon at 7. American Kestrel was the only species that bested its short-term average, but not its long-term touchstone.

The number of species below their recent and long-term averages increased from three last year to seven in 2003. Joining Red-tailed Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, and Northern Goshawk were:

- Northern Harrier at 97 – near the short-term average but well below the long-term average
- Sharp-shinned Hawk at 2,351 – below both the short and long-term averages
- Broad-winged Hawk at 3,327 – very close to the long-term average but below the short-term average
- Red-shouldered Hawk at 455 – down over 100 birds compared to last year

At 8 and 11 respectively, Golden Eagle and Merlin were very close to their short and long-term averages. In summary, it was another successful season for the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch. Thanks to all the counters: Alfred Adamo, Don Barnett, Glenn Barnett, Bouwe Bergsma, Geoff Carpentier, Barry Cherriere, Linda Cherriere, Jim Coey, Dave Copeland, Bob Curry, Willie D'Anna, Keith Dieroff, Bruce Duncan, Tim Foran, Denys Gardiner, Ann Gray, Brian Gray, Jerry Guild, Brandon Holden, Eric Holden, Colin Horstead, Bruce Mackenzie, Kevin McLaughlin, George Meyers, Dave Milsom, George Naylor, John Niewadomski, John Olmsted, Terry Osborne, Betsy Potter, Tom Reavely, Leslie Robinson, Dave Sked, Keith Sealy, Art Slaughter, Glenda Slessor, Terry Smith, John Stevens, Mike Street, Paul Summerskill, Tina Summerskill, Tom Thomas, and Phil Waggett. ❖

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2003 NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH MONTHLY COUNTS

SPECIES	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	TOTALS
Black Vulture					
Turkey Vulture		2901	2012	113	**5026**
Osprey		1	52	6	**59**
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite					
Mississippi Kite				1	**1**
Bald Eagle	1	48	10	6	**65**
Northern Harrier		34	47	16	**97**
Sharp-shinned Hawk		320	1865	166	**2351**
Cooper's Hawk		107	98	14	**219**
Northern Goshawk		4	1	1	**6**
Red-shouldered Hawk		425	29	1	**455**
Broad-winged Hawk			2822	505	**3327**
Swainson's Hawk					
Red-tailed Hawk	3	1488	661	106	**2258**
Ferruginous Hawk					
Rough-legged Hawk		21	18	1	**40**
Golden Eagle		6	2		**8**
American Kestrel		19	79	4	**102**
Merlin		3	8		**11**
Peregrine Falcon		2	2	3	**7**
Gyrfalcon					
Prairie Falcon					
Unid. Accipiter		20	13		**33**
Unid. Buteo		140	20	3	**163**
Unid. Eagle		2	2		**4**
Unid. Falcon		2	3		**5**
Unid. Raptor		89	25	9	**123**
Total Raptors	**4**	**5632**	**7769**	**955**	**14360**
Hours Counted	**4**	**214**	**209**	**106**	**532.00**
Raptors/Hour	**1.0**	**26.3**	**37.3**	**9.1**	**27.0**

Count totals complete to: 15-May-03

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH COUNTS - MARCH 2003

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Totals
Black Vulture																																0
Turkey Vulture														2	1	6	2	180	1	87		20	100	103	9	1355	455	477	67	28	8	2901
Osprey																												1				1
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite																																0
Mississippi Kite																																0
Bald Eagle							3				2			4	1	1	1	6	1	2				19		2	1	4	1			48
Northern Harrier														1	2	1	1	1	2				5	11	1	3	1	5				34
Sharp-shinned Hawk	4			1			1			2	3	4		4	8	6	2	7	5	6		5	11	51	8	17	65	103		4	3	320
Cooper's Hawk							1					1		7	4	3	10	15	1	2		1	6	16	2	13	20	4		1		107
Northern Goshawk	1																			1				2								4
Red-shouldered Hawk														1	1			70	4	86		2	45	107	19	22	63	5				425
Broad-winged Hawk																																0
Swainson's Hawk																																0
Red-tailed Hawk	8	1		1			18	3	4	2	3	2	3	136	21	6	15	241	38	78		13	71	350	14	204	165	62	1	25	3	1488
Ferruginous Hawk																																0
Rough-legged Hawk							1							2	3	1		1		1		2	1	5			1	3				21
Golden Eagle																				2				3		1						6
American Kestrel							1	1						1	1			1		2			2	3				7				19
Merlin							1							1									1									3
Peregrine Falcon	1																						1									2
Gyrfalcon																																0
Prairie Falcon																																0
Unid. Accipiter				1			2			1														10		2	1	3				20
Unid. Buteo														4				9					2	75		17	18	11		4		140
Unid. Eagle																											2					2
Unid. Falcon																										2						2
Unid. Raptor														4				1		1			1	35			44	3				89
Total Raptors	14	1	0	3	0	0	28	4	4	5	8	7	3	167	42	24	31	532	52	268	0	43	246	790	53	1638	836	688	69	62	14	5632
Hours Counted	8	1	8	8	2.5	1.5	7	5.75	7.5	7	7.5	8	8.5	8	9	8	7.5	8	9	6	3	6	8.5	9	4	9	9	9	7.75	7.25	5.75	214
Wind Direction	NE		NE	VAR	VAR	E	SW	SSW	VAR	SW	SW	VAR	NE	VAR	VAR	VAR	SW	NE	E	S	SW	S	VAR	VAR	VAR	NW	NE	S	W	VAR	VAR	

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH COUNTS - APRIL 2003

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	Totals
Black Vulture																															0
Turkey Vulture		143	3			158			29	378	286	122	409	30	80	48		14	69	82	40	4		11	25	11	42		17	11	2012
Osprey		1				2				5	8	3	5	3	2	1		4	2	3				3		2	4	2	2		52
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite																															0
Mississippi Kite																															0
Bald Eagle		2				1				1		1	1		1					2				1							10
Northern Harrier											1	5	9	3	7	2		4		3				1	1	1	3	6		1	47
Sharp-shinned Hawk	4	6	2			5			2	16	94	32	161	152	90	40	1	235	257	511	65	1	4	16	48	28	42	26	16	11	1865
Cooper's Hawk		2				3			2	15	17	1	12	2		5		7	5	12	1		1	5	2		5	1			98
Northern Goshawk						1																									1
Red-shouldered Hawk		1				4			1	1	1	1	12		1			1	1	3				2							29
Broad-winged Hawk																		180	285	1297	61		2	159	161	3	214	10	386	64	2822
Swainson's Hawk																															0
Red-tailed Hawk	1	23				26			8	33	50	30	227	25	6	12	6	2	16	102	1		5	15	13	20	22	6	10	2	661
Ferruginous Hawk																															0
Rough-legged Hawk		1								2			11												1	1	2				18
Golden Eagle																	2														2
American Kestrel										1	3	5		5	6	2		9	18	25	1				2	2					79
Merlin										1			1		3			1	1							1					8
Peregrine Falcon																			1		1										2
Gyrfalcon																															0
Prairie Falcon																															0
Unid. Accipiter						1					3		3							1	1	1			1	1	1				13
Unid. Buteo										1			1					1	8	2					3		3			1	20
Unid. Eagle													1											1							2
Unid. Falcon									1							1											1				3
Unid. Raptor						6							1	2	1			9	3	2									1		25
Total Raptors	**5**	**179**	**5**	**0**	**0**	**207**	**0**	**0**	**43**	**454**	**463**	**200**	**854**	**222**	**197**	**111**	**9**	**467**	**666**	**2045**	**171**	**6**	**12**	**214**	**257**	**70**	**339**	**51**	**432**	**90**	**7769**
Hours Counted	6.75	7.25	5			7	1	4	7	8.5	10	11	10.5	7.5	8	7	5	8	10	11	8	6	6	9	7	8	8.5	8	7.5	6	208.5
Wind Direction	VAR	NE	NE			NNE			VAR	VAR	VAR	N	NE	SW	SW	NE	NE	E	E	VAR	S	W	NW	NW	NE	VAR	VAR	WSW	VAR	E	

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH COUNTS - MAY 2003

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Totals
Black Vulture																																0
Turkey Vulture	7	3	32	17		3	23		28																							113
Osprey	1		1		2	1						1																			6
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite																																0
Mississippi Kite														1																		1
Bald Eagle		1		3					1						1																	6
Northern Harrier	4		3	2	1	1			1		1				3																	16
Sharp-shinned Hawk	24	4	56	30	2	12	2	3	9	5	12		1		6																	166
Cooper's Hawk	2	1	5	5					1																							14
Northern Goshawk								1																								1
Red-shouldered Hawk			1																													1
Broad-winged Hawk	18	1	379	12	1	3	1	1	7		2	1			79																	505
Swainson's Hawk																																0
Red-tailed Hawk	3	6	28	22	2	4	5	3	17	3	3		2	1	7																	106
Ferruginous Hawk																																0
Rough-legged Hawk			1																													1
Golden Eagle																																0
American Kestrel				2					1						1																	4
Merlin																																0
Peregrine Falcon				2			1																									3
Gyrfalcon																																0
Prairie Falcon																																0
Unid. Accipiter																																0
Unid. Buteo			1	2																												3
Unid. Eagle																																0
Unid. Falcon																																0
Unid. Raptor			5	1			2				1																					9
Total Raptors	**59**	**16**	**512**	**98**	**8**	**24**	**34**	**8**	**65**	**8**	**19**	**2**	**3**	**2**	**97**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**955**
Hours Counted	7	8	8	7.25	4	7	8	8	10.3	7	4	5	7	10	5																	105.5
Wind Direction	SW	NE	NE	VAR	VAR	VAR	NE	NE	VAR	NE	VAR	SW	W	W	VAR																	

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH MONTHLY SUMMARIES

(1983 - 2003 DISPLAYED)

Years	February			March			April			May			Year Total		
	# Birds	Hours	#/Hr	# Birds	Hours	#/Hr	# Birds	Hours	#/Hr	# Birds	Hours	#/Hr	# Birds	Hours	#/Hr
1983	49	10.3	4.8	2,301	164.8	14.0	8,991	210.0	42.8	2,369	179.9	13.2	13,710	565.0	24.3
1984	258	10.4	24.8	1,674	151.0	11.1	15,012	232.8	64.5	1,358	170.4	8.0	18,302	564.6	32.4
1985	0	0	0.0	4,059	202.0	20.1	14,818	242.2	61.2	398	164.3	2.4	19,275	608.5	31.7
1986	19	8	2.4	5,361	210.3	25.5	7,894	207.4	38.1	783	150.5	5.2	14,057	576.2	24.4
1987	81	23	3.5	3,943	213.4	18.5	4,719	233.0	20.3	1,765	212.1	8.3	10,508	681.5	15.4
1988	6	2	3.0	5,670	216.9	26.1	6,344	205.4	30.9	2,114	183.9	11.5	14,134	608.2	23.2
1989	0	0	0.0	2,951	179.3	16.5	6,699	241.8	27.7	2,558	78.3	32.7	12,208	499.3	24.5
1990	0	0	0.0	5,065	220.0	23.0	12,801	234.5	54.6	1,377	120.0	11.5	19,243	574.5	33.5
1991	0	0	0.0	4,308	215.8	20.0	9,291	223.2	41.6	1,352	109.5	12.3	14,951	548.5	27.3
1992	0	0	0.0	3,480	193.5	18.0	9,710	236.0	41.1	1,488	112.0	13.3	14,678	541.5	27.1
1993	0	0	0.0	2,014	176.0	11.4	8,836	227.0	38.9	1,257	135.5	9.3	12,107	538.5	22.5
1994	0	0	0.0	5,194	201.8	25.7	10,149	233.4	43.5	634	95.8	6.6	15,977	531.0	30.1
1995	0	0	0.0	4,231	214.6	19.7	5,801	230.8	25.1	776	110.3	7.0	10,808	555.7	19.5
1996	0	0	0.0	3,378	182.0	18.6	8,650	187.1	46.2	1,075	85.4	12.6	13,103	454.5	28.8
1997	0	0	0.0	4,304	181.9	23.7	6,712	221.3	30.3	1,089	105.3	10.3	12,105	508.4	23.8
1998	80	8	10.0	4,432	167.0	26.5	6,847	223.0	30.7	2,128	101.0	21.1	13,487	499.0	27.0
1999	0	0	0.0	4,190	200.0	21.0	6,538	206.0	31.7	267	96.0	2.8	10,995	502.0	21.9
2000	256	5	51.2	4,290	216.0	19.9	6,062	195.0	31.1	1,036	112.0	9.3	11,644	528.0	22.1
2001	49	25	1.9	2,576	181.0	14.2	11,620	243.0	47.8	588	96.0	6.1	14,833	545.0	27.2
2002	23	28	0.8	5,030	223.0	22.6	8,885	213.0	41.7	939	93.0	10.1	14,877	556.3	26.7
2003	4	4	1.0	5,632	214.0	26.3	7,769	209.0	37.2	955	105.5	9.1	14,360	532.0	27.0
TOTAL 1975-2003	**967**	**141.2**	**6.8**	**102,161**	**4,548.6**	**22.5**	**237,068**	**5,200.8**	**45.6**	**37,951**	**2,975.7**	**12.8**	**378,147**	**13,704.0**	**27.6**
AVERAGE 1998-2002				*4,104*	*197.4*	*20.8*	*7,990*	*216.0*	*37.0*	*992*	*99.6*	*10.0*	*13,167*	*526.1*	*25.0*
AVERAGE 1983-2002				*3,923*	*195.5*	*20.1*	*8,819*	*222.3*	*39.7*	*1,268*	*125.6*	*10.1*	*14,050*	*549.3*	*25.6*

NOTES: 1) Totals include 940 birds seen during occasional counts during February from 1976 to 1980.

2) Averages are for 1981-2003 only due to missing data in earlier years.

3) 2001, 2002, 2003 count officially begun in February.

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH ANNUAL SUMMARIES

(1983 - 2003 DISPLAYED)

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	*TOTAL 1975-2003*	*AVG 1998-2002*	*AVG 1983-2002*
Black Vulture										1								1				*2*	*0*	*0*
Turkey Vulture	895	616	948	837	977	2,331	1,406	1,463	1,785	1,990	1,852	3,189	2,151	2,946	3,092	3,277	3,376	2,971	3,402	4,065	5,026	*51,624*	*3,418*	*2,178*
Osprey	20	38	36	33	30	41	36	40	46	64	45	69	47	56	28	42	43	46	71	48	59	*1,055*	*50*	*44*
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite												1						0				*1*	*0*	*0*
Mississippi Kite															1			0			1	*2*	*0*	*0*
Bald Eagle	7	5	10	14	7	16	17	15	17	22	14	40	24	33	17	32	30	25	30	54	65	*518*	*34*	*21*
Northern Harrier	125	127	113	143	217	162	175	194	219	209	126	177	177	172	125	84	91	125	108	135	97	*3,653*	*109*	*150*
Sharp-shinned Hawk	3,931	4,683	4,480	3,549	2,831	3,108	3,576	7,004	3,767	3,418	3,475	4,846	2,136	3,290	3,047	2,816	1,983	2,468	2,551	3,134	2,351	*101,262*	*2,590*	*3,505*
Cooper's Hawk	160	190	152	196	199	229	180	311	220	199	209	263	256	295	221	187	240	177	167	272	219	*5,303*	*209*	*216*
Northern Goshawk	73	67	25	21	31	27	14	24	20	34	28	73	15	37	16	14	6	3	14	9	6	*653*	*9*	*28*
Red-shouldered Hawk	624	838	764	901	876	861	1,102	1,341	761	1,187	1,030	1,419	705	694	796	549	678	498	459	566	455	*21,203*	*550*	*832*
Broad-winged Hawk	4,118	7,844	8,239	3,823	1,628	2,910	2,304	4,428	2,063	2,761	1,963	2,335	1,779	1,550	1,849	3,886	1,833	2,368	5,229	3,668	3,327	*93,270*	*3,397*	*3,329*
Swainson's Hawk			1			1	1				2	2		1	2	3				1		*14*	*1*	*1*
Red-tailed Hawk	3,150	3,105	3,410	2,852	3,265	3,567	2,615	3,482	3,023	3,861	2,684	2,890	2,861	3,584	2,572	2,235	2,216	2,616	2,358	2,033	2,258	*78,474*	*2,292*	*2,919*
Ferruginous Hawk										1						1		0		1		*3*	*0*	*0*
Rough-legged Hawk	59	85	48	45	77	87	45	127	145	128	35	62	87	98	44	32	69	49	71	22	40	*1,936*	*49*	*71*
Golden Eagle	8	6	12	7	6	3	7	10	8	12	6	10	4	13	6	6	10	13	6	8	8	*188*	*9*	*8*
American Kestrel	71	56	150	126	85	148	132	207	180	92	93	122	70	61	84	77	69	95	77	99	102	*2,790*	*83*	*105*
Merlin	2	2	5	5	12	5	4	9	11	12	9	23	14	22	14	15	10	22	6	19	11	*246*	*14*	*11*
Peregrine Falcon			2	1	1	4	2	6	5	6	2	4	1	2	2	4	1	7	3	6	7	*76*	*4*	*3*
Gyrfalcon																		0				*1*	*0*	*0*
Prairie Falcon													1					0				*1*	*0*	*0*
Unid. Raptors	467	640	880	1,504	266	634	592	582	2,681	681	534	452	480	249	189	227	340	160	281	737	328	*15,872*	*349*	*629*
Total Raptors	13,710	18,302	19,275	14,057	10,508	14,134	12,208	19,243	14,951	14,678	12,107	15,977	10,808	13,103	12,105	13,487	10,995	11,644	14,833	14,877	14,360	*378,147*	*13,167*	*14,050*
Hours Counted	565	564.6	608.5	576.2	681.5	608.2	499.3	574.5	548.5	541.5	538.5	530.95	555.7	454.5	508.35	499	502.8	527.4	545	556.28	532	*13704.23*	*526.10*	*549.31*
Birds per Hour	24.3	32.4	31.7	24.4	15.4	23.2	24.5	33.5	27.3	27.1	22.5	30.1	19.4	28.8	23.8	27.0	21.9	22.1	27.2	26.7	27.0	*27.6*	*25.0*	*25.6*

Note 1. This twenty year average is calculated using data from 1983-2002, inclusive.

Note 2. This five year average is calculated using data from 1998-2002, inclusive.

Last Updated: Jun, 2003

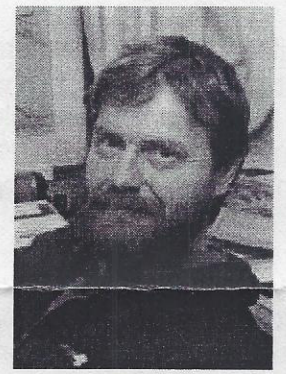
Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch

Newsletter

February 2004 Newsletter #28

BRUCE HUNTER TO SPEAK AT AGM & BANQUET ON APRIL 24

This year's Annual General Meeting and Dinner (aka "the Banquet") will be held on Saturday, April 24th, 2004, at the Grimsby Curling Club.



The guest speaker will be Dr. Bruce Hunter, avian/ wildlife pathologist and Professor in the Department of Pathobiology, Ontario Veterinary College (OVC), at the University of Guelph. Bruce graduated from the Western College of Veterinary Medicine in Saskatoon in 1974 and completed his graduate work at the same institution working on lead poisoning and avian cholera in waterfowl. After three years in private veterinary practice he joined the Government of Ontario Veterinary Diagnostic Lab as an avian pathologist and coordinator of the Ontario Hatchery Supply Flock Policy.

Three years later he joined the University of Guelph where he has been ever since. He teaches the avian/wildlife medicine and pathology portion of the undergraduate Doctor of Veterinary Medicine program, and his research interests involve studying diseases of poultry, mink and wild birds. His present research projects include an investigation of calicivirus enteritis in mink, issues associated with the transport of commercial poultry and West Nile Virus in owls. He founded the OVC Wild Bird Clinic in 1985 and has been involved in environmental education for over 20 years.

Bruce and his wife Daina live on a farm north of Fergus, Ontario where Appaloosa horses and Charollais sheep occupy most of their spare time.

At this year's banquet Bruce's talk will focus on the research, findings and implications for wildlife of the occurrence of West Nile virus in this area in 2002 and 2003. Tickets are priced at $25 for members and their spouses/partners, and $40 for non-members (includes annual membership to the NPH). Call John Stevens or Mike Street to make arrangements for tickets.

Socializing and the bucket raffle begin at 5:00pm. The pre-supper wine and cheese starts at 5:15, and as per tradition, members of the NPH will select the wines for the evening in advance. Dinner will start around 6:15. The Grimsby Curling Club is located at 277 Kerman Avenue (take QEW to Casablanca Blvd, left on South Service Road, right on Kerman Ave).

Donations are still needed for the bucket raffle – please contact Keith Dieroff at (905) 545-5859. Mark your calendars. Hope to see you there! ❖

WANT TO BE A COUNTER?

The NPH is always in need of more people to count hawks. Anyone who would like to learn to be a counter should get in touch with Mike Street by e-mail (mikestreet@hwcn.org) or by telephone at (905) 648-3737. We plan to have training workshops on two weekends this season, from 10:00am to 3:00pm on Saturday and Sunday, March 20th and 21st, and again on Saturday and Sunday, April 17th and 18th. Everyone is welcome. ❖

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THIRTY YEARS AT BEAMER – FIFTEEN OF NPH!!!

President's Column by Mike Street

As we quickly approach the thirtieth season of organized Hawkwatching at Beamer Memorial Conservation Area, and fifteenth year of the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch, it is time to look into the crystal ball to see what the season may bring. Our Red-tail numbers have been down for the last few years, leading me to wonder if this was due to winters being warm enough for Red-tails to find food and stay closer to their summer homes. Very large numbers of Red-tails were seen at some hawkwatches last fall. If I've been right, we should see a surge at Beamer this year. On at least one and possibly two separate days last spring watchers at the point reported counts of over 30 Osprey that did not fly high enough to be seen from the parking lot. This is something we want to monitor closely in 2004. There was also a huge flight of Golden Eagles through Pennsylvania last fall - Hawk Mountain tallied over 30 in a single day in late November - and many were seen at Hawk Cliff, Holiday Beach and Erie Metropark. For a while I've said that the increasing numbers of Golden Eagles we've been seeing suggested the existence of at least two breeding areas, one in far north-eastern Quebec and Labrador and a second in far northern Ontario on the west side of James Bay. Now I'm wondering if there could be three, those two and another on the east side of James Bay in north-western Quebec. So many birds, so little time, but eventually the data we gather will help put the picture together!

We are heading into the second year of recording our data on-line in the HAWKCOUNT database. See elsewhere in this newsletter for access to that information. Those of you without a computer should not worry – the newsletters will still arrive with the primary numbers and information. As of this writing the 2004 counter schedule is filling up fast, and the help of everyone is much appreciated. We always need more counters, so please contact me if you can commit to a day or two of counting. On-the-job training is provided, so don't let inexperience stop you.

A lot has been accomplished at Beamer CA in thirty years. Dave Copeland and then Mary Ellen Hebb organized counters and details from 1975 through 1989. The Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch was formed in 1990 to keep things going and inform the public, with Bruce Duncan as our first President. Today we have even more counters available than in the past, we have the tower and now a new information sign, and last year took the first steps toward having all our data available electronically for research. Our relationship with the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority is great, and more people than ever before know about the annual spring migration. I am fortunate to be President of NPH as we reach the thirty and fifteen-year marks, but after ten years in the post this will be my last President's Column. I will still be around helping out as needed, but it is time for someone else to take the reins and drive the wagon. My sincere thanks to everyone who has helped the hawkwatch during my term as President, especially to those who have served on the Executive. There are members who could help on the Executive but have not come forward to date. Please do so, and help the NPH into the second thirty years of successful hawkwatching at Beamer CA. ❖

ANNUAL OPEN HOUSE – GOOD FRIDAY, APRIL 9, 2004

The NPH will once again hold it's annual Open House on Good Friday, April 9th, 2004. This year's activities will include displays, nature groups, 'hawk talks' by Bruce Duncan and the children's program presented by Carla Carlson of Niagara Nature Tours. If possible, a rehabilitated raptor will be released during the day.

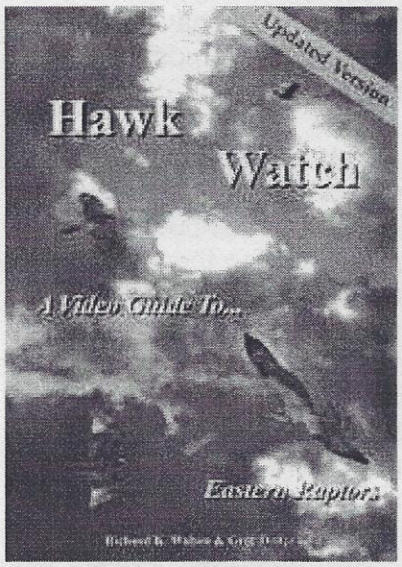
Visitors will be able to see the new NPH supplied hawkwatch panel installed in its permanent location. Designed by our own Dave Copeland, the panel illustrates the routes raptors take traveling from South and Central America and the southern United States past Grimsby on their way to their breeding grounds elsewhere in Ontario. Insets show how weather affects the birds along the escarpment. Silhouettes of the three main raptor families seen at Beamer are also prominent.

Everyone is welcome. Invite your family and friends...it should be a good day for them, and the birds too! ❖

REVIEWS

By Mike Street

Hawk Watch - A Video Guide To Eastern Raptors, DVD Version, Brownbag Productions, Hillsborough, NC. Program running time, 36 minutes, plus extra features. $24.95US. Note: David Wood of Wild Birds Unlimited, 3350 Fairview Street, Burlington is in the process of ordering copies of the DVD edition. Call WBU at 905-634-7700 to check price and availability.



The original VHS video-tape version of *Hawk Watch - A Video Guide* allowed hawkwatchers to view - from their arm chairs - the raptor species normally seen in the eastern half of this continent. Each species was shown flying, more or less as they would be seen at a hawkwatch, with key features noted. A particular advantage offered by the tape was, of course, the ability to learn different attributes of each species by repeating individual sequences or through multiple viewings of the whole tape.

Hawk Watch - DVD is a revised and updated digital edition. New footage has been added for many of the species, and the digital presentation results in a much higher resolution than the original. The menu-driven format allows one to watch the whole presentation or only a group of hawks the viewer wishes to study, without having to fast forward or rewind. There is also a new 'Slide Show' quiz.

What I like about looking at hawks on my TV set is that it can be done before the migration begins or a first visit of the season to Beamer CA, and also during the off-season just to reminisce. Each sequence briefly shows the species perched, then soaring, gliding and flying. I found the flight portions to be very useful as reminders of the flapping pattern of certain birds, especially Red-shouldered Hawks and, when we get another, Black Vulture.

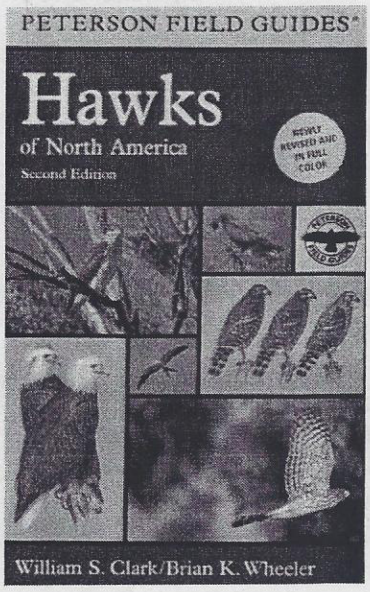
For the most part the flight pictures in *Hawk Watch - DVD* are sharp and clear, allowing the viewer to get a good handle on shape and movement. Most images are large enough to produce a view equivalent to what we would see through our binoculars of a bird at a distance but not too far out. The stop action sequences are quite useful for looking at key identification points. It is also a lot easier to repeat sequences with a DVD than with a video tape.

As good and helpful as *Hawk Watch - DVD* is, there are a few things that could be improved for the next edition. There is no footage of adult Golden Eagle, and this should be fixed. A few of the flight images, and one or two of the stop action shots are a bit blurred and/or distant and could be improved. On the whole, the audio script is very good, but I was surprised that neither the rusty colour of the American Kestrel nor the protruding head of the Cooper's Hawk were included in the respective descriptions of identification points. I would suggest (strongly) that the electronic 'jumps' be made to each species and not just to families. At present you can only get a quick repeat of the first member of a family shown. For later species in a family you have to wait while the previous ones are shown.

The most noticeable production flaw is that the text in the Author's Notes and Resource sections is so small and blurred that it is virtually unreadable, even on a large TV set. The next edition should use a font with thinner letters and a larger size. One thing I did not care for is the presence in the quiz of species not covered in the main program. Inserting a ringer into a quiz is fine if you are in the room with the people being quizzed and can joke about and/or explain it. It is not smart in a format where the viewer has no chance to ask questions, and could easily upset beginners.

All in all, I recommend *Hawk Watch - DVD* not only for people getting started in hawkwatching but even for people with years of raptor viewing under their belts. Including a manufacturer's coupon that would allow buyers to get future editions at a lower price would not be a bad idea. ❖

A Field Guide to Hawks of North America, Second Edition, William S. Clark; Brian K. Wheeler;



Peterson Field Guides; 2000; Houghton-Mifflin Company, Boston and New York, ISBN: 0395670675; Vinyl-bound; 328 pages; $22.00US/$34.95Cdn or less. Available at book retailers and nature stores that stock birding guides.

Bill Clark is a photographer, author, and lecturer who travels worldwide researching raptors and leading birding tours with his company, Raptours. Brian Wheeler is a noted wildlife artist, writer, and photographer specializing in hawks. Together they have produced the second edition of *A Field Guide to Hawks of North America*, which covers all 39 species of North American hawks and other diurnal raptors, including eagles, falcons, and vultures. The 40 colour plates with multiple illustrations, and additional colour photographs, show each species in various colour morphs and plumages, which are also described in detail.

This book, published in November 2001 when the world was focused on other sad things, has not received much publicity to date. This is unfortunate. On its own, the sheer amount of work that went into its production makes the guide worthy of attention. Add to that the quality of the both the illustrations and the text, and the authors and publisher should all have received medals.

Normally a book reviewer reserves judgement until the end of the review. In this case I can't wait. In a nutshell, although I read and used the first edition of this guide, I did not find it useful enough to carry with me at the hawkwatch. The second edition will be either in my bag or close by in the car!

Why the high praise? Because instead of just gussying up a few things and adding some bits and pieces to create a new edition, Bill and Brian have actually redone the entire book, and in first rate style! In the first edition several plates, all the range maps and all the supplementary photographs were in black-and-white. Gone!!! In their place are brand new full colour plates and photos. Gone too are the plates with three species jammed into a single page. With one exception, no more than two species are covered on any plate. Each major species has at least one full plate to itself and many have two. The Red-tailed Hawk, the species with the most variation, gets great treatment with four plates.

A Field Guide to Hawks of North America starts out with an excellent introduction which describes the book's format and includes shape silhouettes of the main raptor families, a plate showing the topography of these birds, and a glossary of terms.

Next come the plates, each with an opposing full page of text that describes the different illustrations, with diagnostic marks highlighted in italics. The basic perched bird, adults and immatures, males and females where different, plumage variations, flying shapes, wing attitudes and diagnostic marks - all are beautifully rendered. Key features have the characteristic Peterson arrows to make sure we don't miss them as we rush to confirm an identification. Although I did not count, I would estimate that there are at least fifty percent more plate illustrations in the second edition. As far as I could see very few paintings, if any, were carried over. All appear to be newly done for this book.

The Species Accounts form the bulk of the guide. Each section has a group heading describing the genus, sub-family or group of birds included. Descriptions of the individual species include common and scientific names, field marks, morphs and plumages, unusual plumages, similar species, flight characteristics (active, soaring, gliding, etc.), molt, behaviour, status and distribution, range map, fine points, subspecies, etymology, and measurements.

Although I have not compared editions line by line, a quick check indicates that the original text has been reviewed word for word and updated where necessary. This is evident from subtle things like the description of a perched Sharp-shin's head shape, to mention of the huge numbers of Broad-wings that can be seen at Erie Metropark near Detroit or Hazel Bazemore Park near Corpus Christi. (Things change quickly in hawkwatching, however, and the next edition may well mention the way Sharpies often cock their tail when gliding and the increase in

numbers of dark morph Broad-wings being seen in the east in both spring and fall migrations.)

The major (to me at least) problem with first edition was the often dark and sometimes blurred quality of the black-and-white photos in the Species Accounts section. That has been remedied this time around - in spades! Beautiful full colour pictures - usually at least of an adult, an immature or juvenile and one them perched - are included for each species. Again, I haven't compared page for page, but it appears that none of the photos in this guide are duplicates of photos in Bill and Brian's *A Photographic Guide to North American Raptors*. This means, of course, that we have a new set of photographic images to enjoy and study. Just in case something really unusual appears, the guide wraps up with species accounts of European, Mexican and Asian raptors that have accidentally turned up in Canada or the USA, birds such as the Eurasian Hobby, White-tailed Eagle and Crane Hawk.

Every serious hawkwatcher should have a copy of the second edition of *A Field Guide to Hawks of North America*. It is a book to be studied at home or when things are quiet at the hawkwatch, and consulted when there's a question about an unusual looking bird that just whizzed by. I also like the vinyl binding. It seems much sturdier than the normal plastic-coated paper cover, but time will tell. If Santa Claus had not put a copy in my stocking I'd have to go out and buy one. In fact, I'll likely wind up with two copies to make sure the book is never far away. ❖

GETTING BEAMER RESULTS VIA THE INTERNET

In his column in the August 2003 newsletter President Mike Street advised members how day-to-day results of our hawkwatch at Beamer CA were being made available over the Internet. Almost as soon as he receives counters' sheets in the mail, NPH Statistician Bill Brown enters the data into HAWKCOUNT, the on-line database provided by the Hawk Migration Association of North America (HMANA). If the report is entered within three days of being recorded in Grimsby, an e-mail with that day's numbers and other information is automatically generated and sent out to over 1600 people via the BIRDHAWK and ONTBIRDS listservs.

Anticipating that some hawkwatchers would not want to get all the non-raptor e-mails posted to ONTBIRDS, or reports from the many other hawkwatches posting to BIRDHAWK, HMANA has arranged for each site to have its own listserv, i.e. people signed on will get only that site's posts. This feature should be available by March 1, 2004. If you are a paid up NPH member and would like to get all Beamer postings for this year please e-mail Bill Brown at <kestrel@rogers.com>. Please note that if you are also subscribed to ONTBIRDS and/or BIRDHAWK you will get multiple copies of posts less than four days old.

Want to see 2004 year-to-date or previous years' numbers other than in an e-mail? Beamer counts for 2002 and 2003 are available online to everyone at the HAWKCOUNT site (www.hawkcount.org). We do not make the current season's numbers available to the general public until they have been audited, any inaccuracies corrected to the best of our ability, and members have received the Summer newsletter with the full set of season counts. However, paid up NPH members who would like to access 2004 data anytime after March 1 can do so via HAWKCOUNT. Contact Bill Brown at <kestrel@rogers.com> and he will supply you with a password and instructions. ❖

THE DOUG TARRY YOUNG ORNITHOLOGISTS' WORKSHOP

The Doug Tarry Young Ornithologists' Workshop, a program of BSC's Long Point Bird Observatory, encourages young people who have a keen interest in birds to develop their skills in ornithology. Each August, a one-week workshop is offered to six lucky teenagers (13-17 years of age) from across Canada. The Doug Tarry Bird Study Award covers all fees incurred by the participants (excluding travel costs).

Participants visit many birding 'hotspots' the Long Point region has to offer and professional field biologists share their expertise with students. In the last few years, no less than three young counters from the NPH have attended. If you are interested in the workshop, or know of someone who might be, applications are available from members of the Hawkwatch Executive or online at www.bsc-eoc.org.

2003 SOUTHERN ONTARIO BALD EAGLES DO WELL IN 2003

In their 22 December 2003 on-line newsletter Bird Studies Canada advised: "The 2003 monitoring of Bald Eagles in Southern Ontario has come to an end, and what a year it has been for the eagles!"

"The number of active nests and total number of eaglets has been increasing steadily over the years, and 2003 was no different. With a record 44 young produced this year and a record number of triplets reported, Bald Eagles are showing positive signs of recovery in southern Ontario. A total of 28 nests were active in 2003, and four of these nests were successful in raising triplets." ❖

NPH MEMBER'S STUDY AVAILABLE ONLINE

NPH member Paul Summerskill has been working on a study outlining the correlation between Thermal Updraft Velocity BLIPMAP forecasts and data from various hawkwatches. The paper can be accessed at his website, http://www.ideasbypaul.ca ❖

PLEASE BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR COLOR-MARKED RED-TAILED HAWKS IN THE EASTERN U.S. AND CANADA.

This is the final year the Wildlife Information Centre will be color-marking Red-tailed Hawks. Reports of sightings are greatly appreciated. The hawks will retain the color marking through winter and into the breeding season.

The Red-tails are marked with Green or Red (Pink) dye on the first 4 secondaries forming a square patch of color along the trailing edge of each wing. The color is visible both above and below. If you see one of these birds, please record the following:

- Name, Address, Phone Number, and e-mail address of the observer
- Date and Time (EST)
- Location (City, Province, exact locality of the sighting)
- Age of hawk (adult vs. immature)
- Dye Color
- Behavior of hawk when observed (soaring, hunting, resting, etc.)

Send the information to:

Dan Kunkle
Wildlife Information Center
P.O. Box 198
Slatington, PA 18080
wildlife@fast.net

Through the first 3 years of the study, there have been about 45 returns, mostly during fall migration, but with a number of winter, spring migration, and breeding territory records. Returns have been received from New Brunswick to Tennessee and from the Atlantic Coast through the Appalachians. None have been seen in Ontario yet, but you never know.

Winter and spring returns are needed to round out the study. This is the last year birds will be marked, so after all results are in next spring, work will begin on a manuscript to publish the results. Stay tuned to this newsletter! ❖

2003/2004 Hawkwatch Executive

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Special Projects: Art Slaughter, 730 Fieldstone Road, Mississauga, ON L5C 3M5 – (905) 803-8933 art.slaughter@rbc.com

(The Hawkwatch Executive is currently looking for new volunteers. If you're interested, please phone or e-mail Mike Street)

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH MIGRATION CALENDAR FOR BEAMER MEMORIAL CONSERVATION AREA

NOTES:

1. Species initials and Right (>) or Left (<) arrow:
   This combination indicates the start (>) or end (<) of the normal (at Beamer) migration period for that species. The same in bold type indicates the start or end of a noticeable peak period for that species. The box in which this combination is located indicates the day and month on which the period is likely to start or end.
2. A number, followed by species initial, followed by a slash (/) and a two-digit number:
   In this combination, the largest number of that species ever seen in one day is given first; the two-digit number following the / indicates the year in which this occurred. The box in which this combination is located indicates the day and month on which the event occurred. Example: 655 RS/94 in the March 23rd box indicates that the highest number of Red-shouldered Hawks recorded in one day was 655, seen on March 23rd, 1994.

TV – Turkey Vulture
BV – Black Vulture
OS – Osprey
SK – American Swallow-tailed Kite
MK – Mississippi Kite
BE – Bald Eagle
GE – Golden Eagle
NH – Northern Harrier
SS – Sharp-shinned Hawk
CH – Cooper's Hawk
NG – Northern Goshawk
RS – Red-shouldered Hawk
RT – Red-tailed Hawk
SW – Swainson's Hawk
RL – Rough-legged Hawk
FH – Ferruginous Hawk
AK – American Kestrel
ME – Merlin
PF – Peregrine Falcon
PR – Prairie Falcon
GF – Gyrfalcon
BW – Broad-winged Hawk

The following information, based on 30 years of data has been updated to show significant events up to the year 2003.

Largest number of raptors in one season: 19,724 in 1985.

E>, NH>, SS>, CH>, RT>, RL>, AK>, begin February 20.

MARCH

1 **RT>** NG>	2 GE>	3 RS>	4	5	6	7
8 TV>	9	10	11 **RL>**	12 **AK>**	13 **CH>** **RS>**	14 44 AK/90
15	16 744 RT/96	17	18 **BE>** 7 GE/86	19	20 **TV>** ME> PF>	21
22	23 **NH>** 655 RS/94	24 11 NG/84 19 BE/03	25	26 **SS>** 2 PF/91 7 GE/88 1355 TV/88	27	28 2 PF/90
29	30	31 OS> 1 BV/00*				

Largest # of raptors in month: 5,670 in March 1988; largest # of raptors in one day in month: 2,080 on March 26th, 1988.

APRIL

1	2 24 RL/82	3 2 PF/91	4 1 BV/92	5 50 CH/93	6	7
8 **OS><RS** 706 RT/87	9	10 BW>	11	12 16 OS/92	13 1 FH/92	14
15 **BW>** SW> 1 SK/94	16 **<BE** 2 PF/90	17	18 35 NH/96 1556 SS/76	19 1 PR/95**	20 1 GF/77	21 6007 BW/85
22	23 1 FH/98*	24 **<OS** 1 FH/02*	25 **<TV** 6 ME/96 2 PF/94	26	27	28
29 2 SW/98*	30 **<RL**					

Largest # of raptors in month: 15,012 in April 1984; largest # of raptors in one day in month: 7,007 on April 21st, 1985.

MAY

1	2 2 SW/97*	3	4 **<RT**	5 <SW	6 <PF	7
8	9	10 <GE	11 1 MK/97*	12 **<NH** **<AK**	13 **<CH** <BE	14 **<SS** 1 MK/03*
15 **<BW** <RL <ME	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25 <OS	26	27	28
29	30	31 <TV<NH <SS<CH <NG<RS <AK				

BW and RT continue beyond May 31st.

Largest # of Raptors in month: 2,695 in May 1980; largest # of raptors in one day in month: 1,492 on May 4th, 1989.

** Sighting not reviewed/accepted by Ontario Bird Records Committee*

***First accepted Prairie Falcon record in Ontario*

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch

Newsletter

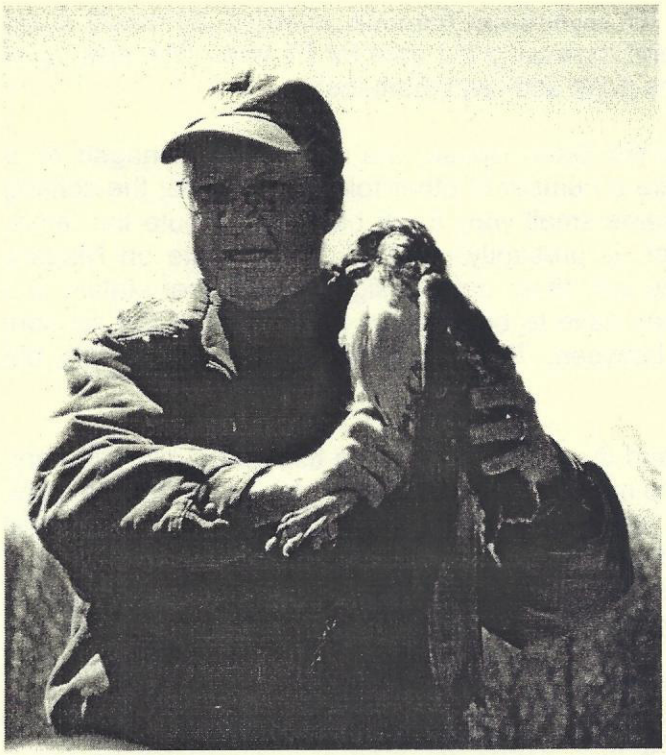
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2004 ROUND-UP

The 2004 Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch season was, once again, a success!

The annual Open House, which took place on Good Friday, April 9th, was well attended, and remarkably both the weather and the birds co-operated. The official count for the day was 981, including 764 Turkey Vultures, and 161 Red-tails. Highlights were 2 Osprey, 3 Northern Harriers, plus singles of Northern Goshawk, Merlin, and Peregrine Falcon.

A live Red-tailed Hawk, rehabilitated by the University of Guelph, was released back into the wild, much to the delight of the spectators. Thanks to everyone who attended and made this event an unqualified success.



Honourary President Bruce Duncan releases the Red-tail

The Annual General Meeting (a.k.a. the Banquet) was moved to a new venue this year, the Grimsby Curling Club.

Around forty attendees enjoyed the wine tasting, a delicious dinner, and the guest speaker, Dr. Bruce Hunter. Dr. Hunter has been on the leading edge of West Nile Virus research in Ontario, and after dinner, he provided the audience with a presentation about the effects of West Nile on various avian species.

Vulnerability to West Nile virus varies widely, even among species of raptors. For example, the mortality rate resulting from the virus is very high in some hawk and owl species, particularly northern species, while others species, like the Peregrine Falcon, suffer few ill effects at all.

During his 'state of the hawkwatch' address, Mike Street confirmed he would not be returning as President for the 2005 season. We are pleased to announce that John Stevens will assume the role of President for the coming season.

The evening was capped off by the bucket raffle. Thanks again to everyone who donated prizes and bought tickets for the raffle – your generosity is truly appreciated.

In other news, the annual migration count was down slightly this year. For more information about the count, be sure to read the 2004 Migration Summary on page 4. ❖

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

By John Stevens

Thanks Mike

After ten years of solid leadership, Mike Street has stepped aside as President of the NPH. At times carrying most of the work load of the Executive Committee on his broad shoulders, Mike has guided us through more than half of our existence with a sincere and dedicated commitment and deserves a respite. You did a great job Mike and on behalf of us all, I'd like to thank you very much. Although he will no longer be the chief, Mike is willing to continue as a member of the Executive Committee and also to serve as the Counter Organizer during his 'retirement'.

I would like to welcome Jim Coey to the Executive Committee. Jim is a long-time observer of the hawk migration at Beamer and has agreed to take on a new position in our activities at the NPH as Publicity Director. The focus of this role is to investigate ways and means to disseminate our efforts to the public. This should also help to attract new members on the theory that if they don't know about us they won't join us.

After a vigorous election campaign, John Stevens emerged as the new President and Art Slaughter has assumed the dual role of Treasurer and Membership Secretary. When Mike Street announced that he was leaving the HMANA Board of Directors, Art expressed an interest in participating there as well. The HMANA elections are usually held in the autumn so watch for Art's name as a candidate. Several of our regular watchers have been on the HMANA Board in the past and it would be good to maintain that tradition so that there is representation from a spring watch as well as a Canadian presence.

Glenn Barnett will continue as the Secretary to the Board and Keith Dieroff as Editor of the Newsletter. Keith also serves as our Webmaster, a role for which yours truly has little idea what it entails. He did it last year and we didn't get into any trouble so I'm pleased that he's doing it again. Check out our website and if you have any suggestions, send them along to Keith, or any of the Committee for that matter.

Bill Brown will be the Statistician again. That's a $10 word for assembling the data, entering the hourly count information into the Hawkcount database and maintaining and assessing the data for Beamer. We now have so many annual summaries that we can't both fit them on one page and read them too!

Several of our activities, such as the Annual Meeting and the Open House, are now being managed by a committee or rather a group of members. However, there are a number of other roles left to fill for the coming year. If we can get a greater number of you involved in some small way, it will help to distribute the tasks. One job in particular, which I will call the Site Coordinator, is presently unfilled. We operate on Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority land and must co-ordinate with them but our sign, the weather station and the wind deflectors on the tower are our responsibility. They have to be installed at the start of the season, removed at the close and may need some maintenance in between. Several members will help with this, but we still need the person to organize it.

We have just completed our 15th year as an organization, and the 30th of monitoring the spring migration and recording data for HMANA. We have an observation tower to maintain a consistent vantage point for the flight, a counter's manual to help collect consistent data, a public open house that typically attracts over a thousand visitors, including many children, and a permanent sign in the Conservation Area describing the migration of raptors. After a slow but steady growth for the first ten years, our membership has leveled off over the last five at around 65, with an additional half dozen complimentary memberships to some wonderful supporters, like generous George Coker, and founder Dave Copeland.

As indicated elsewhere in this issue, we have a group of dedicated counters but we need a continuous influx of fresh blood, so to speak, because there is always some attrition. When the migration monitoring began at Beamer, there was no Internet, Microsoft had not become a pervasive force, even personal computers were in

their infancy. While electronic calculators may have been used to determine totals, most records were kept by hand. A few of our members have been watching hawks at Beamer for 30 years, but most are newer to the experience. I worry about where we will get counters in the future. Already it is becoming difficult to get even the first 15 days of May covered, whereas 20-25 years ago the coverage went to May 31.

One option is to retain a paid observer, as is done at some places in the USA, such as Braddock Bay, Hawk Ridge, and Cape May. This would require a substantial increase in our dues if we had to cover the cost for just the one month. It might also be difficult to identify a suitable candidate. Maybe the trick would be to get some University department involved to both provide a researcher to do the work and maybe provide instruction in identification of species, sex, morphs, etc. to students. I would hate to see the NPH lose the volunteer counters system. The social atmosphere is an important part of the hawkwatch and before the passerine migration gets underway, Beamer is a primary spot for birders, even listers, providing opportunity to meet, exchange notes and arrange future outings with others of a similar bent. By May, however, very few people come if they are not the designated counter so the social aspect is not as important.

This is your newsletter. It is not the organ of the Executive Committee. I strongly urge you to submit articles, news items, letters, cartoons, or whatever you could contribute. The fall raptor migration is underway and it is time to watch some hawks. Before you go out, review how you could contribute to our activities in the coming year and step forward while it is in your thoughts. The NPH needs you. ❖

JOURNAL REPORT

By Mike Street

BIRD TRENDS: An annual report on results of national ornithological surveys in Canada; Number 9, Winter 2003. 68 pages, paper. Judith Kennedy, Editor. David Kirk, Overview Contributor. Bird Trends is published annually for free distribution by the Canadian Wildlife Service. To obtain a copy see details at the end of this article.

Each issue of Bird Trends looks on a particular family or group of birds. The Winter 2003 issue focus is on raptors - hawks, eagles, falcons and owls - and leads off with, "Although the birds of prey are among the largest landbirds, studying raptors is not easy. We still lack basic data on population size and trends for most species. While studies have taken place across Canada, there is no nationally coordinated program to monitor raptor populations, largely because this group of birds falls under provincial jurisdiction in Canada. Efforts to improve raptor monitoring are underway, but until there are enough data from these renewed efforts, much of our information on raptors is generated by work on species at risk. This issue of Bird Trends summarizes some recent studies of this group of birds, but many questions about the status of raptors in Canada remain, for now, unanswered. "

The articles vary in length from just a page to nine for the overview, Some are a little harder to read than others but on the whole were well written or edited for both scientific and non-scientific readers. Most include graphs and/or tables and there are many nice illustrations. As can be seen for the following list, the subject matter varies widely. The value of this publication to hawkwatchers is that it gives us an idea of the kind of work professional ornithologists are doing with the species that interest us the most. My only complaint is that some of the articles are from studies that ended around 2000-2001. Since it will be a few years before Bird Trends does another issue on raptors, it would have been good if those articles had included addenda updating them closer to the 2003 publishing date.

The complete list of articles is:

- OVERVIEW OF RAPTOR STATUS AND CONSERVATION IN CANADA
- RAPTORS AT RISK: Raptors at risk in Canada; Urban Sharp-shinned Hawk productivity in Quebec
- SPECIES ACCOUNTS: Population trends of Red-shouldered Hawks in Ontario; The recovery of Bald Eagles in Southern Ontario, 1980-2001; The Bald Eagle population in New Brunswick; Lessons we can learn from the natural variation in Northern Goshawk population trends; Queen Charlotte Goshawk: status, distribution, and population trends; Ferruginous and Swainson's Hawks in

Saskatchewan: should we worry?; Ferruginous Hawk numbers in Alberta: a real decline?; Trends in a Migratory Population of Golden Eagle in the Canadian Rocky Mountains; Trends in birds of prey in Quebec

- OWL MONITORING: North American nocturnal owl monitoring: a volunteer-based initiative; Population trends of nocturnal owls in Ontario; Estimating Flammulated Owl population trends at the northern range limit; Burrowing Owl population trend surveys in Alberta, 1991-2000; Northern Pygmy-Owl inventory of west-central Alberta
- STATUS OF PEREGRINES: Summary of the 2000 Canadian Peregrine Falcon Survey; The 2001 Peregrine Falcon survey in interior Labrador; Raptor trends in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut: a Peregrine Falcon case study; Are northern raptor populations signaling a new collapse?; An overview of recovery and trends in Bay of Fundy Peregrine Falcons
- VOLUNTEER PROGRAM: Menu of volunteer-based ornithological programs in Canada

Bird Trends is available on-line at: http://www.cws-scf.ec.gc.ca/birds/news/index_e.cfm

Printed copies may be obtained without charge from: Martin Damus, Canadian Wildlife Service, Environment Canada; 351 St. Joseph Blvd.; Gatineau, QC K1A 0H3; Fax: (819) 994-4445 Martin.Damus@ec.gc.ca ❖

SPRING 2004 MIGRATION SUMMARY

By Mike Street

While the overall Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Spring 2004 total was down from the previous three years, it was still above the recent five-year average. Lower numbers of Sharp-shinned Hawks, Turkey Vultures and Broad-winged Hawks were partly offset by big increases for Northern Harriers and Rough-legged Hawks and lesser increases for Bald Eagles, Merlins and Red-tailed Hawks.

Although weather during the 2004 season seemed better than usual, it was actually worse. With four snow/rain-out days, and one day uncovered due to lack of counter power, total counting hours this year dropped to 495.5 from 532 in 2003. Interestingly, the number of birds counted per hour rose to 27.5, the highest since 1996, which was a year of even fewer counting hours and a lower overall total than 2004.

One of the highlights of the season was the Black Vulture which turned up late on the afternoon of April 5, one day after the twelfth anniversary of the first BV counted at Beamer. Turkey Vulture numbers, down 400 from 2003, were still 30% higher than the 5-year and double the 20-year averages. These data continue to correlate to the huge numbers of TVs being seen leaving Ontario in the fall - more than 67,000 were counted in fall 2003 by the Holiday Beach and Southern Michigan Raptor Research sites near Windsor and Detroit.

In the fish-eating category, Osprey numbers were steady while Bald Eagles were 80% higher than the five-year average and triple the 20-year number. One Osprey passed by with a fish in its talons. On March 9 an adult BE with green wing tags was well seen. This was likely the same bird that has spent the last 10-12 winters on the Niagara River near Queenston Heights. Reversing a trend, Northern Harrier numbers were double their five-year average and 50% higher than the 20-year figure. It is too soon to know if this indicates an improvement in the health of their population, but we can hope.

In the Accipiter family the 11 Northern Goshawks were about normal as people hoping for the long-awaited irruption of these northern forest birds were again disappointed. At 252 Coopers Hawks maintained the increases of recent years. For the fifth or sixth year in a row a pair of Coopers Hawks nested in the nearby woods and gave us many (too many?) opportunities for nice views. Unfortunately, the Sharp-shinned Hawk total dropped by 1000 birds (30%) over 2003, continuing their long-term decline at Beamer. This year Sharpies were 10% lower than the 5-year and 30% lower than the 20-year average. One Sharpie was seen carrying a Mourning Dove-sized bird as it migrated.

MARCH

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Totals
Black Vulture	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Turkey Vulture	0	1	1	1	0	0	3	1	1	22	3	0	6	1	1	0	0	11	69	1	3	13	0	75	128	84	0	283	968	0	0	**1,676**
Osprey	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Mississippi Kite	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Bald Eagle	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	1	0	0	3	1	1	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	4	2	0	0	5	3	0	0	**28**
Northern Harrier	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	7	1	2	0	7	19	0	0	**45**
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	1	0	3	0	0	2	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	0	0	0	5	0	1	0	0	1	20	10	16	2	43	121	0	0	**233**
Cooper's Hawk	1	0	0	1	1	1	4	2	1	10	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	5	2	0	0	1	0	15	23	5	0	25	28	0	0	**126**
Northern Goshawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	**2**
Red-shouldered Hawk	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	6	1	0	2	3	0	0	0	18	9	0	0	0	0	9	61	33	1	161	109	0	0	**422**
Broad-winged Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Swainson's Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Red-tailed Hawk	4	7	4	7	1	9	100	40	140	149	5	0	30	0	1	0	0	50	52	2	12	20	0	10	24	38	4	152	368	0	0	**1,229**
Ferruginous Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Rough-legged Hawk	0	0	0	2	0	0	11	1	2	3	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	6	1	0	3	46	0	0	**81**
Golden Eagle	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**4**
American Kestrel	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	5	0	5	5	0	0	**20**
Merlin	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	**3**
Peregrine Falcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
Gyrfalcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Prairie Falcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Unid. Accipiter	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	5	4	0	0	**16**
Unid. Buteo	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	1	0	12	19	0	0	**40**
Unid. Falcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**2**
Unid. Eagle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	**2**
Unid. Raptor	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	23	0	0	**32**
Total Raptors	**7**	**9**	**6**	**15**	**3**	**11**	**125**	**45**	**155**	**199**	**17**	**0**	**48**	**7**	**3**	**0**	**0**	**96**	**137**	**4**	**15**	**37**	**4**	**146**	**263**	**186**	**7**	**703**	**1714**	**0**	**0**	**3,962**
Hours Counted	*7.5*	*6*	*6*	*8*	*3*	*5.8*	*8.6*	*7*	*7*	*8.3*	*6.5*	*4*	*7*	*5*	*4*	*0*	*0*	*7*	*6.5*	*5.3*	*7*	*8.3*	*4.6*	*5.8*	*8.5*	*7*	*7*	*9.8*	*8*	*1*	*2.5*	*181.83*

APRIL

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	Totals
Black Vulture	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
Turkey Vulture	19	0	146	31	269	156	229	196	764	229	117	44	0	67	32	73	46	5	43	24	71	74	11	45	0	18	15	24	37	39	**2,824**
Osprey	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	2	8	4	1	0	0	2	3	4	4	0	1	0	0	2	2	0	1	1	1	1	2	**42**
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Mississippi Kite	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Bald Eagle	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	**16**
Northern Harrier	0	0	4	0	1	2	1	3	3	10	8	4	0	1	11	4	6	14	6	4	16	2	1	5	0	4	1	3	5	14	**133**
Sharp-shinned Hawk	0	0	21	2	7	43	15	62	22	46	73	12	0	4	66	71	53	235	102	120	225	32	29	24	3	29	9	49	58	148	**1,560**
Cooper's Hawk	0	0	7	2	2	6	2	6	9	4	12	1	0	2	8	3	1	7	0	2	5	7	5	2	0	4	0	4	2	6	**109**
Northern Goshawk	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	**8**
Red-shouldered Hawk	0	0	11	0	1	8	1	15	7	0	21	1	0	1	1	2	3	0	0	8	8	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**90**
Broad-winged Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	5	0	17	3	1257	56	58	32	20	0	11	52	709	51	79	**2,352**
Swainson's Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Red-tailed Hawk	7	0	36	5	27	88	24	58	161	62	171	31	0	39	55	69	2	6	2	64	20	53	11	47	0	16	2	29	5	18	**1,108**
Ferruginous Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Rough-legged Hawk	0	0	5	0	3	9	1	9	2	9	6	1	0	2	5	37	0	1	1	5	2	4	1	0	0	1	0	2	2	2	**110**
Golden Eagle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
American Kestrel	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	3	4	3	5	0	1	7	4	5	4	4	2	6	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	4	**59**
Merlin	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	2	1	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	**12**
Peregrine Falcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	**4**
Gyrfalcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Prairie Falcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Unid. Accipiter	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	4	1	9	0	0	0	0	1	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	**25**
Unid. Buteo	0	0	3	0	0	5	3	2	3	9	4	0	0	0	1	17	0	1	0	12	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	9	0	0	**73**
Unid. Falcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Unid. Eagle	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
Unid. Raptor	0	0	0	0	1	4	2	2	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	8	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	**26**
Total Raptors	**26**	**0**	**235**	**40**	**313**	**327**	**280**	**362**	**983**	**392**	**426**	**101**	**0**	**117**	**192**	**304**	**122**	**296**	**162**	**1506**	**409**	**236**	**97**	**145**	**3**	**85**	**80**	**833**	**163**	**319**	**8,554**
Hours Counted	*5.8*	*0*	*8*	*7*	*8*	*7.2*	*7.8*	*8*	*9.3*	*8.8*	*10*	*8*	*0.5*	*8.3*	*8.6*	*8*	*7*	*7.5*	*7*	*8.5*	*4*	*8*	*8*	*8.3*	*7*	*8*	*6*	*7*	*7.5*	*6*	*212.9*

Buteos showed mixed results. 2004 was the best year ever for Rough-legged Hawks at Beamer. Perhaps reflecting a very cold winter, the total of 204 was four times the 5-year and triple the 20-year long-term average. The previous one-day record of 24 Rough-legs (set on April 24, 1982) was broken twice this year, on March 29 (46) and April 16 (37). A good proportion of the Rough-legs were dark-morph birds, adding to the enjoyment of the counters. Red-shouldered Hawks dropped 33% from last year but remained close to the 5-year average. The Broad-wing total was 25% below both averages but could have easily been skewed by cloudless days at the peak of their flight. Red-tails, 10% higher than the 5-year average, were still 10% below the 20-year figure. Whether or not milder winters, allowing Red-tails to stay north of us, are the cause of this remains to be seen. A Western Red-tail on April 15 was nice to see. Golden Eagle totals remained at their averages this season.

Falcon results were also mixed. American Kestrels were up a bit above the 5-year average but still below the 20-year figure. One Kestrel was seen carrying food as it flew by. Merlins did well, 30% above the short term and double the long-term average. More Peregrine Falcons were seen in 2004 than in the past few years but the total was still average. A very high bird seen on March 22 could have been either a Peregrine or a Gyrfalcon. Although seen by several experienced people, it was impossible to make a solid identification due to distance and conditions.

A small physical change at the site this season was the re-positioning of the plastic owl to a much higher point in the tree where it has resided for more than a dozen years. The desired effect, close views of raptors coming in to take a look, was achieved and there were several reports of counters actually hearing the talons of birds striking the owl. Rough-legs, Red-tails, Merlins, Northern Harriers and at least one Sharp-shin made passes at the decoy.

We continue to get reports of birds, particularly Osprey and both species of eagle, being seen from the point but not from the tower or parking lot. It would be a great help to the Hawkwatch if people who regularly watch from the point would write down and submit their sightings on an hour-by-hour basis. If we had this information we could get a much better handle on whether or not significant numbers of any species are being missed. Daily totals only are not sufficient because it is very possible that some birds will not be seen at one of the two locations at any given time. Hour-by-hour data allow for closer comparisons. Data forms are always available at the notice board.

There were a few good sightings in the non-raptor category again this year. A Wild Turkey flew across the north side of the park on April 12 and a Tufted Titmouse visited briefly on April 23. There were two sightings of Common Raven, one on March 21 and the other on April 11, and Sandhill Cranes flew by on April 16, 17, 20 and 30. Several good flights of Common Loons and Tundra Swans were also reported.

Many people from out of town visited the site during the season, and especially during the annual Open House. On May 5 a group of 24 students from Waterdown District High School got to see a bit of the migration and what we do at Beamer CA.

Thanks as always to our counter mainstay, Tom Reavley, and to everyone else who helped out during 2004. Assigned counters or recorders were: Alina Barnett, Glenn Barnett, Bouwe Bergsma, John Black, Bill Brown, Geoff Carpentier, Barry Cherriere, Linda Cherriere, Jim Coey, Dave Copeland, Bob Curry, Willie D'Anna, Keith Dieroff, Bruce Duncan, Chris Escott, Denys Gardiner, Ann Gray, Brian Gray, Brandon Holden, Eric Holden, Kevin McLaughlin, Gord McNulty, George Meyers, Dave Milsom, George Naylor, John Olmsted, Betsy Potter, Tom Reavley, Keith Sealy, Gerry Shemilt, Art Slaughter, Glenda Slessor, Terrie Smith, John Stevens, Mike Street, Paul Summerskill, Tom Thomas and Phil Waggett. ❖

2004 NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH MONTHLY COUNTS

SPECIES	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	TOTALS
Black Vulture			1		**1**
Turkey Vulture		1,676	2,824	123	**4,623**
Osprey			42	9	**51**
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite					
Mississippi Kite					
Bald Eagle	3	28	16	15	**62**
Northern Harrier	2	45	133	43	**223**
Sharp-shinned Hawk		233	1,560	517	**2,310**
Cooper's Hawk		126	109	17	**252**
Northern Goshawk		2	8	1	**11**
Red-shouldered Hawk		422	90	12	**524**
Broad-winged Hawk			2,352	180	**2,532**
Swainson's Hawk					
Red-tailed Hawk	12	1,229	1,108	164	**2,513**
Fe❖rruginous Hawk					
Rough-legged Hawk		81	110	13	**204**
Golden Eagle		4	1	3	**8**
American Kestrel		20	59	8	**87**
Merlin		3	12	6	**21**
Peregrine Falcon		1	4		**5**
Gyrfalcon					
Prairie Falcon					
Unidentified Accipiter		16	25	2	**43**
Unidentified Buteo		40	73	4	**117**
Unidentified Eagle		2			**2**
Unidentified Falcon		2	1		**3**
Unidentified Raptor	1	32	26	10	**69**
Total Raptors	**18**	**3,962**	**8,554**	**1,127**	**13,661**
Hours Counted	**14**	**182**	**213**	**87**	**495.49**
Raptors/Hour	**1.3**	**21.8**	**40.2**	**13.0**	**27.6**

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FEBRUARY

	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	Totals
Black Vulture	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Turkey Vulture	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Osprey	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Mississippi Kite	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Bald Eagle	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	**3**
Northern Harrier	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	**2**
Sharp-shinned Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Cooper's Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Northern Goshawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Red-shouldered Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Broad-winged Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Swainson's Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Red-tailed Hawk	0	0	1	10	0	0	1	**12**
Ferruginous Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Rough-legged Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Golden Eagle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
American Kestrel	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Merlin	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Peregrine Falcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Gyrfalcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Prairie Falcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Unid. Accipiter	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Unid. Buteo	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Unid. Falcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Unid. Eagle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Unid. Raptor	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	**1**
Total Raptors	**1**	**0**	**1**	**12**	**0**	**0**	**4**	**18**
Hours Counted	*0.17*	*0*	*4*	*4*	*0*	*0*	*6*	*14.17*

MAY

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Totals
Black Vulture	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Turkey Vulture	8	0	2	7	1	8	1	12	0	5	0	35	44	0	**123**
Osprey	1	0	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	**9**
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Mississippi Kite	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Bald Eagle	0	0	5	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	4	2	**15**
Northern Harrier	1	0	12	4	2	3	0	0	0	10	0	3	7	1	**43**
Sharp-shinned Hawk	115	0	51	84	19	120	8	0	0	54	0	35	28	3	**517**
Cooper's Hawk	5	0	0	6	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	**17**
Northern Goshawk	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
Red-shouldered Hawk	1	0	2	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	**12**
Broad-winged Hawk	49	0	54	25	18	4	1	0	0	3	0	12	10	4	**180**
Swainson's Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Red-tailed Hawk	5	0	33	8	5	9	14	0	0	8	1	30	47	4	**164**
Ferruginous Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Rough-legged Hawk	0	0	7	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	1	1	0	**13**
Golden Eagle	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	**3**
American Kestrel	1	0	1	1	0	3	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	**8**
Merlin	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	**6**
Peregrine Falcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Gyrfalcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Prairie Falcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Unid. Accipiter	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**2**
Unid. Buteo	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	**4**
Unid. Falcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Unid. Eagle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Unid. Raptor	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	0	**10**
Total Raptors	**189**	**0**	**173**	**152**	**46**	**157**	**28**	**12**	**0**	**83**	**1**	**121**	**149**	**16**	**1,127**
Hours Counted	*6.17*	*0*	*7*	*7.75*	*6*	*9.17*	*7*	*2.5*	*2.17*	*8.33*	*7.5*	*8*	*7*	*8*	*86.58*

	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	'84-'04 TOTALS	'84-'03 AVG	'99-'03 AVG	'75-'04 TOTALS
Black Vulture									1								1				1	**3**	**0.1**	**0.2**	**3**
Turkey Vulture	616	948	837	977	2331	1406	1463	1785	1990	1852	3189	2151	2946	3092	3277	3376	2971	3402	4065	5026	4623	**52,323**	**2,385.0**	**3,768.0**	**56,247**
Osprey	38	36	33	30	41	36	40	46	64	45	69	47	56	28	42	43	46	71	48	59	51	**969**	**45.9**	**53.4**	**1,106**
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite											1											**1**	**0.1**	**0.0**	**1**
Mississippi Kite														1						1		**2**	**0.1**	**0.2**	**2**
Bald Eagle	5	10	14	7	16	17	15	17	22	14	40	24	33	17	32	30	25	30	54	65	62	**549**	**24.4**	**40.8**	**580**
Northern Harrier	127	113	143	217	162	175	194	219	209	126	177	177	172	125	84	91	125	108	135	97	223	**3,199**	**148.8**	**111.2**	**3876**
Sharp-shinned Hawk	4683	4480	3549	2831	3108	3576	7004	3767	3418	3475	4846	2136	3290	3047	2816	1983	2468	2551	3134	2351	2310	**70,823**	**3,425.7**	**2,497.4**	**103,572**
Cooper's Hawk	190	152	196	199	229	180	311	220	199	209	263	256	295	221	187	240	177	167	272	219	252	**4,634**	**219.1**	**215.0**	**5,555**
Northern Goshawk	67	25	21	31	27	14	24	20	34	28	73	15	37	16	14	6	3	14	9	6	11	**495**	**24.2**	**7.6**	**664**
Red-shouldered Hawk	838	764	901	876	861	1102	1341	761	1187	1030	1419	705	694	796	549	678	498	459	566	455	524	**17,004**	**824.0**	**531.2**	**21,727**
Broad-winged Hawk	7844	8239	3823	1628	2910	2304	4428	2063	2761	1963	2335	1779	1550	1849	3886	1833	2368	5229	3668	3327	2532	**68,319**	**3,289.4**	**3,285.0**	**95,802**
Swainson's Hawk		1			1	1				2	2		1	2	3				1			**14**	**0.7**	**0.2**	**14**
Red-tailed Hawk	3105	3410	2852	3265	3567	2615	3482	3023	3861	2684	2890	2861	3584	2572	2235	2216	2616	2358	2033	2258	2513	**60,000**	**2,874.4**	**2,296.2**	**80,987**
Ferruginous Hawk									1						1				1			**3**	**0.2**	**0.2**	**3**
Rough-legged Hawk	85	48	45	77	87	45	127	145	128	35	62	87	98	44	32	69	49	71	22	40	204	**1,600**	**69.8**	**50.2**	**2,140**
Golden Eagle	6	12	7	6	3	7	10	8	12	6	10	4	13	6	6	10	13	6	8	8	8	**169**	**8.1**	**9.0**	**196**
American Kestrel	56	150	126	85	148	132	207	180	92	93	122	70	61	84	77	69	95	77	99	102	87	**2,212**	**106.3**	**88.4**	**2,877**
Merlin	2	5	5	12	5	4	9	11	12	9	23	14	22	14	15	10	22	6	19	11	21	**251**	**11.5**	**13.6**	**267**
Peregrine Falcon		2	1	1	4	2	6	5	6	2	4	1	2	2	4	1	7	3	6	7	5	**71**	**3.3**	**4.8**	**81**
Gyrfalcon																						**0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**1**
Prairie Falcon												1										**1**	**0.1**	**0.0**	**1**
Unid. Raptors	640	880	1504	266	634	592	582	2681	681	534	452	480	249	189	227	340	160	281	737	328	234	**12,671**	**621.9**	**369.2**	**16,106**
Total Raptors	18302	19275	14057	10508	14134	12208	19243	14951	14678	12107	15977	10808	13103	12105	13487	10995	11644	14833	14877	14360	13661	**295,313**	**14,082.6**	**13,341.8**	**377,234**
Hours Counted	564.6	608.5	576.2	681.5	608.2	499.3	574.5	548.5	541.5	538.5	531.0	555.7	454.5	508.4	499.0	502.8	527.4	545.0	556.3	532.0	495.5	**11,448.83**	**547.7**	**532.7**	**14,199.8**
Birds per Hour	32.4	31.7	24.4	15.4	23.2	24.5	33.5	27.3	27.1	22.5	30.1	19.4	28.8	23.8	27.0	21.9	22.1	27.2	26.7	27.0	27.6	**25.8**	**25.7**	**25.0**	**26.6**

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch

Newsletter

February 2005 **Newsletter #30**

PEREGRINE PROGRAM AT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & BANQUET APRIL 30, 2005



This year's Annual General Meeting and dinner (aka "the banquet") will be held on Saturday, April 30, 2005 at the Grimsby Curling Club. The guest speaker will be Audrey Gamble of Hamilton, whose topic will be 'Urban Peregrines - Falcons at the Sheraton Hamilton'. Since 1995, Peregrine Falcons have nested, with some help from their friends in the Hamilton Community Peregrine Project, on a ledge high above King Street in the heart of the city. It is an avian success story, mainly due to the birds themselves, but not all has been smooth. Audrey will tell us about some of the ups and downs as well as about the terrific birds.

Socializing and the bucket raffle begin at 5:00pm. The pre-supper wine and cheese starts at 5:15, and as per tradition, members of the NPH will select the wines for the evening in advance. Dinner will start around 6:15. Donations are still needed for the bucket raffle - please contact Jane Hamilton at (905) 765-2832.

Tickets are priced at $25 for members and their spouses/partners, and $30 for non-members (includes annual membership to the NPH). Please call John Stevens at (905) 792-1093 [weekdays] or (905) 685-6734 [weekends], or Glenn Barnett at (905) 628-2093 to make arrangements for tickets.

The Grimsby Curling Club is located at 277 Kerman Avenue, Grimsby. Please see page five of this newsletter for directions.

Mark your calendars. See you there!

NPH OPEN HOUSE SET FOR GOOD FRIDAY, MARCH 25, 2005

The NPH will once again hold it's annual Open House on Good Friday, March 25, 2005 at Beamer Memorial Conservation Area in Grimsby.

Last year's event was an unequivocal success with great attendance, good weather and a significant flight of hawks, including the first Broad-winged Hawks of the season. While there won't likely be any Broad-wings at this year's Open House, there is a good chance of a strong Turkey Vulture flight, or maybe even a big eagle day.

This year's activities will include displays, nature groups, 'hawk talks' by Bruce Duncan and the children's program presented by Carla Carlson of Niagara Nature Tours. If possible, a rehabilitated raptor will be released during the day.

New exhibitors this year will include the Bruce Trail Association, and Niagara West Tourism Association. The Bruce Trail Association will be leading a morning hike from the Grimsby Lion's Club pool on Elm Street to Beamer and back again to promote the hawkwatch. For more information about the hike, check the NPH website at www.hwcn.org/link/niaghawk.

Everyone is welcome. Invite your family and friends...it should be a good day for them, and the birds too!

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by John Stevens

With the days lengthening and the warmer sun eating away at the snow cover, it's time for the hawks to start their annual flight north. It's also time for us to head out to Beamer to catch the show. As I write this, daily counters are being scheduled, arrangements are being made with our hosts, the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, for snow ploughing, tables, etc. and Bill Smith of Hamilton is gearing up to enter our collected data into the Hawkcount database.

Meanwhile, I recommend that you check out our web site on the Internet to see the great job that Keith Dieroff has done in redesigning it for us. The address, which we need to disseminate more, is www.hwcn.org/link/niaghawk. Send a link to your friends, near and far, to spread the word about the fascinating phenomenon of the parade of raptors that we experience each year.

In the last newsletter, I noted that the organization needed some volunteers to help with carrying out the various tasks that have to be done to continue our current programs. It is discouraging to report that not only did we get no positive responses, but one member of our executive committee chose to resign. This has meant that the people currently contributing are collectively carrying more responsibilities. Surely there is somebody out there willing to lend us a hand.

After collecting data on the migration for 30 years, we are hoping to have the information from our site included in the first scientific study being conducted for the Raptor Population Index (RPI) program that is described elsewhere in this issue. This will make use of the information entered into the Hawkcount database. A minimum of ten consecutive years of data are needed for this first study and through the efforts of Mike Street, the Hamilton Naturalists' Club obtained a grant for us to help with the historical data entry. The funding is being used to provide an honorarium to Bill Smith to get the 1995 to 2000 data entered. A team of members will then be auditing the information for completeness and accuracy so that it may be added to the Hawkcount database in time for use in the study.

All of your executive committee strongly support a suggestion by our founding father, Bruce Duncan, that the RPI program represents a significant step to utilize the wealth of information that has been collected over the years, deserving of our commitment and support. To that end, on your behalf we made a donation of $1,000 to HMANA to facilitate its implementation.

HERE THEY COME! Time to go watch some hawks. See you at Beamer.

HMANA NEWS

by Art Slaughter

Raptor Population Index

The Hawk Migration Association of North America (HMANA) has teamed up with Hawk Mountain Sanctuary and HawkWatch International to develop a raptor population index (RPI) that is intended to measure population trends using the spring and fall census data from count sites in Canada, the US, and Central America.

Specific objectives of the RPI are to:

1. Produce scientifically defensible indices of annual abundance and trends for each species of migratory raptor from as many count sites as possible;
2. Make those results available widely (i.e. to participating count sites, the scientific community, conservation agencies and the public).

The RPI implementation plan has been developed and approved by the partners. In June 2004, the RPI project received funding from the US National Fish & Wildlife Foundation. The Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch also donated $1,000 to the project.

For hawk watchers everywhere the launch of the RPI project is very exciting - it is the most significant attempt to take a large volume of raptor census data and use it for scientific purposes. Many of us have been tracking raptor migration for decades. RPI represents the first time that the data will be used to understand what is happening on a broad scale. Sophisticated statistical analyses have recently been developed to allow precise tracking of population trends.

The RPI project's Management Committee is: Keith Bildstein, Steve Hoffman, David Hussell, Kirk Moulton, Jeff Smith and Will Weber.

If you want to join HMANA or obtain more information on RPI, then please go to - www.hmana.org.

Wind Power - 'Green' Power With An Edge

There is growing concern amongst hawkwatchers worldwide that the erection of massive wind turbines in the direct path of migrating raptors will kill raptors and other birds. Such wind farms can also cause significant disruption to migration patterns and nesting sites. One such group presented their concerns to HMANA's Board on Nov. 20th, 2004. Len DeFrancisco and Gil Randell from the Ripley Hawk Watch gave an in-depth presentation about the proposed installation of 34 wind turbines by Chautauqua Windpower. Ripley is located on the south shore of Lake Erie between Erie and Buffalo. Each spring they count approximately 20,000 raptors.

The newer GE wind turbines being installed are close to 450 feet tall - that's 300 feet taller than the Statue of Liberty! Their massive rotor blades rotate at 18 rpm (over 200 mph) and have a sweep area equal to that of a football field. Three of the proposed Chautauqua wind turbines are to be located quite close to an existing bald eagle nesting area.

If the Chautauqua project is implemented, it will be the first project in the southern Great Lakes flyway and the first project in a major eastern US migration site. Implementation would create a precedent that could put other flyways at risk. Just two years ago, applications were being prepared for a wind power project located on the Niagara escarpment near Grimsby. There is a growing concern that as companies aggressively pursue new wind power farms, the environmental impact guidelines governing site selection are not as definitive and enforceable as they should be.

Conservation and other like-minded organizations find themselves in a strange position - fighting against the placement of an 'environmentally friendly' power source. Since the broad public perception is that wind power is good, it means that opposing organizations have quite an expensive challenge on their hands. As Ripley Hawkwatch has said - 'good idea, bad location'.

HISTORICAL BEAMER RESULTS GOING ON-LINE

For the last two years, through the efforts of Bill Brown and Mike Street, all hourly data gathered by NPH counters has been entered into the HAWKCOUNT, the on-line database developed by the Hawk Migration Association of North America (HMANA). Data entry has been done within days of the actual counting so members can easily see what's happening during the season.

As part of the development of the new Raptor Population Index (RPI), HMANA asked hawkwatches to provide at least 10 years of hourly data for the project's first analysis work (see separate article on RPI elsewhere in this newsletter). The NPH Executive wanted Beamer data to be part of this initial study. After some bumps in the road we obtained a small grant from the McCallum-McBride Foundation in Hamilton and data entry work started. This spring, after auditing is complete, all data from 1995-2004 inclusive will be available through Hawkcount.

Since the grant was awarded we have also learned that Beamer data from 1975 through 1990 is available in computer files!

In 1990, David Hussell of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources wrote a paper comparing raptor data from

Beamer and Holiday Beach (near Windsor, Ontario) during the period 1975-1990. David, who currently has a major role in the RPI project, has been able to locate the computer files used for his paper. As this newsletter goes to press, work is underway to convert David's files and place them in the HAWKCOUNT database. When the conversion is complete the data will all be checked and then made available. At that point it will be necessary to put data from 1991 through 1994 into HAWKWCOUNT so all 30 years of Beamer data will be on-line.

As the Spring 2005 counters' reports arrive results will be recorded in HAWKCOUNT by our new Data Compiler, Bill Smith. Bill is a well-known birder who has been active in Hamilton and Ontario since the 1950s. If a report is received and entered within three days of being recorded in Grimsby, an e-mail with that day's numbers and other information is automatically generated and sent out to over 1600 people via the BIRDHAWK and ONTBIRDS listservs.

Want to see 2005 year-to-date or previous years' numbers other than in an e-mail? Beamer counts for 2003 and 2004 are available online to everyone at the HAWKCOUNT site (www.hawkcount.org). We do not make the current season's numbers available to the general public until they have been audited, any inaccuracies corrected to the best of our ability, and members have received the Summer newsletter with the full set of season counts. However, paid up NPH members who would like to access 2005 data anytime after March 1 can do so via HAWKCOUNT. Contact Mike Street, at <mikestreet@hwcn.org>, and he will supply you with a password and instructions.

Anticipating that some hawkwatchers would not want to get all the non-raptor e-mails posted to ONTBIRDS, or reports from the many other hawkwatches posting to BIRDHAWK, HMANA has arranged for each site to have its own listserv, i.e. people signed on will get only that site's posts. If you are a paid up NPH member and would like to receive all 2005 Beamer postings, please e-mail Mike Street <mikestreet@hwcn.org>. Please note that if you are also subscribed to ONTBIRDS and/or BIRDHAWK you will get multiple copies of posts less than four days old.

DIRECTIONS TO ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

From Hamilton, Burlington, Oakville, Toronto:

- Take the QEW Niagara to Grimsby and exit at Casablanca Blvd
- From the offramp, turn south on Casablanca and then make an immediate left onto the South Service Road
- Proceed east on the South Service Road to Kerman Avenue, turn right (south) onto Kerman and the Curling Club is on the right hand side.

From St. Catharines, Niagara Falls:

- Take the QEW Niagara to Grimsby and exit at the Maple Ave/Ontario Street/Christie Street exit
- Continue on the offramp to Christie Street and then turn left and head south to the South Service Road
- Turn right on the South Service Road and proceed west to Kerman Avenue
- Turn left (south) onto Kerman Avenue and the Curling Club is on the right hand side.

2005 Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Executive

Honourary President: Bruce Duncan
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Secretary: Glen Barnett, 87 Highland Park Drive, Dundas, ON L9H 6G5 (905) 628-2093 - glenn.barnett@sympatico.ca
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Counter Co-ordinator: Mike Street, 73 Hatton Drive, Ancaster, ON L9G 2H5 (905) 648-3737 - mikestreet@hwcn.org

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH MIGRATION CALENDAR FOR BEAMER MEMORIAL CONSERVATION AREA

NOTES:

1. Species initals and Right (>) or Left (<) arrow:
   This combination indicates the start (>) or end (<) of the normal (at Beamer) migration period for that species. The same in bold type indicates the start or end of a noticeable peak period for that species. The box in which this combination is located indicates the day and month on which the period is likely to start or end.
2. A number, followed by species initial, followed by a slash (/)and a two digit number:
   In this combination, the largest number of that species ever seen in one day is given first; the two-digit number following the / indicates the year in which this occurred. The box in which this combination is located indicates the day and month on which the event occurred. Example: 655 RS/94 in the March 23rd box indicates that the highest number of Red-shouldered Hawks recorded in one day was 655, seen on March 23rd, 1994.

TV - Turkey Vulture
BV - Black Vulture
OS - Osprey
SK - American Swallow-tailed Kite
MK - Mississippi Kite
BE - Bald Eagle
GE - Golden Eagle
NH - Northern Harrier
SS - Sharp-shinned Hawk
CH - Cooper's Hawk
NG - Northern Goshawk
RS - Red-shouldered Hawk
RT - Red-tailed Hawk
SW - Swainson's Hawk
RL - Rough-legged Hawk
FH - Ferruginous Hawk
AK - American Kestrel
ME - Merlin
PF - Peregrine Falcon
PR - Prairie Falcon
GF - Gyrfalcon
BW - Broad-winged Hawk

The following information, based on 30+ years of data has been updated to show significant events up to the year 2004.

Largest number of raptors in one season: 19,724 in 1985.

BE>, NH>, SS>, CH>, RT>, RL>, AK> begin February 20th.

MARCH						
1 **RT>** NG>	2 GE>	3 RS>	4	5	6	7
8 TV>	9	10	11 **RL>**	12 **AK>**	13 **CH>** **RS>**	14 44AK/90
15	16 744 RT/96	17	18 **BE>** 7 GE/86	19	20 **TV>** ME> PF>	21
22	23 **NH>** 655 RS/94	24 11 NG/84 19 BE/03	25	26 **SS>** 2 PF/91 7 GE/88 1355 TV/88	27	28 2 PF/90
29 46 RL/04	30	31 OS> 1 BV/00*				

Largest # of raptors in month: 5,670 in March 1988; largest # of raptors in one day in month: 2,080 on March 26th, 1988

APRIL						
1	2	3 2 PF/91	4 1 BV/92	5 50 CH/93	6	7
8 **OS><RS**	9	10 BW>	11	12 16 OS/92	13 1 FH/92	14
15 **BW>** SW> 1 SK/94	16 **<BE** 2 PF/90	17	18 35 NH/96 1556 SS/76	19 1 PR/95**	20 1 GF/77	21 6007 BW/85
22	23 1 FH/98**	24 **<OS** 1 FH/02*	25 **<TV** 6 ME/96 2 PF/94	26	27	28
29 2 SW/98*	30 **<RL**					

Largest # of raptors in month: 15,012 in April 1984; largest # of raptors in one day in month: 7,007 on April 21st, 1985

MAY						
1	2 2 SW/97*	3	4 <RT	5 <SW	6 <PF	7
8	9	10 <GE	11 1 MK/97*	12 **<NH** **<AK**	13 **<CH** <BE	14 **<SS** 1 MK/03*
15 **<BW** <RL <ME	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25 <OS	26	27	28
29	30	31 <TV<NH <SS<CH <NG<RS <AK	*BW and RT continue beyond May 31st...*			

Largest # of raptors in month: 2,695 in May 1980; largest # of raptors in one day in month: 1,492 on May 4th, 1989

** Sighting not reviewed/accepted by Ontario Bird Records Committee*
*** First accepted Prairie Falcon record in Ontario*

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch

Newsletter

October 2005 **Newsletter #31**

DEREK RATCLIFFE 1929-2005



One of the UK's most outstanding ecologists and nature conservationists passed away on May 23rd, at the age of 75.

Dr. Ratcliffe's research and writings on Peregrine Falcons in the late 1950's helped the world recognize the impact of chlorinated hydrocarbons on the natural environment. Ratcliffe was one of the first to link the decline of raptors with the use of agricultural pesticides.

Aside from being an ecologist, Dr. Ratcliffe was also a well-informed and outspoken civil servant, a great ornithologist, an equally accomplished plant ecologist, and an authority on peat bogs.

As chief scientist for the Nature Conservancy Council in Great Britain during the 1970's and 1980's, his contribution to the selection and conservation of protected areas was immense, and he inspired the nature conservation movement. The amount and diversity of habitats protected to this day are a living memorial to his life's work.

Dr. Ratcliffe's legacy to the world of hawk-watching in North America includes a number of captive-breeding programs, which over the past two decades have helped revive Peregrine Falcon populations and provide viewing opportunities for hawkwatchers at migration sites like Beamer.

2005 ROUNDUP

The NPH Open House was held on Good Friday, March 25th, 2005 at Beamer Memorial Conservation Area in Grimsby. Attendance was strong, and for the third year in a row, the weatherman cooperated, providing clear skies for hawkwatching.

Even though it was a cool day for the end of March, with the temperature high reaching only 3 degrees celcius and lots of snow still on the ground, the flight of 206 birds was good. Highlights of the day included one Bald Eagle, one Merlin, and a Peregrine Falcon.

The Annual General Meeting took place at the Grimsby Curling Club on Saturday, April 30th. The guest speaker, Audrey Gamble, delivered an excellent presentation on the history of Hamilton's nesting Peregrine Falcons.

Audrey's presentation included footage from local television station, CH News, as well as a report from CBC News, which aired in April.

Thanks to Jane Hamilton for taking on the bucket raffle this year. To those who donated prizes for the raffle again this year, your generosity is much appreciated.

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by John Stevens

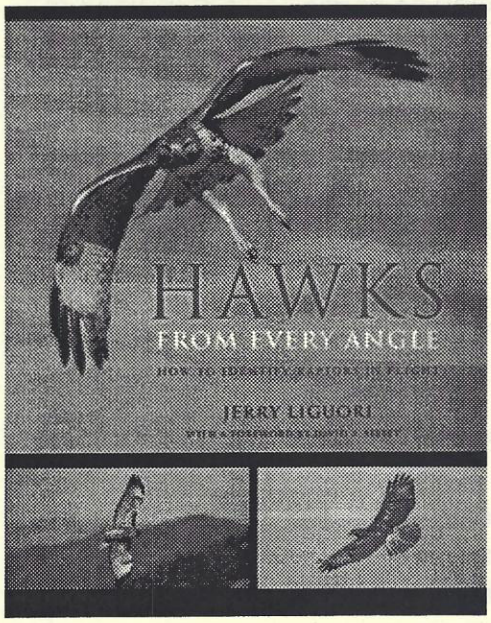
As I enter the second year as president of the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch, I would like to thank everyone for their support in the past year and encourage you to continue acting on behalf of the raptors in the coming year. We had an above average flight in 2005, anchored by a very good April and many Turkey Vultures (TVs). Compared to the early years when we would count 15,000 plus birds but less than a thousand TVs, we now have over 5,000 TVs when we get 15,000 birds. If some year we can catch a day with over 5,000 Broad-winged Hawks, we stand a good chance of cracking 20,000 birds for a season, something that has not yet been accomplished at Beamer. If we're around 19,000 by the middle of May some year, it might be worth counting later in the month to try and get the immature Broad-wings that currently pass undetected.

You may have heard that DNA studies have demonstrated that the Turkey Vulture is not a vulture but a member of the condor family. Ron Pittaway of Minden has proposed that the species be re-named as the Red-headed Condor. I am very much in favour of this change and I think that it would help market hawk watching to the public, certainly better than TVs do. Novice birders are confused by Turkeys and Turkey Vultures and TV has been an accepted short form for television for so long that it too is a confusing term. What do you think? Should we lobby to get the name changed?

Next summer, we are hoping to get the tower re-painted. A generous offer of primer and topcoat has been received from the father of a friend of the daughter of our ex-President (that's Mike Street) who is in the painting business (the father, not Mike). Negotiations are underway with the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority with respect to equipment. If anyone is interested in assisting, please contact me by e-mail.

Well the fall migration is upon us and to paraphrase the spring call, THERE THEY GO! Time to visit your favourite fall site.

HAWKS FROM EVERY ANGLE: HOW TO IDENTIFY RAPTORS IN FLIGHT



Raptors at Beamer are easy to identify from below, when lighting conditions are good and you can get a long look at them. Then there are the raptors you only get to see from the side as they zip along the treetops over the quarry, or at eye level from a distance as they soar beyond the farmhouse.

If you're looking for help with those difficult identification situations, *Hawks From Every Angle: How To Identify Raptors In Flight* by Jerry Liguori could be for you. The book contains 339 colour and 32 black and white photos of 19 species common at North American raptor migration sites.

Innovative, accurate and field tested identification traits for each species are included, and there are discussions on light conditions, as well as how molt can affect the shape and appearance of raptors.

Hawks From Every Angle has received many ringing endorsements, including one from David A. Sibley, who says, "This book is the first of its kind that deals with the real-world problems of identifying flying raptors from different angles. The understanding of what hawkwatchers actually face in the field comes through on every page." Hawks From Every Angle is currently available at your favouriate bookseller, or your can get it from www.amazon.ca, where it is currently priced at $27.00 for softcover and $75.00 for the hardcover edition.

2005 MIGRATION SUMMARY

by Keith Dieroff

Without a significant rarity at Beamer this season, the story was the overall numbers. This year's count of 16,602 raptors was the highest since 1990, and the fourth highest count in the hawkwatch's 30-year history.

Leading the way were Turkey Vultures and Bald Eagles, with record counts of 5,158 and 71 respectively. It's obvious, even to the casual observer, that the Ontario Turkey Vulture population is very healthy. As mentioned in the President's Column, at Beamer, Turkey Vulture counts have increased steadily since the late 1980's, to the point where Turkey Vultures now contribute roughly one third of the total count.

Other species with counts above both their short-term (5-year) and long-term (20-year) averages were Broad-winged Hawk at 5,537, Rough-legged Hawk at 120, Merlin at 15, and Peregrine Falcon at 5. Four species bested their short-term average, but not their long-term average, including Northern Harrier at 128, Northern Goshawk at 12, Red-shouldered Hawk at 641, and Red-tailed Hawk at 2,693.

Sharp-shinned Hawks and Cooper's Hawks continue to disquiet counters. This year's total of 1,756 was the lowest count of Sharp-shins since full March to May coverage began in 1980. This trend seems to mirror what has been reported in Ontario breeding bird surveys, which show a decline in this species over the past decade. The Cooper's Hawk count varies from year to year, but at 183, it was still below both the short-term and long-term averages for this species.

Last, but certainly not least, at 8 birds, Golden Eagles were very close to both their short and long-term averages.

Overall it was an interesting season. After a slow start in March, during which the count did not exceed 450 raptors on any given day, April was definitely hit and miss. There were five days in April with over 1,000 raptors, and another five days with zero. Throughout the season, there were 12 days with no raptors counted, and another ten days with less than a dozen.

Many thanks to this year's counters: Bouwe Bergsma, John Black, Peter Booker, Geoff Carpentier, Hollie Carruthers, Barry Cherriere, Linda Cherriere, Jim Coey, Dave Copeland, Mark Cranford, Bob Curry, Keith Dieroff, John Djukic, Bruce Duncan, Tim Foran, Denys Gardiner, Ann Gray, Brian Gray, Brandon Holden, Eric Holden, Ian Jolliffe, Bruce Mackenzie, Kevin McLaughlin, Gord McNulty, George Meyers, Dave Milsom, George Naylor, John Olmsted, Tom Reavley, Dan Salisbury, Gerry Shemilt, Art Slaughter, Glenda Slessor, Bill Smith, Terrie Smith, Bob Stamp, John Stevens, Mike Street, Ed Taylor, Phil Waggett. If your name has inadvertently been left off this list please notify Mike Street and accept our apologies.

2005 Monthly Counts

Species	February	March	April	May	Total
Black Vulture	0	0	0	0	**0**
Turkey Vulture	0	835	4,086	237	**5,158**
Osprey	0	1	39	7	**47**
Bald Eagle	2	45	18	6	**71**
Northern Harrier	0	19	86	23	**128**
Sharp-shinned Hawk	0	117	1,283	356	**1,756**
Cooper's Hawk	0	76	85	22	**183**
Northern Goshawk	0	7	5	0	**12**
Red-shouldered Hawk	0	512	128	1	**641**
Broad-winged Hawk	0	0	4,754	783	**5,537**
Red-tailed Hawk	31	1,360	1,160	142	**2,693**
Rough-legged Hawk	1	35	72	12	**120**
Golden Eagle	0	1	4	3	**8**
American Kestrel	0	10	26	9	**45**
Merlin	0	4	9	2	**15**
Peregrine Falcon	0	2	2	1	**5**
Unidentified Accipiter	0	3	6	1	**10**
Unidentified Buteo	0	84	34	2	**120**
Unidentified Falcon	0	1	2	2	**5**
Unidentified Eagle	0	0	0	1	**1**
Unidentified Raptor	0	17	30	0	**47**
Total	**34**	**3,129**	**11,829**	**1,610**	**16,602**
Hours Counted	**9.0**	**197.5**	**193.1**	**95.6**	**495.2**
Birds/Hour	***3.8***	***15.8***	***61.3***	***16.8***	***33.5***

2005 Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Executive

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February 2005

Species	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	Total
Black Vulture	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Turkey Vulture	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Osprey	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Bald Eagle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	**2**
Northern Harrier	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Sharp-shinned Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Cooper's Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Northern Goshawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Red-shouldered Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Broad-winged Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Red-tailed Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	30	0	**31**
Rough-legged Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	**1**
Golden Eagle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
American Kestrel	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Merlin	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Peregrine Falcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Unidentified Accipiter	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Unidentified Buteo	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Unidentified Falcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Unidentified Eagle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Unidentified Raptor	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Total	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**33**	**0**	**34**
Hours Counted	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*3.5*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*5.5*	*0.0*	***9.0***

March 2005

Species	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Total
Black Vulture	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Turkey Vulture	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	1	1	2	54	48	108	3	0	9	100	14	39	38	29	32	0	19	140	194	**835**
Osprey	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	**1**
Bald Eagle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	4	2	7	2	0	0	11	2	1	1	4	4	0	3	1	1	**45**
Northern Harrier	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	3	0	0	1	3	4	0	0	1	3	**19**
Sharp-shinned Hawk	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	3	1	0	1	3	3	4	0	1	0	1	1	3	19	18	0	9	21	26	**117**
Cooper's Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	2	2	4	5	8	5	0	1	0	0	0	13	13	5	0	3	6	5	**76**
Northern Goshawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	1	0	0	**7**
Red-shouldered Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	6	62	9	0	0	79	9	41	43	132	32	0	22	57	17	**512**
Broad-winged Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Red-tailed Hawk	0	0	2	0	13	1	0	7	4	3	66	2	9	21	59	32	79	152	82	0	20	201	19	30	100	169	42	0	94	109	44	**1,360**
Rough-legged Hawk	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	4	2	0	6	4	1	1	3	2	1	0	2	4	1	**35**
Golden Eagle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
American Kestrel	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	3	**10**
Merlin	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	**4**
Peregrine Falcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	**2**
Unidentified Accipiter	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	**3**
Unidentified Buteo	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	1	12	0	1	0	0	1	34	0	0	1	18	12	0	1	0	0	**84**
Unidentified Falcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
Unidentified Eagle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Unidentified Raptor	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	9	0	0	1	2	2	0	0	0	2	**17**
Total	**0**	**0**	**3**	**0**	**14**	**2**	**0**	**7**	**7**	**5**	**68**	**4**	**19**	**27**	**67**	**109**	**148**	**348**	**110**	**0**	**38**	**443**	**46**	**113**	**208**	**396**	**156**	**0**	**154**	**339**	**298**	**3,129**
Hours Counted	*0.0*	*0.0*	*4.5*	*8.0*	*7.5*	*5.5*	*0.0*	*8.0*	*7.7*	*7.5*	*5.0*	*3.5*	*7.5*	*8.0*	*8.0*	*7.0*	*8.0*	*7.6*	*8.0*	*3.0*	*7.5*	*9.7*	*7.2*	*8.0*	*8.0*	*8.7*	*7.5*	*2.3*	*8.0*	*8.5*	*8.0*	***197.5***

April 2005

Species	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	Total
Black Vulture	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Turkey Vulture	1,403	0	0	320	747	146	21	813	177	56	28	32	33	39	10	49	13	18	43	5	15	13	0	0	4	4	41	12	44	0	**4,086**
Osprey	2	0	0	0	1	3	0	6	0	0	2	0	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	0	5	1	0	0	1	1	8	0	1	0	**39**
Bald Eagle	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	3	0	6	0	**18**
Northern Harrier	0	0	0	2	7	7	1	6	4	1	0	1	2	1	4	16	6	1	1	0	6	1	0	0	0	6	3	2	8	0	**86**
Sharp-shinned Hawk	44	0	0	17	243	36	11	32	130	34	8	8	11	7	10	46	64	47	116	17	118	14	0	0	0	140	46	12	72	0	**1,283**
Cooper's Hawk	12	0	0	10	15	2	0	1	9	2	0	0	6	3	0	3	3	2	1	0	3	2	0	0	1	0	3	1	6	0	**85**
Northern Goshawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	**5**
Red-shouldered Hawk	24	0	0	1	87	5	0	0	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**128**
Broad-winged Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	1	0	5	184	58	212	34	2,664	3	0	0	0	334	76	11	1,169	0	**4,754**
Red-tailed Hawk	131	0	0	21	166	46	0	135	78	38	57	29	15	47	49	108	7	11	38	1	96	8	0	0	0	33	15	0	31	0	**1,160**
Rough-legged Hawk	6	0	0	0	6	0	0	2	0	0	1	2	4	4	2	21	1	2	5	0	4	4	0	0	0	5	0	0	3	0	**72**
Golden Eagle	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	**4**
American Kestrel	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	1	4	1	0	3	0	1	0	3	2	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	**26**
Merlin	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	**9**
Peregrine Falcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**2**
Unidentified Accipiter	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	**6**
Unidentified Buteo	1	0	0	0	3	1	0	6	0	5	0	0	0	1	0	7	4	1	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	**34**
Unidentified Falcon	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	**2**
Unidentified Eagle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Unidentified Raptor	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	6	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	1	0	0	0	**30**
Total	**1,627**	**0**	**0**	**373**	**1,278**	**248**	**33**	**1,002**	**411**	**146**	**98**	**75**	**75**	**105**	**76**	**267**	**287**	**153**	**429**	**59**	**2,922**	**46**	**0**	**0**	**6**	**532**	**199**	**38**	**1,344**	**0**	**11,829**
Hours Counted	*8.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*9.0*	*8.8*	*7.0*	*5.5*	*8.0*	*8.7*	*8.0*	*6.5*	*8.0*	*6.5*	*9.3*	*8.0*	*9.0*	*8.5*	*7.5*	*9.0*	*3.8*	*8.5*	*7.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*4.0*	*8.0*	*8.3*	*9.3*	*9.0*	*0.0*	***193.1***

May 2005

Species	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Total
Black Vulture	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Turkey Vulture	16	8	2	71	61	0	19	14	9	9	19	4	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	237
Osprey	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
Bald Eagle	0	1	0	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Northern Harrier	4	1	0	5	5	2	1	2	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	23
Sharp-shinned Hawk	34	25	21	95	103	52	6	4	1	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	356
Cooper's Hawk	1	2	2	10	4	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	22
Northern Goshawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Red-shouldered Hawk	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Broad-winged Hawk	4	0	2	209	510	13	1	11	5	26	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	783
Red-tailed Hawk	10	2	5	21	63	18	5	3	0	12	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	142
Rough-legged Hawk	3	0	0	4	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12
Golden Eagle	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
American Kestrel	1	0	0	3	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9
Merlin	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Peregrine Falcon	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Unidentified Accipiter	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Unidentified Buteo	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Unidentified Falcon	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Unidentified Eagle	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Unidentified Raptor	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	**73**	**41**	**33**	**422**	**761**	**87**	**34**	**36**	**17**	**69**	**26**	**4**	**7**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1,610**
Hours Counted	*8.5*	*8.3*	*8.0*	*8.7*	*6.5*	*7.0*	*5.5*	*7.0*	*6.0*	*8.0*	*2.8*	*6.3*	*7.0*	*6.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	***95.6***

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch

Newsletter

February 2006 **Newsletter #32**

GENERAL MEETING & BANQUET APRIL 29, 2006

HMANA
Hawk Migration Association of North America

This year's Annual General Meeting and dinner (aka "the banquet") will be held on Saturday, April 29, 2006 at the Grimsby Curling Club. The guest speaker will be Ernesto Ruelas Inzunza from HMANA whose topic will be the Raptor Population Index (RPI) project.

The goal of RPI is to determine annual population indexes and trends of hawks counted during spring and fall migrations at sites throughout the United States, Canada, and Central America, including Beamer Memorial Conservation Area in Grimsby. Ernesto will be providing an update on the progress made so far on this important project.

Socializing and the bucket raffle begin at 5:00 pm. The pre-supper wine and cheese starts at 5:15, and as per tradition, members of the NPH will select the wines for the evening in advance. Dinner will start around 6:15. Donations are still needed for the bucket raffle - please contact Keith Dieroff at (905) 545-5859.

Tickets are priced at $25 for members and their spouses/partners, and $32 for non-members (includes annual membership to the NPH). Please call John Stevens at (905) 792-1093 [weekdays] or (905) 685-6734 [weekends], or Glenn Barnett at (905) 628-2093 to make arrangements for tickets.

The Grimsby Curling Club is located at 277 Kerman Avenue, Grimsby. Please see page 4 of this newsletter for directions.

Mark your calendars. See you there!

GORDON BELLERBY, DFC

by Mike Street



Gordon Bellerby at at Tollgate Ponds in Hamilton viewing the Wilson's Plover on May 16, 2004 - photo by Jean Iron

After a brief illness, Gordon Bellerby died at home on January 17, 2006 in his 87th year. Born and raised in England, Gordon served with distinction for six years in the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve during WWII.

After a tour flying Hurricane fighters with the Desert Air Force in Africa, he trained in aerial photography and then flew 100 missions in unarmed Spitfires above and far into enemy territory in Africa and all over Europe.

Gordon left England in 1947 for Canada, living first in Montreal where he married his wife Diana and then moving to Toronto in 1960. He retired to Niagara-on-the-Lake in 1983, where he developed his birding skills with the Grimsby/Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch at Beamer Conservation Area in the spring, and on the Niagara River during the fall and winter.

Gordon joined the Grimsby Hawkwatch in 1987 and remained active as a scheduled counter with the NPH until he reached his 80th birthday, after which he said he thought he "should take a break". A charter member of the NPH, Gordon served on its Executive as Treasurer from 1991-1995, Counter Coordinator

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in 1995-96, and Assistant Counter Coordinator in 1997-1998.

On hearing of Gordon's passing, Honourary NPH President Bruce Duncan said, "Gordon was such a gentleman and brought with his English demeanour a quick smile and ready quip. I can see him flying those Hurricanes over enemy territory. He was clear on the direction he was going always." The writer well remembers many interesting chats with Gordon about various things relating to birds, organizations and people, as well as a 'Gordon Rocket', deservingly received after we totally forgot to hold the required NPH election at the Annual General Meeting.

Mary-Ellen Hebb recalls that "Gordon arrived in the Niagara region in 1983, brimming with unspent energy. Retired, yes, but certainly not tired! He surveyed the place and saw potential everywhere. At that point, only a few people in Niagara were atlassing, no-one was doing the January waterfowl count for the MNR, the hawkwatch at Beamer did not have its own formal organization, and no-one had thought of having a regular, organized count of gulls coming down the Niagara River every winter evening. We just weren't involved in many ornithologically-oriented projects.

Gordon changed all that. He had such a cheery, inviting personality that it wasn't until after you had hung up the phone that you realized he had hornswoggled you into participating or (God forbid!) co-ordinating some incredibly time-intensive/exhausting/sure-to-freeze-your-bottom-off project! Because he always rewarded you afterwards with lots of praise and a glass of wine - or, after the waterfowl count, when you wondered if parts of your body might possibly have snapped off, with cups of hot soup, mulled cider and, always, delightful, insightful, provocative conversation - you never felt like complaining. On the contrary, you just wanted to come back for more."

The memorial service held in the lovely St. Mark's Anglican Church in Niagara-on-the-Lake was conducted by the Rector, Rev. Canon Dr. Robert Wright, and Gordon's son, Rev. Guy Bellerby. The final hymn was 'On Eagle's Wings', and the memorial card carried a copy of the poem 'High Flight', which begins, "Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of Earth...". The latter, made well known to the current generation when read by Ronald Reagan after the Challenger disaster, was written by Pilot Officer John Gillespie Magee, RCAF, who coincidentally trained in Niagara-on-the-Lake prior to perishing overseas during World War II.

Guy Bellerby spoke briefly, telling those assembled how Gordon had explicitly stated that at his funeral service he did not want a eulogy given and that everyone attending was to enjoy a champagne reception afterwards. Since the 'No Eulogy' directive was hard to obey, both Guy and Canon Wright related some brief anecdotes that well described the Gordon his relatives and friends, both within and outside the birding community, remembered. Everyone attending did enjoy the champagne reception. In addition to Diana and Guy, Gordon leaves two daughters, four grandchildren and a great-granddaughter. We will all miss him. ❖

2006 NPH OPEN HOUSE

The NPH will once again hold it's annual Open House on Good Friday, April 14, 2006 at Beamer Memorial Conservation Area in Grimsby. This year's activities will include displays, nature groups, 'hawk talks' by Bruce Duncan and the children's program presented by Carla Carlson of Niagara Nature Tours. If possible, a rehabilitated raptor will be released during the day.

Last year's Open House was a resounding success. The weather was sunny and cold (only 3 degrees celcius) but attendance was excellent. The the flight of 206 birds was good. Highlights of the day included one Bald Eagle, great views of a Northern Goshawk directly overhead, plus one each of Merlin and Peregrine Falcon.

Visit the NPH website [www.hwcn.org/link/niaghawk] in March for complete details about the Open House, including an Agenda with times for the day's activities.

Everyone is welcome. Invite your family and friends...it should be a good day for them, and the birds too! ❖

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by John Stevens

It is difficult for me to believe that another year has passed and the annual flight north for the raptors is starting again. With the mild weather that we've experienced in southern Ontario the last six weeks, we may have missed many returning birds already. It will certainly be interesting to see what effects this winter might have on our count records this season for species such as Bald Eagles and the large buteos.

We continue to make progress on getting our historical records into electronic format and auditing the data for correctness and completeness. We have had several requests to use the material including one from the Raptor Population Index (RPI) Committee. We hope to have ten consecutive years of data available for that study sometime in March.

For years we have made available a silhouette sheet of hawks that was published by a U.S. group for their watch sites. Many of us were concerned that we may not have had authorization to reproduce and distribute this material. We wanted one of our own. Some of you may not be aware that within our membership are several talented artists, actually, a surprisingly high proportion. This is very satisfying to someone as artistically challenged as myself. In any event, it is hoped that sometime early in the season, we will have a new sheet to hand out that has been prepared by Barry Cherriere. Barry was responsible for the colour drawings in the Guide prepared by Hawk Cliff for their fall watch site. I've seen the drafts and think it is wonderful.

Recently we learned that our primary counter for the last several years, Tom Reavley, has developed some vision problems and will need some spotting assistance this year. This is putting a strain on our ability to have complete seasonal coverage of the watch, so necessary when the information can be used in RPI studies. If any of you can assist for even a day, please contact the coordinator, Mike Street, whose contact info is elsewhere in this issue. As the Breeding Bird Atlas field work is over now, some of you should have time on your hands.

Wow! HERE THEY COME. Time to go watch some hawks. See you at Beamer. ❖

HMANA News

by Keith Dieroff (with contributions from Art Slaughter & Ernesto Ruelas Inzunza)

NPH Representation on HMANA Board

Keeping alive the tradition of having an NPH member on the HMANA Board, Art Slaughter has recently accepted the position of treasurer.

RPI Project Update

Data collection continues and findings are starting to emerge.

Currently 150 raptor migration sites, including the NPH, contribute data through HawkCount.org. However, there are over one million hours of observations from some 400 sites which need to be converted from paper to electronic form. This transfer is going to take some time and a significant amount of effort.

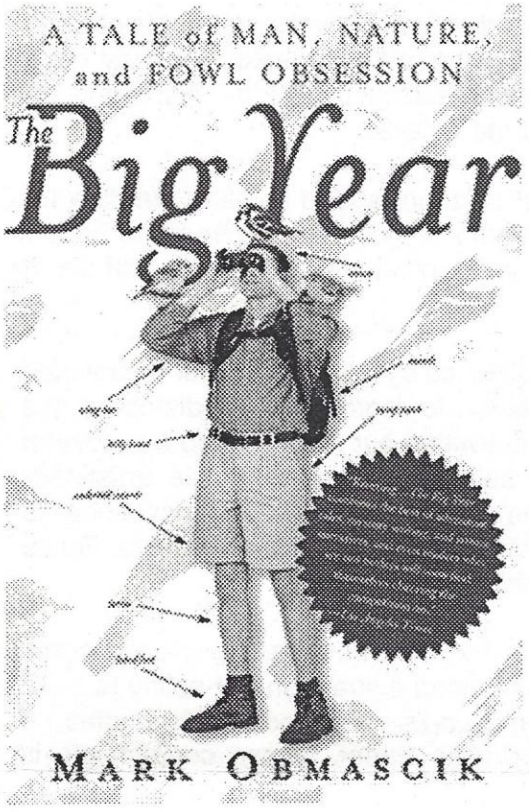
Perhaps the most interesting findings from RPI are not the individual site trends themselves, but the multi-site perspective. For example, several sites in eastern North American have shown increases in Bald Eagles and Cooper's Hawks, as well as declines in Sharp-shinned Hawks and American Kestrels. However, when one zooms out to a larger picture that includes localities further inland, there are curious patterns of increases and declines across the entire region of coverage.

Ernesto Ruelas Inzunza will be talking more about RPI and its findings at the annual General Meeting and Banquet on April 29, 2006.

If you can't make it to the General Meeting, more details about RPI will be provided in the next issue of this newsletter. ❖

Book Review - The Big Year

by John Stevens



The Big Year by Mark Obmascik, published by Free Press in 2004, 250 pages.

This book chronicles the activities of three disparate (and I would add desperate) men during 1998 as they attempt to see and/or hear all the species they can in North America during one calendar year, a Big Year.

All three decided independently to go for the record. Listers will enjoy the exploits of these very different individuals while the rest of us have our eyes opened to some of the worst aspects of birding, while also gaining many useful insights on how and where to find some species.

The author, a journalist and birder, writes well and has crafted an entertaining tale of adventure, competition, drama and mystery from notes made from extensive interviews with the three men. Like a good journalist, he did independent checks of the facts. I enjoyed this book a lot and towards the end, couldn't put it down until I'd finished.

A great read. ❖

DIRECTIONS TO ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

From Hamilton, Burlington, Oakville, Toronto:

- Take the QEW Niagara to Grimsby and exit at Casablanca Blvd
- From the offramp, turn south on Casablanca and then make an immediate left onto the South Service Road
- Proceed east on the South Service Road to Kerman Avenue, turn right (south) onto Kerman and the Curling Club is on the right hand side.

From St. Catharines, Niagara Falls:

- Take the QEW Niagara to Grimsby and exit at the Maple Ave/Ontario Street/Christie Street exit
- Continue on the offramp to Christie Street and then turn left and head south to the South Service Road
- Turn right on the South Service Road and proceed west to Kerman Avenue
- Turn left (south) onto Kerman Avenue and the Curling Club is on the right hand side.

2006 Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Executive

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NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH MIGRATION CALENDAR FOR BEAMER MEMORIAL CONSERVATION AREA

NOTES:

1. Species initials and Right (>) or Left (<) arrow:
   This combination indicates the start (>) or end (<) of the normal (at Beamer) migration period for that species. The same in bold type indicates the start or end of a noticeable peak period for that species. The box in which this combination is located indicates the day and month on which the period is likely to start or end.
2. A number, followed by species initial, followed by a slash (/)and a two digit number:
   In this combination, the largest number of that species ever seen in one day is given first; the two-digit number following the / indicates the year in which this occurred. The box in which this combination is located indicates the day and month on which the event occurred. Example: 655 RS/94 in the March 23rd box indicates that the highest number of Red-shouldered Hawks recorded in one day was 655, seen on March 23rd, 1994.

TV - Turkey Vulture
BV - Black Vulture
OS - Osprey
SK - American Swallow-tailed Kite
MK - Mississippi Kite
BE - Bald Eagle
GE - Golden Eagle
NH - Northern Harrier
SS - Sharp-shinned Hawk
CH - Cooper's Hawk
NG - Northern Goshawk
RS - Red-shouldered Hawk
RT - Red-tailed Hawk
SW - Swainson's Hawk
RL - Rough-legged Hawk
FH - Ferruginous Hawk
AK - American Kestrel
ME - Merlin
PF - Peregrine Falcon
PR - Prairie Falcon
GF - Gyrfalcon
BW - Broad-winged Hawk

The following information, based on 30+ years of data has been updated to show significant events up to the year 2005.

Largest number of raptors in one season: 19,724 in 1985.

BE>, NH>, SS>, CH>, RT>, RL>, AK> begin around February 20th.

MARCH						
1 **RT>** NG>	2 GE>	3 RS>	4	5	6	7
8 TV>	9	10	11 **RL>**	12 **AK>**	13 **CH>** **RS>**	14 44AK/90
15	16 744 RT/96	17	18 **BE>**	19	20 **TV>** ME> PF>	21
22	23 **NH>** 655 RS/94	24 11 NG/84 19 BE/03	25	26 **SS>** 2 PF/91 1355 TV/88	27	28 2 PF/90
29 46 RL/04	30	31 OS> 1 BV/00*				

Largest # of raptors in month: 5,670 in March 1988; largest # of raptors in one day in month: 2,080 on March 26th, 1988

APRIL						
1	2	3 2 PF/91	4 1 BV/92	5 50 CH/93	6	7
8 **OS><RS**	9	10 BW>	11	12 16 OS/92	13 1 FH/92	14
15 **BW>** SW> 1 SK/94	16 **<BE** 2 PF/90	17	18 35 NH/96 1556 SS/76	19 1 PR/95**	20 1 GF/77	21 6007 BW/85
22	23 1 FH/98**	24 **<OS** 1 FH/02*	25 **<TV** 6 ME/96 2 PF/94	26	27	28 4 GE/96
29 2 SW/98*	30 **<RL**					

Largest # of raptors in month: 15,012 in April 1984; largest # of raptors in one day in month: 7,007 on April 21st, 1985

MAY						
1	2 2 SW/97*	3	4 **<RT**	5 <SW	6 <PF	7
8	9	10 <GE	11 1 MK/97*	12 **<NH** **<AK**	13 **<CH** <BE	14 **<SS** 1 MK/03*
15 **<BW** <RL <ME	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25 <OS	26	27	28
29	30	31 <TV<NH <SS<CH <NG<RS <AK	*BW and RT continue beyond May 31st...*			

Largest # of raptors in month: 2,685 in May 1980; largest # of raptors in one day in month: 1,492 on May 4th, 1989

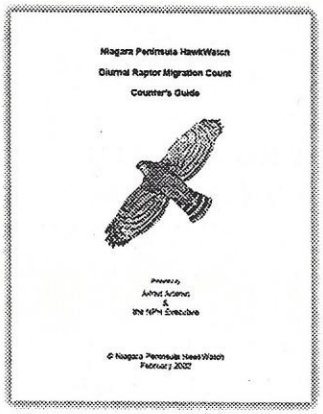
** Sighting not reviewed/accepted by Ontario Bird Records Committee*
*** First accepted Prairie Falcon record in Ontario*

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch

Newsletter

August 2006 **Newsletter #33**

COUNTER'S GUIDE TO BE UPDATED



Prior to the beginning of the 2007 spring migration season, your NPH Executive will be updating the Counter's Guide, which was first introduced in 2002.

Over the past four years, a number topics covered in the Guide have changed, including how we collect and record our data.

Once the Guide has been updated, a Counter's meeting will be held to:

- Re-introduce the Counter's Guide
- Review identification techniques
- Answer any questions counters may have

More information about the Counter's Meeting will be sent to counters via e-mail in the coming months. ❖

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2006 ROUNDUP

The NPH Open House was held on Good Friday, April 14, 2006 at Beamer Memorial Conservation Area in Grimsby.

For the first time in many years, Mother Nature did not co-operate. The day started out rainy and cold, and things went from bad to worse as organizers watched fog roll in off the lake around 11:00am.

The few brave souls who remained were rewarded with a live bird demonstration by the Canadian Raptor Conservancy, who brought both a Red-tailed Hawk and a Golden Eagle for viewers to have an up-close look at.

The official count for the Open House was one raptor, a Turkey Vulture.

The Annual General Meeting took place at the Grimsby Curling Club on Saturday, April 29.

At the last minute (and with some good fortune) the guest speaker, Ernesto Inzunza, was able to overcome some border-crossing issues to deliver an excellent presentation on the Raptor Population Index (RPI) project.

Ernesto's presentation included an overview of RPI, along with a summary of some of the trends observed to date. For more information, please see the President's Corner on page 2.

Thank you to Ernesto for an excellent presentation, and many thanks to those who donated prizes for the raffle again this year, your generosity is much appreciated! ❖

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by John Stevens

Those of you who were at the annual meeting in April heard Ernesto Ruelas Inzunza describe the initial results from the RPI program, fortunately sparing us the details of the mathematics. It was reassuring to learn that the findings suggest that Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle and Cooper's Hawk populations have been increasing, which is what we've seen happening at Beamer for many years. Similarly, an apparent decline in Sharp-shinned Hawk populations in eastern North America correlates with our observations at Beamer. The results are providing numerical values for the trends that have seemed obvious to long-time hawkwatchers.

Your organization has made a second donation ($500) to the RPI program, so that HMANA can continue this work. As more and more data from additional sites, including spring watches, are incorporated, the accuracy, validity and geographical populations being sampled will become better refined. The most recent timetable has work with a selection of spring watches, including ours, starting early in 2007. We have pledged to have the last 11 years of data complete and ready for analysis before the end of 2006. Most of it has been entered and audited but corrections for some years have yet to be done.

With data now available in electronic format for researchers to mine for trends, correlations, proving theories, developing theories, etc., it is easy to see how diligent we need to be to collect the data and ensure that it is complete, accurate and defensible. To that end, the executive has determined that the Counter's Guide needs to be updated and a refresher session for counters will be scheduled before next spring's migration to distribute the revised edition.

If anyone has some suggestions on how we could improve the counts and our records, please send them along to me, either by post at the address given elsewhere in this issue or by e-mail to jrstevens@cogeco.ca. I would particularly like to hear some ideas on establishing the limit of visibility. Having audited several years of our data, it is amusing to see what a range of distances people enter in the visibility column. Most of the time, this doesn't affect what we see very much but I suspect that we miss high birds in May because the visibility is reduced. Without a view for several kilometres, as is the case at most watches, we need a means to estimate the visibility at Beamer so that we're all recording consistent values for a given condition.

In a month or so the fall retreat will be underway and we get a chance to see if our record Bald Eagle numbers of this spring are reflected in large numbers at the fall watches, such as High Park and Hawk Cliff. As I understand it, both those watches could use some help with counting so you can put your skills to good use by lending them your eyes. ❖

HANDY TOOL FOR HAWKWATCHERS

Although the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch now obtains humidity and barometric pressure over the Internet, relieving counters of the task of recording those data, it is still very important that counters write down both temperature and wind direction every hour. Counters may find a new item on the market very helpful. The accompanying picture shows the Royal 'Hook-It Weatherclip'.



Continued on next page...

A large LCD display shows both temperature (choose Celsius or Fahrenheit) and time (12 or 24 hour clock - you can leave it on Standard time!). It also features a compass and mini light, all on a spring loaded d-ring. The Weatherclip sells for about $8.00 plus tax at Home Hardware stores and comes with a 1-year warranty. Home Hardware's product number is 3818-346. ❖

2006 MIGRATION SUMMARY

by Keith Dieroff

Eagles! Eagles! Eagles! That was the story of spring 2006 at the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch. Counters recorded a total of 85 Bald Eagles during the count period, surpassing the previous high count by 14 birds, or 20%. Golden Eagles showed up in numbers too, with 13 being counted, matching the high count obtained during two previous count years. There were three days in March with more than 10 Bald Eagles, including the big day - March 11th - when a total of 18 BE's were counted. This one-day total surpassed the season count for Bald Eagles during 19 of our previous count years. Add to these numbers the 6 unidentified Eagles recorded during the count period, and it was most certainly the year of the Eagle.

Overshadowing the Eagles in terms of rarity was the sighting of a dark-phase Gyrfalcon on March 17th. This was only the second Gyr ever recorded on the count, the first one being almost thirty years ago, in 1977.

In terms of a recap: needless to say, Bald Eagle numbers were above both their long-term (20-year) and short-term (5-year) averages. Other species exceeding both their long and short-term averages were: Osprey, Turkey Vulture, Red-tailed Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, Golden Eagle, and Peregrine Falcon. The season count for Peregrine Falcons of 9 was also the highest on record.

Several species were below both their long and short-term averages, including: Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Northern Goshawk, Broad-winged Hawk, and American Kestrel. Regrettably, the Sharp-shinned Hawk count reached an all-time low. The season count of 1,753 individuals was the lowest on record since regular counting began in 1980.

Rounding out the species summaries, Red-shouldered Hawks were above their short-term average, but below the long-term benchmark, and Merlins were at or near their average numbers.

Overall it was an interesting season. Compared to last year's slow start, March 2006 was outstanding. Over 5,300 raptors were counted, well above the short and long-term average for this month. April numbers were down, as we were without a significant Broad-wing flight during the month. May 2006 was very disappointing, with one of the lowest counts on record for this month.

Thanks very much once again to all the counters who agreed to count or assist on one or more days during the 2006 Hawkwatch: Alfred Adamo, Jack Alvo, Glenn Barnett, Bouwe Bergsma, John Black, Hollie Carruthers, Geoff Carpentier, Barry Cherriere, Linda Cherriere, Dave Copeland, Keith Dieroff, John Djukic, Bruce Duncan, Tim Foran, Denys Gardiner, Ann Gray, Brian Gray, Colin Horstead, Marcie Jacklin, Eric Machell, Bruce Mackenzie, Stuart Mackenzie, Kevin McLaughlin, Gordon McNulty, George Meyers, Dave Milsom, George Naylor, Tom Reavley, Bill Smith, Terrie Smith, John Stevens, Mike Street, Sandra van Hullenar, Phil Waggett. If anyone's name has been omitted please accept our apologies and let Mike Street know. ❖

2006 Monthly Counts

Species	February	March	April	May	Total
Black Vulture	0	0	0	0	**0**
Turkey Vulture	0	2,246	3,550	138	**5,934**
Osprey	0	2	58	5	**65**
Bald Eagle	0	68	10	7	**85**
Northern Harrier	1	29	58	8	**96**
Sharp-shinned Hawk	0	167	1,474	112	**1,753**
Cooper's Hawk	1	94	97	10	**202**
Northern Goshawk	0	6	0	0	**6**
Red-shouldered Hawk	0	563	113	3	**679**
Broad-winged Hawk	0	0	1,937	89	**2,026**
Red-tailed Hawk	3	1,989	1,038	67	**3,097**
Rough-legged Hawk	0	64	37	1	**102**
Golden Eagle	0	2	9	2	**13**
American Kestrel	0	30	31	2	**63**
Merlin	0	6	6	1	**13**
Peregrine Falcon	0	4	4	1	**9**
Gyrfalcon	0	1	0	0	**1**
Unidentified Accipiter	0	17	10	0	**27**
Unidentified Buteo	0	41	47	1	**89**
Unidentified Falcon	0	1	3	2	**6**
Unidentified Eagle	0	3	3	0	**6**
Unidentified Raptor	0	29	18	3	**50**
Total	**5**	**5,362**	**8,503**	**452**	**14,322**
Hours Counted	**5.33**	**222.35**	**210.67**	**95.17**	**533.52**
Birds/Hour	***0.9***	***24.1***	***40.4***	***4.7***	***26.8***

2007 Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Executive

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February 2006

Species	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	Total
Black Vulture	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Turkey Vulture	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Osprey	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Bald Eagle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Northern Harrier	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	**1**
Sharp-shinned Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Cooper's Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	**1**
Northern Goshawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Red-shouldered Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Broad-winged Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Red-tailed Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	**3**
Rough-legged Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Golden Eagle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
American Kestrel	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Merlin	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Peregrine Falcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Gyrfalcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Unidentified Accipiter	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Unidentified Buteo	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Unidentified Falcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Unidentified Eagle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Unidentified Raptor	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Total	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**4**	**0**	**1**	**5**
Hours Counted	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*4.3*	*0.0*	*1.0*	***5.3***

March 2006

Species	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Total
Black Vulture	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Turkey Vulture	1	0	0	0	2	0	3	0	0	0	11	7	0	0	0	72	70	16	6	27	42	7	29	59	280	253	300	130	310	402	219	**2,246**
Osprey	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	**2**
Bald Eagle	1	0	0	1	2	0	4	0	0	0	18	0	0	0	1	10	4	3	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	5	11	1	0	1	2	**68**
Northern Harrier	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	9	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	1	4	1	0	4	1	**29**
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	2	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	0	0	2	5	6	15	19	10	46	40	**167**
Cooper's Hawk	0	0	1	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	4	3	0	0	4	4	4	8	1	6	6	0	1	7	8	6	8	4	3	6	6	**94**
Northern Goshawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	**6**
Red-shouldered Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	0	0	1	8	45	2	0	12	34	0	4	84	79	35	71	101	18	62	2	**563**
Broad-winged Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Red-tailed Hawk	3	0	0	3	11	51	26	28	2	5	152	24	0	0	10	252	268	24	14	42	57	4	33	56	183	157	178	156	92	141	17	**1,989**
Rough-legged Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	15	1	0	0	0	7	2	0	0	2	1	0	0	4	2	2	12	3	4	5	2	**64**
Golden Eagle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	**2**
American Kestrel	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	3	1	1	5	9	**30**
Merlin	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	**6**
Peregrine Falcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	**4**
Gyrfalcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
Unidentified Accipiter	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	0	3	1	2	1	0	**17**
Unidentified Buteo	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	4	3	14	4	11	1	1	**41**
Unidentified Falcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	**1**
Unidentified Eagle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	**3**
Unidentified Raptor	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	20	0	3	**29**
Total	**8**	**2**	**1**	**6**	**19**	**56**	**34**	**31**	**2**	**6**	**224**	**39**	**0**	**0**	**18**	**365**	**395**	**59**	**24**	**92**	**144**	**11**	**67**	**219**	**570**	**469**	**621**	**421**	**475**	**677**	**307**	**5,362**
Hours Counted	*6.8*	*3.0*	*7.0*	*7.5*	*6.0*	*8.0*	*8.0*	*6.5*	*5.3*	*7.0*	*8.0*	*7.3*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*8.0*	*9.0*	*9.0*	*7.0*	*7.0*	*9.0*	*8.0*	*7.6*	*7.5*	*8.5*	*8.5*	*8.5*	*9.5*	*8.0*	*9.0*	*9.9*	*8.0*	***222.4***

April 2006

Species	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	Total
Black Vulture	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Turkey Vulture	422	348	213	63	37	1,236	0	72	238	309	80	88	98	1	121	65	22	2	0	18	0	0	0	27	0	55	11	10	13	1	**3,550**
Osprey	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	6	1	2	1	3	0	5	5	0	3	6	10	2	0	0	1	3	0	2	3	2	0	**58**
Bald Eagle	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	2	**10**
Northern Harrier	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	6	8	3	0	5	0	1	4	2	2	3	4	1	0	0	1	0	8	1	1	1	2	**58**
Sharp-shinned Hawk	11	122	44	3	2	44	0	14	31	147	161	57	119	0	146	55	27	49	27	51	32	0	0	77	8	89	56	35	29	38	**1,474**
Cooper's Hawk	5	24	6	0	0	6	0	2	5	4	0	1	1	0	6	2	1	4	3	3	2	0	0	4	1	7	4	1	1	4	**97**
Northern Goshawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Red-shouldered Hawk	1	81	3	0	0	5	0	1	1	3	6	0	4	0	2	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	**113**
Broad-winged Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	1	11	0	64	302	100	90	15	151	12	0	0	259	14	118	623	119	27	27	**1,937**
Red-tailed Hawk	10	231	27	4	2	92	0	58	92	141	15	22	48	0	50	62	48	20	5	5	5	0	0	16	1	12	23	16	21	12	**1,038**
Rough-legged Hawk	0	13	0	0	0	2	0	4	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	0	1	0	2	0	**37**
Golden Eagle	0	3	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	**9**
American Kestrel	0	1	4	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	6	5	2	0	2	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	**31**
Merlin	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	**6**
Peregrine Falcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**4**
Gyrfalcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Unidentified Accipiter	0	4	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	**10**
Unidentified Buteo	0	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	5	0	1	1	24	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	**47**
Unidentified Falcon	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	**3**
Unidentified Eagle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	**3**
Unidentified Raptor	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	**18**
Total	**451**	**844**	**299**	**71**	**41**	**1,390**	**0**	**155**	**387**	**625**	**275**	**176**	**299**	**1**	**402**	**511**	**234**	**171**	**60**	**245**	**55**	**0**	**0**	**388**	**29**	**292**	**724**	**186**	**101**	**91**	**8,503**
Hours Counted	*8.0*	*8.0*	*5.5*	*8.0*	*4.5*	*8.3*	*1.0*	*8.5*	*9.0*	*9.3*	*8.0*	*6.7*	*8.0*	*6.0*	*8.0*	*9.0*	*8.0*	*7.5*	*7.3*	*9.0*	*7.0*	*1.5*	*0.0*	*8.8*	*6.4*	*9.0*	*8.5*	*8.0*	*7.0*	*7.0*	***210.7***

May 2006

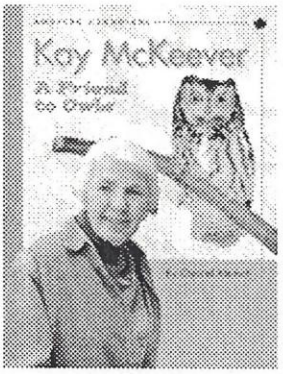
Species	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Total
Black Vulture	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Turkey Vulture	3	29	12	0	8	12	5	10	3	0	19	8	29	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	138
Osprey	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Bald Eagle	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
Northern Harrier	2	0	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
Sharp-shinned Hawk	18	13	2	15	1	0	41	13	0	0	3	3	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	112
Cooper's Hawk	1	3	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
Northern Goshawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Red-shouldered Hawk	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Broad-winged Hawk	8	3	3	6	11	0	50	2	0	0	4	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	89
Red-tailed Hawk	7	7	6	6	3	8	23	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	67
Rough-legged Hawk	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Golden Eagle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
American Kestrel	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Merlin	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Peregrine Falcon	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Gyrfalcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unidentified Accipiter	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unidentified Buteo	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Unidentified Falcon	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Unidentified Eagle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unidentified Raptor	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Total	**40**	**60**	**24**	**35**	**25**	**20**	**127**	**26**	**3**	**0**	**29**	**17**	**36**	**3**	**7**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**452**
Hours Counted	*7.5*	*8.0*	*6.1*	*7.5*	*5.0*	*4.2*	*7.0*	*9.8*	*5.0*	*4.0*	*4.2*	*8.0*	*8.5*	*4.5*	*6.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	***95.2***

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch

Newsletter

February 2007 **Newsletter #34**

GENERAL MEETING & BANQUET APRIL 28, 2007



This year's Annual General Meeting and dinner (aka "the banquet") will be held on Saturday, April 28, 2007 at the Grimsby Curling Club. The guest speaker will be Kay McKeever, co-founder of the Owl Foundation.

The Owl Foundation is a non-profit organization that operates a centre for both the rehabilitation to release status of Canadian owl species, and the behavioural observation of permanently damaged wild owls in a breeding environment.

An engaging and entertaining speaker, Kay McKeever will relate some of her experiences with owls over the past forty years.

Socializing and the bucket raffle begin at 5:00pm. The pre-supper wine and cheese starts at 5:15, and as per tradition, members of the NPH will select the wines for the evening in advance. Dinner will start around 6:15. Donations are still needed for the bucket raffle - please contact Keith Dieroff at (905) 545-5859.

Tickets are priced at $25 for members and their spouses/partners, and $32 for non-members (includes annual membership to the NPH). Please call John Stevens at 685-6734, or Glenn Barnett at (905) 628-2093 to make arrangements for tickets.

The Grimsby Curling Club is located at 277 Kerman Avenue, Grimsby. Please see page 6 of this newsletter for directions.

Mark your calendars. See you there!

2007 NPH OPEN HOUSE

The NPH will once again hold it's annual Open House on Good Friday, April 6, 2007 at Beamer Memorial Conservation Area in Grimsby.

This year's activities will include displays, nature groups, 'hawk talks' by Mike Street and the children's program presented by Carla Carlson of Niagara Nature Tours. If possible, a rehabilitated raptor will be released during the day.

Visit the NPH website [www.hwcn.org/link/niaghawk] in March for complete details about the Open House, including an Agenda with times for the day's activities.

Everyone is welcome. Invite your family and friends...it should be a good day for them, and the birds too!

NOTE TO COUNTERS

There are still some days uncovered in April and May 2007. Anyone who can help count is asked to contact the counter coordinator, Mike Street. Anyone who would like to learn to count raptors should also get in touch with Mike.

What's Inside...

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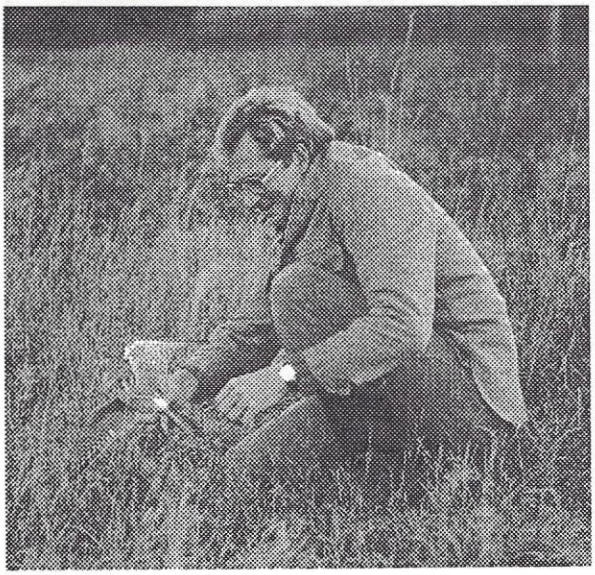
IN MEMORIAM - BRUCE WILLIAM DUNCAN (1946-2006)



Bruce Duncan - environmentalist, hawkwatcher, raptor bander, educator and winner of HMANA's highest honour, the Maurice Broun Award for Lifetime Achievement in Raptor Conservation - passed away in Hamilton, Ontario on 11 November 2006. His sudden and senseless death resulted from a traffic accident caused by the driver of the other vehicle involved.

Born in the United Kingdom of Scottish heritage, Bruce came to Canada at a young age with his parents and siblings. After receiving a degree in Psychology from Wilfred Laurier University he spent three years working as a guide and interpreter at Quetico Provincial Park in northern Ontario. This experience caused him to return to school to earn a degree in biology at the University of Waterloo. After 11 years as a resource interpreter for the Grand River Conservation Authority, in 1988 Bruce joined the staff of the Hamilton Conservation Authority (HCA) to look after their outdoor education program. He became the HCA's staff ecologist, then Director of Watershed Planning and Engineering, and in 2004 was named General Manager and Chief Administrative Officer of the HCA.

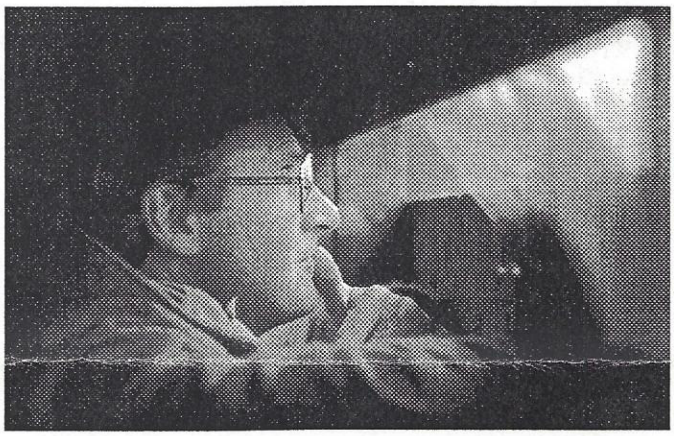
His interest in raptors led him to spend many years as a bander and hawkwatcher at the fall hawkwatch site at Hawk Cliff, on the north shore of Lake Erie near Port Stanley, Ontario. As a bander he was known for not wearing gloves, even with the largest eagles, and he had the scars to prove it. Bruce met his future wife, Janet Snaith, through his work at Hawk Cliff. Their involvement with raptors and the location was such that their 1992 marriage took place at Hawk Cliff, with both of them (and the Minister) wearing binoculars and a firm understanding in place that if a really good bird showed up the ceremony would be delayed a bit!



Bruce also helped out at the spring hawkwatch at Grimsby, on the south shore of Lake Ontario, which had been started in 1975. In 1990 he spearheaded the organization of the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch (NPH). As the NPH's first President, he guided the membership in continuing the work of the Grimsby Hawkwatch, finding and training new hawkwatchers, and educating the public about the natural phenomenon taking place right over their heads. His 'Hawk Talks' during the annual Open House held at Beamer Memorial Conservation Area, the NPH watch site, were always popular. Almost every year during one of these talks a Bald Eagle would appear, giving those assembled a real treat. Despite his busy work schedule he would book at least two days in the hawkwatcher rotation each season.

With his broad interest in nature, Bruce was willing to get involved. He served as President of the Hamilton Naturalists' Club and the Ontario Bird Banding Association, as well as on boards and committees of many organizations, including the Long Point Bird Observatory and the Owl Rehabilitation Foundation. Recognizing that general interest in bird watching was increasing, in 1986 he founded the Hamilton Bird Study Group, which he led for 10 years; the group is still going strong and recently celebrated its 20th anniversary. In 1992 he was named Hamilton's Environmentalist of the Year and also received the Canada 125 Award for Environmental Service to the Community.

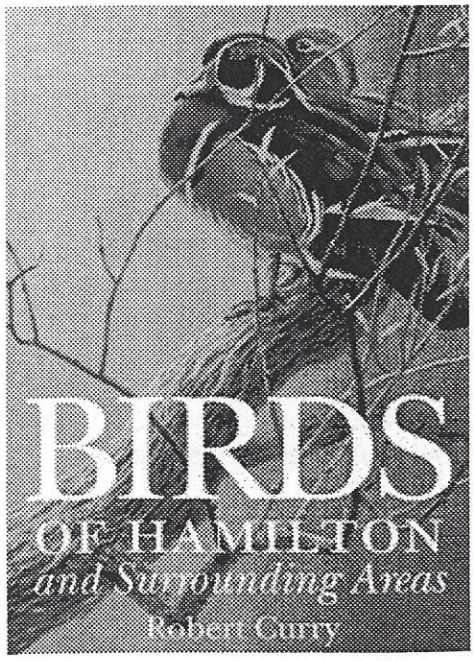
In addition to banding and hawkwatching, Bruce wrote or contributed to many articles on birds of prey for different journals, among them HMANA's Hawk Migration Studies. He served on HMANA's Board of Directors, was a presenter at the HMANA conventions at Cape May in 1991 and Corpus Christi in 1993, and attended the 1995 and 2000 conventions at Windsor and Hawk Mountain. In the late 1980s he coordinated reintroduction hacking programs in the Hamilton area for Bald Eagles and Peregrine Falcons, and since 1995 acted as consultant and primary bander for the Hamilton Community Peregrine Project.



In a news story the Hamilton Spectator called Bruce "a community treasure" and headlined an editorial, "We lost a teacher". The memorial service on November 25 was attended by so many people that the large funeral home was overflowing and extra parking had to be arranged. While pictures of Bruce were displayed on large screens in all the rooms, a representative of the Government of Ontario, colleagues from the HCA and several friends spoke warmly in his memory. Bruce is survived by Janet, their two children, James and Katie, his sister Margaret and brother Jim. A quiet man with a dry sense of humour, his only wish was to share his knowledge and love of nature with his family and others. He was perhaps most aptly described by his friend Bob Curry, as "a gentleman, and a gentle man". Bruce is and will be missed. Whenever in the future a Bald Eagle goes over Beamer, many will think of him. ❖

BIRDS OF HAMILTON AND SURROUNDING AREAS

In October 2006, "Birds of Hamilton and Surrounding Areas" by Robert Curry was published by the Hamilton Naturalists' Club (HNC). This 676-page book documents the status of over 386 species of birds that have occurred in the Hamilton Study Area (HSA). The HSA covers a 25-mile/ 40 km radius circle centred on Hamilton, and so also includes all or parts of Hamilton, Halton, Brant, Haldimand, Norfolk, Peel, Waterloo, Wellington and Niagara counties.



As well as detailed bird species accounts written by Bob Curry, the book features 32 pages of colour photographs, original art by Robert Bateman, David Beadle and Peter Burke, a provocative foreword by Fred Bodsworth, 20 chapters by leading local field naturalists, and detailed colour maps of the regional hot spots and seasonal bar graphs for each species. Look especially for the history of the NPH by Mike Street and the chapter on Hamilton's Peregrine Falcons by Mike and Audrey Gamble.

This $60.00 book is available through the HNC (www.hamiltonnature.org, 905-381-0329) and local book retailers. ❖

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by John Stevens

As I write this, we have just come through the first cold week of the season and here in St. Catharines, it has been snowing all day, although with little accumulation. Nevertheless it feels like winter has arrived at last, and you want me to tell you what days I'll count hawks? True folks; the calendar says it's the beginning of February, but we're only three weeks away from the official start of the hawkwatch season, and winter will be over almost as soon as it started, or so we hope.

Last year in this space, I speculated that the mild weather we had in January 2006 might have an adverse effect on the counts for large buteos and Bald Eagles. After having had our best year ever for eagles by far, I'm getting out of the prediction business while I still have some credibility.

Just stick to the facts, Stevens. And the fact is that the Raptor Population Index (RPI) program will be using our data in their first assessment of data from spring migrations, which is just getting underway. Between Bill Smith and Mike Street, with an assortment of auditors, we've managed to get our complete records for the last eleven years into electronic format. This includes all the years that we've had the tower and the Counter's Manual and should be our most consistent data. We in the NPH know that spring data is better than fall data because (choose three):

- the birds aren't so high;
- the counters are more experienced;
- there aren't all those young birds getting in the way;
- the serious birders have no better place to go;
- the air is clearer in the spring;
- there are fewer good places to watch and therefore more watchers per site.

Let's hope the study tells us more than the Red-headed Condor (a.k.a. TV) population is increasing.

As you will see elsewhere in this issue, the NPH has lost one of its foremost members but I'm sure Bruce expects us to continue the good work without his guidance. The NPH has made a donation to the RPI program in Bruce's memory as he was an ardent supporter of it from the beginning. There is also good news to report as Tom Reavley's eyesight is back to 20/20 and we won't be able to fool him anymore with reports of imaginary Merlins, low over the vineyard.

Hey! HERE THEY COME. See you at Beamer. ❖

HMANA NEWS

by Art Slaughter

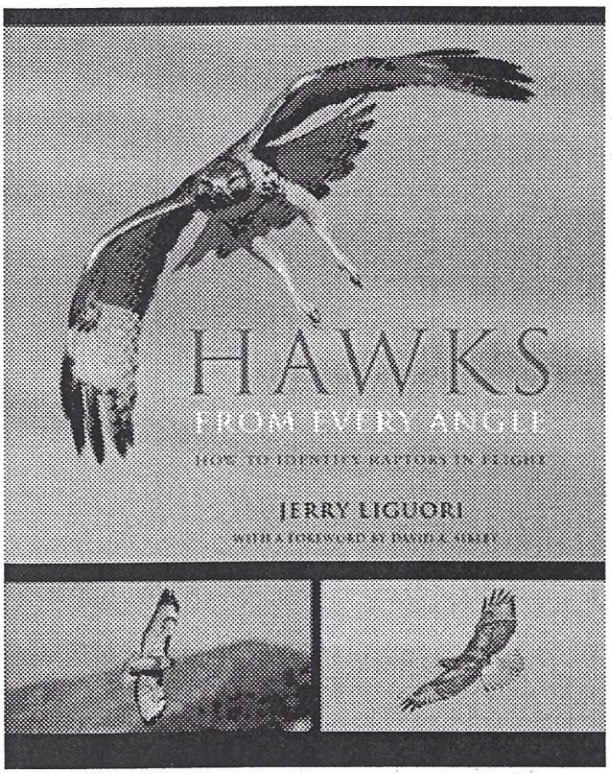
In late 2006, Iain McLeod was elected the new Chair of HMANA, replacing Will Weber whose term was up. The organization has developed a strategic plan, with the Raptor Population Index (RPI), and similar scientific applications of our census data continuing to be a focus. HMANA is in need of additional funding for this pivotal project, so please visit their website (hmana.org) and do what you can to help.

HMANA's first annual field trip to Veracruz was a huge success, with the group seeing 222 different species. The 2006 tour guide was Veracruz/Pro Natura pioneer, Ernesto R. Inzunza. Stay tuned for information on HMANA's 2007 Veracruz tour.

In September 2007, the tri-annual HMANA conference will be held in conjunction with the Raptor Research Foundation meeting in Allentown, Pennsylvania. Several field trips to Hawk Mountain and other venues are planned, so please mark Sept 12 -16 on your calendar. ❖

HAWKS FROM EVERY ANGLE

Book Review by Keith Dieroff with technical notes from Mike Street



Hawks from Every Angle: How to Identify Raptors in Flight. was written by Jerry Liguori with a foreword by David A. Sibley. It consists of 144 pages with 339 colour photos, 32 black and white photos, and 2 maps.

Let me start by saying I like this book. For day-to-day hawkwatching, I think it is by far the best I've seen, and it will replace Peterson's as the guide that I bring to Beamer on count days.

As Mike says later in his notes, this book is worth buying for the photos alone. I also found the shapes pages at the end of each chapter very useful for hawkwatching in the field.

Before you rush out to buy this book based on my endorsement, here are a few notes from Mike about the strengths and weaknesses of the content:

1. The book is worth buying for the photos alone. The eye-level and shots-from-above pictures of raptors are amazing. Except for Hawk Mountain in the fall, there are not many locations in eastern North America where a hawkwatcher can get face-to-face or topside views.

2. The Glossary mentions the bib but this is not shown in the Anatomy drawing on page 3. Text is not always consistent, e.g. Swainson's Hawk description on p.49 mentions remiges, but these are not shown or described in the Anatomy drawing.

3. It would have been nice if the site maps on pages 8 & 9 included at least one Canadian hawkwatch. We've been watching hawks at Beamer for a lot longer than some of the sites shown, and there's lots of room on the page.

4. The timetable on page 11 may be OK for western birds but is a good two weeks late for most species during spring and fall migrations in the east.

5. Page numbers are missing on many pages, making it a bit difficult to navigate the book.

6. Some of the descriptive text seems overdone, in that too many points of reference are given and occasionally appear contradictory. For example, the paragraph on Red-tail undersides on p. 54 describes western characteristics followed by eastern, but then closes out the paragraph by saying, "Note that many Red-tailed Hawks from eastern Canada resemble typical Western birds."

7. I often found it hard to keep track of the plumage points because some words and phrases used for adults were then immediately repeated in paragraphs on juveniles or morphs. I think that if the same info was provided in table format the side-by-side layout might have made comparisons between forms more easy to grasp.

Aside from few 'warts' described above, this is an excellent book. It is tailor-made for hawkwatchers, as it provides photos and descriptions of situations you might encounter at any hawkwatch, including Beamer. ❖

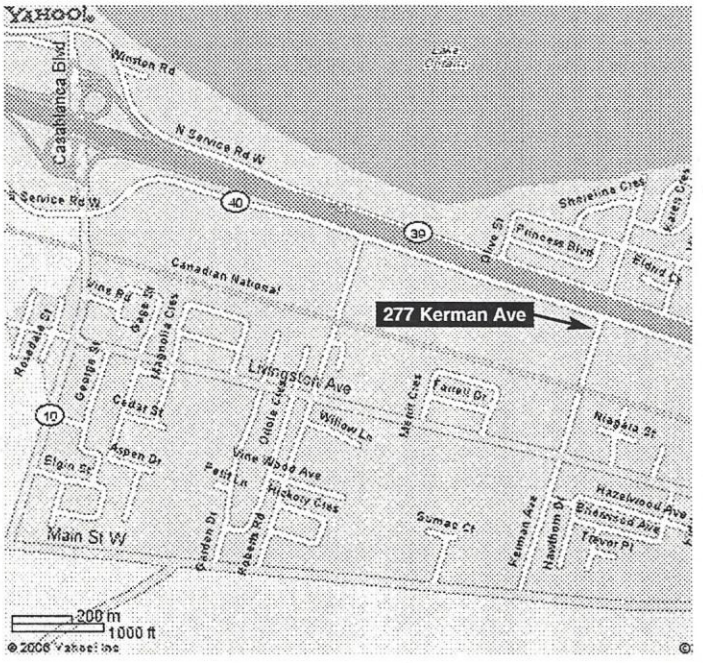
DIRECTIONS TO ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

From Hamilton, Burlington, Oakville, Toronto:

- Take the QEW Niagara to Grimsby and exit at Casablanca Blvd
- From the offramp, turn south on Casablanca and then make an immediate left onto South Service
- Proceed east on the South Service Road to Kerman Avenue, turn right (south) onto Kerman and the Curling Club is on the right hand side.

From St. Catharines, Niagara Falls:

- Take the QEW Niagara to Grimsby and exit at the Maple Ave/Ontario Street/Christie Street exit
- Continue on the offramp to Christie Street and then turn left and head south to the South Service Road
- Turn right on the South Service Road and proceed west to Kerman Avenue
- Turn left (south) onto Kerman Avenue and the Curling Club is on the right hand side.



2007 Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Executive

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NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH MIGRATION CALENDAR FOR BEAMER MEMORIAL CONSERVATION AREA

NOTES:

1. Species initals and Right (>) or Left (<) arrow:
   This combination indicates the start (>) or end (<) of the normal (at Beamer) migration period for that species. The same in bold type indicates the start or end of a noticeable peak period for that species. The box in which this combination is located indicates the day and month on which the period is likely to start or end.
2. A number, followed by species initial, followed by a slash (/)and a two digit number:
   In this combination, the largest number of that species ever seen in one day is given first; the two-digit number following the / indicates the year in which this occurred. The box in which this combination is located indicates the day and month on which the event occurred. Example: 655 RS/94 in the March 23rd box indicates that the highest number of Red-shouldered Hawks recorded in one day was 655, seen on March 23rd, 1994.

TV - Turkey Vulture
BV - Black Vulture
OS - Osprey
SK - American Swallow-tailed Kite
MK - Mississippi Kite
BE - Bald Eagle
GE - Golden Eagle
NH - Northern Harrier
SS - Sharp-shinned Hawk
CH - Cooper's Hawk
NG - Northern Goshawk
RS - Red-shouldered Hawk
RT - Red-tailed Hawk
SW - Swainson's Hawk
RL - Rough-legged Hawk
FH - Ferruginous Hawk
AK - American Kestrel
ME - Merlin
PF - Peregrine Falcon
PR - Prairie Falcon
GF - Gyrfalcon
BW - Broad-winged Hawk

The following information, based on 30+ years of data has been updated to show significant events up to the year 2004.

Largest number of raptors in one season: 19,724 in 1985.

BE>, NH>, SS>, CH>, RT>, RL>, AK> begin February 20th.

MARCH						
1 **RT>** NG>	2 GE>	3 RS>	4	5	6	7
8 TV>	9	10	11 **RL>**	12 **AK>**	13 **CH>** **RS>**	14 44AK/90
15	16 744 RT/96	17	18 **BE>**	19	20 **TV>** ME> PF>	21
22	23 **NH>** 655 RS/94	24 11 NG/84 19 BE/03	25	26 **SS>** 2 PF/91 1355 TV/88	27	28 2 PF/90
29 46 RL/04	30	31 OS> 1 BV/00*				

Largest # of raptors in month: 5,670 in March 1988; largest # of raptors in one day in month: 2,080 on March 26th, 1988

APRIL						
1	2	3 2 PF/91	4 1 BV/92	5 50 CH/93	6	7
8 **OS><RS**	9	10 BW>	11	12 16 OS/92	13 1 FH/92	14
15 **BW>** SW> 1 SK/94	16 **<BE** 2 PF/90	17	18 35 NH/96 1556 SS/76	19 1 PR/95**	20 1 GF/77	21 6007 BW/85
22	23 1 FH/98**	24 **<OS** 1 FH/02*	25 **<TV** 6 ME/96 2 PF/94	26	27	28 4 GE/96
29 2 SW/98*	30 **<RL**					

Largest # of raptors in month: 15,012 in April 1984; largest # of raptors in one day in month: 7,007 on April 21st, 1985

MAY						
1	2 2 SW/97*	3	4 **<RT**	5 <SW	6 <PF	7
8	9	10 <GE	11 1 MK/97*	12 **<NH** **<AK**	13 **<CH** <BE	14 **<SS** 1 MK/03*
15 **<BW** <RL <ME	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25 <OS	26	27	28
29	30	31 <TV<NH <SS<CH <NG<RS <AK	*BW and RT continue beyond May 31st...*			

Largest # of raptors in month: 2,685 in May 1980; largest # of raptors in one day in month: 1,492 on May 4th, 1989

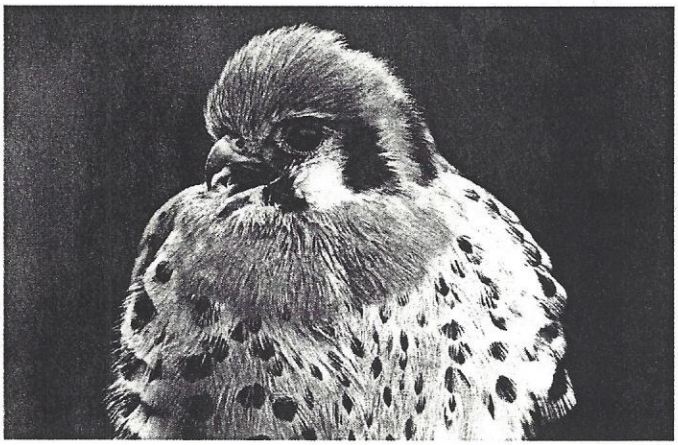
** Sighting not reviewed/accepted by Ontario Bird Records Committee*
*** First accepted Prairie Falcon record in Ontario*

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch

Newsletter

August 2007 **Newsletter #35**

2007 ROUNDUP



Open House Kestrel - courtesy of Tom Thomas

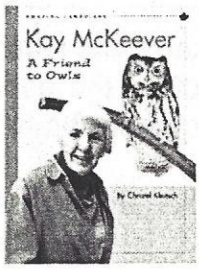
The NPH Open House was held on Good Friday, April 6, 2007 at Beamer Memorial Conservation Area in Grimsby. It was a cold wet day, but the turnout was not bad, considering the less than ideal weather.

The live bird demonstrations were expanded this year, with an American Kestrel, a Golden Eagle, and a Great-horned Owl provided by the Canadian Raptor Conservancy, as well as a Red-tailed Hawk, courtesy of the Mountsberg Wildlife Centre. These four birds, offered visitors an up-close look at a few of the raptor species they weren't likely to see overhead.

The official count for the Open House was 17 raptors, including 13 Turkey Vultures. The best bird of the day was a Merlin that buzzed through between 1 and 2pm, while a few visitors were still in attendance.

Next year, Good Friday is on March 21, several weeks earlier than this year - here's hoping the weatherman cooperates. ❖

The Annual General Meeting took place at the Grimsby Curling Club on Saturday, April 28.



The guest speaker, Katherine (Kay) McKeever, presented an excellent program about owls and the work of the Owl Foundation, which she co-founded with her husband Larry in 1975.

Kay started working with injured owls in 1965. She is not only a bird rehabilitator, but an architect and a formidable personality. She captivated her audience with pictures and stories of her ground-breaking discoveries about owl breeding behaviour.

The lengths to which the McKeevers have gone over the past 42 years to rehabilitate injured owls and breed unreleaseable birds is nothing short of remarkable.

Thank you again to Kay for an excellent presentation, and many thanks to those who donated prizes for the bucket raffle and silent auction (new this year), your generosity is, as always, much appreciated!

Note: The Annual General Meeting aka the 'banquet' was well attended this year (see President's Corner on page 2 of this newsletter). As a result, a ticket request form for next year's banquet will be included with your renewal notice in the February issue of this newsletter. ❖

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by John Stevens

Following what was arguably our most successful annual meeting and dinner, your executive committee has already met twice. The executive responsibilities for the coming year remain generally as they were in the past year. The one change was the newest recruit to the committee, Linda Cherriere, who has assumed the position of Membership Director. Welcome Linda!

Our membership has not been growing in recent years, even though our fees have not changed since we started in 1989. We need to attract members, perhaps as supporters rather than as active participants in our activities. Efforts to enhance the benefits of membership, such as having access to the current data on Hawkcount, have not generated any significant number of distant members anxious to see the numbers. One of the benefits of membership has been attending the annual meeting and dinner, which costs more to stage than the fee charged to attend. However, this year a few of our members, who didn't respond quickly enough missed out when we reached capacity about two weeks before the event and they couldn't even enjoy that benefit. Linda has some plans to improve the number of members but if you have any suggestions, please pass them along to her.

The second meeting was a belated workshop to revise the Counter's Manual. This document is only five years old and not out of date or incorrect but there are a few sections that need tweaking. Mike Street noted all the suggested edits and is producing the draft of the revised text, which we plan to have ready for distribution to the counters in February next year.

I've not seen anything in the way of output as yet, but the RPI program has 17 years of data (1991-2007) from the Beamer C. A. Parking Lot that is complete, audited and available for viewing on Hawkcount. This has been a major undertaking to get this done and Mike Street and Bill Smith are to be commended for all the effort that they have put into it. There is still eleven years worth of full coverage historical data to be entered (1980-1990), for most of which we don't have the original sheets. That will be a lot more work. Fortunately, the new data is being entered as it is collected, reducing the risk of losing the information and spreading the effort over an extended period.

Recently I was asked about the hawk migration in the autumn through the Niagara Peninsula. We call ourselves the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch but only deal with the spring event. Does anyone have any information on a fall migration through the Peninsula? I speculated that there might be a flight along the Lake Erie shoreline but where to see it in Niagara? Maybe it's time for another "ad hawk" committee to investigate. ❖

2007 MIGRATION SUMMARY

by Keith Dieroff

Writing the Migration Summary for the 2007 season turned out to be much harder than I expected. There were no significant rarities, and unfortunately, there were not a lot of good news stories, so I'll just stick to the facts.

The first widely known fact is that Turkey Vulture numbers continue to increase. While we didn't match our apogee from last year of 5,934, Turkey Vulture numbers were higher than both their short-term (5-year) and long-term (20-year) average.

Merlin numbers also continue their upward trend. This year's count of 18 was also above both the short-term and long-term averages.

Counts for several species were mixed, including Osprey, Bald Eagle, and Red-shouldered Hawk. Both Ospreys and Bald Eagles were above their 20-year average but below the 5-year benchmark. Conversely, Red-shouldered Hawks were above their short-term average, but below the long-term average.

This leaves 10 species of raptor below both their short-term and long-term averages, including:

- Northern Harrier - 15% below short-term average; 25% below long-term average
- Sharp-shinned Hawk - 31% below short-term average; 99% below long-term average
- Cooper's Hawk - 8% below short-term average; 8% below long-term average
- Northern Goshawk - 10% below short-term average; 60% below long-term average
- Broad-winged Hawk - 29% below short-term average; 14% below long-term average
- Red-tailed Hawk - 12% below short-term average; 22% below long-term average
- Rough-legged Hawk - 23% below short-term average; 9% below long-term average
- Golden Eagle - 22% below short-term average; 16% below long-term average
- American Kestrel - 3% below short-term average; 22% below long-term average
- Peregrine Falcon - 69% below short-term average; 51% below long-term average

Thanks very much once again to all the counters who agreed to count or assist on one or more days during the 2007 Hawkwatch: Alfred Adamo, Glenn Barnett, Bouwe Bergsma, John Black, David Brewer, Geoff Carpentier, Barry Cherriere, Linda Cherriere, Jim Coey, Bob Curry, Sandra Davey, Keith Dieroff, Jim Dowall, Chris Escott, Tim Foran, Denys Gardiner, Ann Gray, Brian Gray, Colin Horstead, Marcie Jacklin, Kevin McLaughlin, Gord McNulty, George Meyers, Brian Mishell, George Naylor, Alfred Raab, Tom Reavley, Glenda Slessor, Bill Smith, Terrie Smith, John Stevens, Mike Street, Tom Thomas, Sandra van Hullenaar, Phil Waggett. If anyone's name has been omitted please accept our apologies and let Mike Street know. ❖

BALD EAGLE COMPARISON - 2006 VS. 2007

This year the NPH started tracking the as-reported ages of Bald Eagles. Counters were asked to record ages, and were contacted as soon as the sheet arrived if this information was missing. We were also able to determine the ages of most of the 2006 eagles from the report sheets, although there are more unknown ages in that year.

The exercise has proved useful because we have been able to document where the huge drop in BEs occurred in 2007 - first and second year birds. The table at right shows the counts by month and year. Based on the sighting of more than 20 sub-adult BEs near Nanticoke in one day at the end of February 2007, it seems obvious that young Bald Eagles moved north earlier this year than last and most did not come by Beamer.

	2006				2007			
Age	**Mar**	**Apr**	**May**	**Ttl**	**Mar**	**Apr**	**May**	**Ttl**
1st year	11	2	2	**15**	1	2	1	**4**
2nd year	10	0	1	**11**	1	2	0	**3**
3rd year	2	0	0	**2**	3	1	0	**4**
4th year	1	0	1	**2**	0	0	1	**1**
4+	0	0	1	**1**	0	0	0	**0**
Adult	42	2	0	**44**	28	9	4	**41**
Unknown	2	6	2	**10**	1	0	0	**1**
Total	**68**	**10**	**7**	**85**	**34**	**14**	**6**	**54**

2007 Monthly Counts

Species	February	March	April	May	Total
Black Vulture	0	0	0	0	**0**
Turkey Vulture	0	2,472	2,740	173	**5,385**
Osprey	0	2	45	3	**50**
Bald Eagle	0	34	14	6	**54**
Northern Harrier	0	31	55	29	**115**
Sharp-shinned Hawk	0	443	779	329	**1,551**
Cooper's Hawk	0	117	73	17	**207**
Northern Goshawk	0	4	4	0	**8**
Red-shouldered Hawk	0	614	24	3	**641**
Broad-winged Hawk	0	0	2,014	399	**2,413**
Red-tailed Hawk	6	1,426	653	124	**2,209**
Rough-legged Hawk	0	39	35	1	**75**
Golden Eagle	0	0	3	4	**7**
American Kestrel	0	26	45	6	**77**
Merlin	0	2	14	2	**18**
Peregrine Falcon	0	1	1	0	**2**
Gyrfalcon	0	0	0	0	**0**
Unidentified Accipiter	0	1	6	0	**7**
Unidentified Buteo	0	18	39	2	**59**
Unidentified Falcon	0	0	5	0	**5**
Unidentified Eagle	0	2	1	0	**3**
Unidentified Raptor	0	9	34	17	**60**
Total	**6**	**5,241**	**6,584**	**1,115**	**12,946**
Hours Counted	**3.00**	**202.33**	**201.58**	**100.17**	**507.08**
Birds/Hour	***2.0***	***25.9***	***32.7***	***11.1***	***25.5***

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March 2007

Species	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Total
Black Vulture	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Turkey Vulture	0	0	2	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	18	25	12	78	0	14	21	10	21	22	34	862	0	92	102	474	412	89	108	68	**2,472**
Osprey	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	**2**
Bald Eagle	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	5	0	0	1	0	3	5	1	6	0	1	1	3	2	0	0	1	**34**
Northern Harrier	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	4	6	0	3	4	6	1	1	3	0	**31**
Sharp-shinned Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	5	1	2	0	4	0	0	4	0	0	11	3	37	0	8	77	222	51	4	11	2	**443**
Cooper's Hawk	0	0	3	0	6	0	0	0	2	0	4	4	2	0	2	0	0	4	1	6	12	2	25	0	10	4	10	16	1	2	1	**117**
Northern Goshawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**4**
Red-shouldered Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	5	0	0	3	0	8	88	12	229	0	47	64	112	41	4	0	0	**614**
Broad-winged Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Red-tailed Hawk	1	2	5	2	9	0	2	7	21	0	43	13	15	1	96	0	7	35	3	84	43	13	349	0	52	86	129	275	72	33	28	**1,426**
Rough-legged Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	5	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	7	0	2	2	5	8	3	0	0	**39**
Golden Eagle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
American Kestrel	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	3	0	0	14	2	1	0	1	0	**26**
Merlin	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**2**
Peregrine Falcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
Gyrfalcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Unidentified Accipiter	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
Unidentified Buteo	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	6	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	1	**18**
Unidentified Falcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Unidentified Eagle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	**2**
Unidentified Raptor	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	**9**
Total	**1**	**2**	**12**	**7**	**16**	**0**	**3**	**8**	**25**	**0**	**63**	**38**	**45**	**13**	**196**	**1**	**21**	**72**	**15**	**128**	**183**	**71**	**1,533**	**0**	**217**	**356**	**974**	**807**	**174**	**158**	**102**	**5,241**
Hours Counted	*3.0*	*6.0*	*2.0*	*5.0*	*8.0*	*5.0*	*5.7*	*8.0*	*7.0*	*4.0*	*8.0*	*7.5*	*6.0*	*8.8*	*8.0*	*4.8*	*3.5*	*8.0*	*4.0*	*7.5*	*7.0*	*7.2*	*9.0*	*2.0*	*7.0*	*8.6*	*8.5*	*9.2*	*7.3*	*8.5*	*8.5*	***202.3***

April 2007

Species	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	Total
Black Vulture	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Turkey Vulture	0	196	1,114	15	0	13	12	28	59	199	324	50	15	108	0	0	7	110	49	50	57	47	58	93	0	5	31	1	64	35	**2,740**
Osprey	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	1	3	5	13	7	1	0	2	0	1	1	0	2	1	**45**
Bald Eagle	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	5	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	**14**
Northern Harrier	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	7	2	0	7	0	0	1	3	4	4	5	2	1	3	0	0	5	0	5	0	**55**
Sharp-shinned Hawk	0	27	55	2	0	1	1	0	2	28	25	10	0	16	0	0	2	10	46	20	29	127	103	59	1	17	122	0	45	31	**779**
Cooper's Hawk	0	2	12	1	0	0	1	0	5	6	3	4	0	2	0	0	0	5	2	6	6	2	0	4	0	0	4	0	5	3	**73**
Northern Goshawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	**4**
Red-shouldered Hawk	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	**24**
Broad-winged Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	17	147	68	726	0	145	53	0	778	77	**2,014**
Red-tailed Hawk	0	59	56	0	0	2	5	0	4	75	47	13	1	64	0	0	6	52	58	41	30	20	2	49	0	3	18	0	36	12	**653**
Rough-legged Hawk	0	2	9	0	0	0	1	0	0	4	1	1	0	4	0	0	0	0	7	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	**35**
Golden Eagle	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	**3**
American Kestrel	0	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	1	0	4	0	0	0	2	0	2	3	4	8	0	0	3	0	0	7	0	**45**
Merlin	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	4	0	**14**
Peregrine Falcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
Gyrfalcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Unidentified Accipiter	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	**6**
Unidentified Buteo	0	0	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	3	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	2	3	**39**
Unidentified Falcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**5**
Unidentified Eagle	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
Unidentified Raptor	0	0	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	1	3	0	7	2	**34**
Total	**0**	**290**	**1,293**	**19**	**0**	**17**	**20**	**28**	**71**	**330**	**414**	**85**	**16**	**216**	**0**	**0**	**19**	**188**	**172**	**146**	**158**	**366**	**244**	**951**	**2**	**177**	**238**	**1**	**959**	**164**	**6,584**
Hours Counted	*1.0*	*8.0*	*8.3*	*6.9*	*0.0*	*7.5*	*4.5*	*8.0*	*7.8*	*9.0*	*7.8*	*7.6*	*5.5*	*8.0*	*0.0*	*4.3*	*5.8*	*8.3*	*9.5*	*8.0*	*11.3*	*10.0*	*9.7*	*9.0*	*2.8*	*3.3*	*8.5*	*2.5*	*9.4*	*9.3*	***201.6***

May 2007

Species	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Total
Black Vulture	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Turkey Vulture	0	23	21	78	0	5	29	0	0	0	0	0	8	3	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**173**
Osprey	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**3**
Bald Eagle	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**6**
Northern Harrier	1	5	6	6	1	0	4	0	2	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**29**
Sharp-shinned Hawk	15	55	32	71	15	13	5	1	60	48	0	2	5	5	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**329**
Cooper's Hawk	2	6	1	0	0	0	2	0	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**17**
Northern Goshawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Red-shouldered Hawk	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**3**
Broad-winged Hawk	0	325	34	7	0	6	3	0	12	4	0	1	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**399**
Red-tailed Hawk	0	36	24	18	7	9	6	0	4	4	0	2	13	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**124**
Rough-legged Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
Golden Eagle	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**4**
American Kestrel	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**6**
Merlin	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**2**
Peregrine Falcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Gyrfalcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Unidentified Accipiter	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Unidentified Buteo	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**2**
Unidentified Falcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Unidentified Eagle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Unidentified Raptor	0	13	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**17**
Total	**19**	**469**	**121**	**185**	**24**	**35**	**50**	**2**	**84**	**63**	**0**	**7**	**36**	**11**	**9**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1,115**
Hours Counted	*4.5*	*10.0*	*8.0*	*8.0*	*7.5*	*7.0*	*6.0*	*5.0*	*9.5*	*8.0*	*0.0*	*4.2*	*9.5*	*8.0*	*5.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	***100.2***

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Annual Summaries

Species	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	'87-'06 Avg	'02-'06 Avg	'75-'07 Total
Black Vulture	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0.2	0.2	3
Turkey Vulture	977	2,331	1,406	1,463	1,785	1,990	1,852	3,189	2,151	2,946	3,092	3,277	3,376	2,971	3,402	4,065	5,026	4,623	5,158	5,934	5,385	3,051	4,961	72,724
Osprey	30	41	36	40	46	64	45	69	47	56	28	42	43	46	71	48	59	51	47	65	50	49	54	1,268
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.1	0.0	1
Mississippi Kite	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0.1	0.2	2
Bald Eagle	7	16	17	15	17	22	14	40	24	33	17	32	30	25	30	54	65	62	71	85	54	34	67	790
Northern Harrier	217	162	175	194	219	209	126	177	177	172	125	84	91	125	108	135	97	223	128	96	115	152	136	4,215
Sharp-shinned Hawk	2,831	3,108	3,576	7,004	3,767	3,418	3,475	4,846	2,136	3,290	3,047	2,816	1,983	2,468	2,551	3,134	2,351	2,310	1,756	1,753	1,551	3,081	2,261	108,632
Cooper's Hawk	199	229	180	311	220	199	209	263	256	295	221	187	240	177	167	272	219	252	183	202	207	224	226	6,147
Northern Goshawk	31	27	14	24	20	34	28	73	15	37	16	14	6	3	14	9	6	11	12	6	8	20	9	690
Red-shouldered Hawk	876	861	1,102	1,341	761	1,187	1,030	1,419	705	694	796	549	678	498	459	566	455	524	641	679	641	791	573	23,688
Broad-winged Hawk	1,628	2,910	2,304	4,428	2,063	2,761	1,963	2,335	1,779	1,550	1,849	3,886	1,833	2,368	5,229	3,668	3,327	2,532	5,537	2,026	2,413	2,799	3,418	105,778
Swainson's Hawk	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	2	0	1	2	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0.7	0.2	14
Red-tailed Hawk	3,265	3,567	2,615	3,482	3,023	3,861	2,684	2,890	2,861	3,584	2,572	2,235	2,216	2,616	2,358	2,033	2,258	2,513	2,693	3,097	2,209	2,821	2,519	88,986
Ferruginous Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0.2	0.2	3
Rough-legged Hawk	77	87	45	127	145	128	35	62	87	98	44	32	69	49	71	22	40	204	120	102	75	82	98	2,437
Golden Eagle	6	3	7	10	8	12	6	10	4	13	6	6	10	13	6	8	8	8	8	13	7	8	9	224
American Kestrel	85	148	132	207	180	92	93	122	70	61	84	77	69	95	77	99	102	87	45	63	77	99	79	3,062
Merlin	12	5	4	9	11	12	9	23	14	22	14	15	10	22	6	19	11	21	15	13	18	13	16	313
Peregrine Falcon	1	4	2	6	5	6	2	4	1	2	2	4	1	7	3	6	7	5	5	9	2	4	6	97
Gyrfalcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0.1	0.2	2
Prairie Falcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.1	0.0	1
Unidentified Raptor	266	634	592	582	2,681	681	534	452	480	249	189	227	340	160	281	737	328	234	183	178	134	500	332	16,601
Total	**10,508**	**14,134**	**12,208**	**19,243**	**14,951**	**14,678**	**12,107**	**15,977**	**10,808**	**13,103**	**12,105**	**13,487**	**10,995**	**11,644**	**14,833**	**14,877**	**14,360**	**13,661**	**16,602**	**14,322**	**12,946**	**13,730**	**14,764**	**421,104**
Hours Counted	*681.5*	*608.2*	*499.3*	*574.5*	*548.5*	*541.5*	*538.5*	*531.0*	*555.7*	*454.5*	*508.4*	*499.0*	*502.8*	*527.4*	*545.0*	*556.3*	*532.0*	*495.5*	*495.2*	*533.5*	*507.1*	*536.4*	*522.5*	*15,736*
Birds/Hour	15.4	23.2	24.5	33.5	27.3	27.1	22.5	30.1	19.4	28.8	23.8	27.0	21.9	22.1	27.2	26.7	27.0	27.6	33.5	26.8	25.5	25.6	28.3	26.8

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch

Newsletter

February 2008 Newsletter #36

COUNTER'S WORKSHOP FEBRUARY 23, 2008

The NPH will hold a Counter's Workshop on Saturday, February 23, 2008, starting at 2:00pm, at the Hamilton Spectator auditorium.

The purpose of the workshop is to:

- Launch and discuss the updated NPH Counter's Guide
- Provide a refresher on some of the more tricky aspects of raptor identification



The ID refresher will consist of a PowerPoint presentation containing over 100 raptor photos by Barry Cherriere, with input from Tom Thomas and Tim Foran.

Directions to the Spectator auditorium located at 44 Frid Street, Hamilton are as follows...

From west and north of Hamilton:

- Exit the 403 on the Main Street West exit and turn right on Dundurn Street South
- Take the first right on Chatham Street and then turn right again on Frid Street

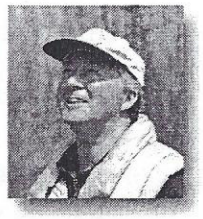
From within Hamilton and points east:

- Turn left onto Dundurn Street South from King Street West
- Take the first right past Main Street West, which is Chatham Street, then turn right again on Frid Street

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GENERAL MEETING & BANQUET APRIL 26, 2008



This year's Annual General Meeting and dinner will be held on Saturday, April 26, at the Grimsby Curling Club. The guest speaker will be Barry Cherriere, who will present his DVD, titled 'Beamer Spring Hawk Watch'.

Barry is a life member of the NPH. His first visit to Beamer was in 1977, but he began taking photos of birds in 1975.

His raptor photos have been featured in the NPH's hawk identification presentation since 1979, and in numerous publications, including Bob Curry's Birds of Hamilton and Surrounding Areas, and the Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Ontario (2001 - 2005).

Socializing and the bucket raffle begin at 5:00pm. The pre-supper wine and cheese starts at 5:15, and as per tradition, members of the NPH will select the wines for the evening in advance. Dinner will start around 6:15. Donations are still needed for the bucket raffle - please contact Keith Dieroff at (905) 545-5859.

Tickets are priced at $25 for members and their spouses/partners, and $42 for non-members (includes annual membership to the NPH).

New this year, tickets can be reserved at the same time you submit your membership renewal - please see the form included with this newsletter.

If you do not wish to reserve your tickets when renewing your membership, you can still call John Stevens at (905) 685-6734, or Keith Dieroff at (905) 545-5859 to make arrangements.

The Grimsby Curling Club is located at 277 Kerman Avenue, Grimsby. Please see page 4 of this newsletter for directions and a map.

Mark your calendars. See you there!

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by John Stevens

A new hawkwatching season is just around the corner and I hope everyone is looking forward as much as I am to some great days at Beamer CA. Your executive has been busy since last season and, spearheaded by Mike Street, has produced a revised version of the Counter's Guide. I urge all of you to try and attend the Counter's Workshop, advertised elsewhere in the newsletter, to get your copy of the new document and enjoy a photographic presentation prepared by Barry Cherriere with input from Tom Thomas and Tim Foran of the raptor species we see at the watch site. I understand that it has over 100 of their photographs. It will provide some refresher tips for us older folks and valuable information for newcomers to assist with identifying the birds in flight.

This year we've learned about a new weather station that is located atop the escarpment just over a kilometre to the east of the tower. It is online and provides information that is updated every 15 minutes. The website is at www.grimsbyweather.com, so you can now check this to find current conditions before you leave for Beamer. It doesn't provide forecasts. In time, we hope to be able to use some of the data to complete our report forms.

Every organization must continually undergo renewal to survive and the NPH is no different. We must seek new members to carry on the work that has been done over the last thirty plus years. To that end, we are striving to increase our base of members and team of counters and assistants. Be sure to send in your membership renewal, which has to be one of the greatest bargains around since the rate is the same for 2008 as it was when we started in 1989. While you are at it, consider asking your children, grandchildren, friends and colleagues who are conscious of raptors, to visit Beamer and maybe join. Hawkwatching is not for everyone but those who enjoy it like it a lot, and if people never experience a good day at a watch site, they'll never know what they're missing.

Last fall we were approached by Laurie Goodrich of Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, on behalf of a young Argentinean working as an intern with her, to provide some seed money to initiate a hawkwatch at a site in western Argentina (38° 55' S and 71° 21' W). Our site is at 43° 11' N and 79° 34' W, quite similar but on opposite sides of the equator. We donated $100. They are hoping to see almost 20 species in northbound migration during their fall, for many of which there is little knowledge of migratory behaviour. This represents only about a quarter of the raptor species found in Argentina!

South America is smaller than North America but is a huge landmass. If one were to start to collect data on hawk migration, it would be somewhat daunting to decide where to start. Maybe this watch will eventually lead to the formation of a HMASA, and we can say that we were there at the beginning.

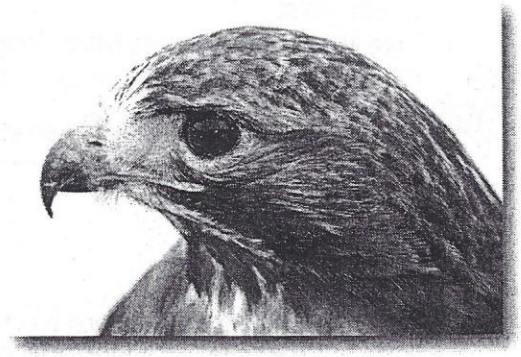
See you at Beamer.

2008 NPH OPEN HOUSE

The NPH will hold it's annual Open House on Good Friday, March 21, 2008 at Beamer Memorial Conservation Area in Grimsby. This is the earliest date for Good Friday since 1913, so be sure to bundle up!

This year's activities will once again include displays, nature groups, 'hawk talks' by Mike Street and the children's program presented by Carla Carlson of Niagara Nature Tours. Live raptor demonstrations will also take place throughout the day, so visitors are guaranteed to see at least a few birds up close. All are welcome!

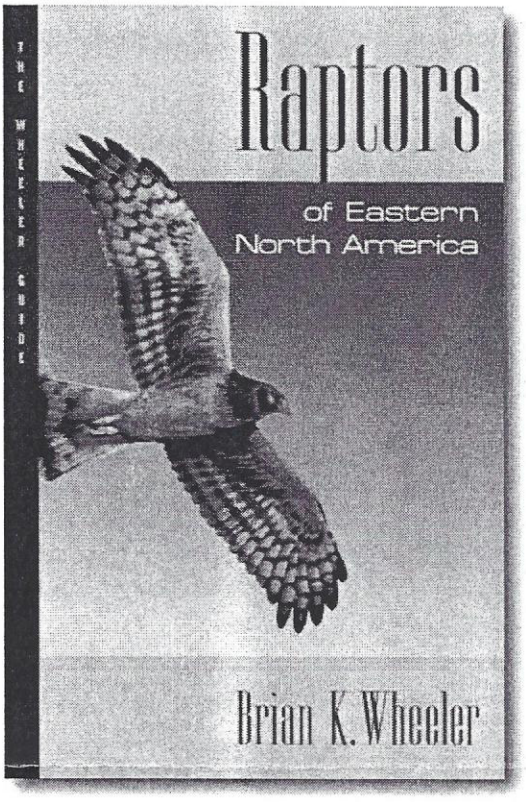
Note: parking will be limited this year, and it may be necessary to park outside of the 'circle'.



Up close and personal with a Red-tailed Hawk at last year's Open House - photo by Tom Thomas

RAPTORS OF EASTERN NORTH AMERICA - BRIAN K. WHEELER

by Keith Dieroff



When updating the Counter's Guide, several members of the NPH executive (including myself) were surprised to learn that this book existed. It was first published in 2003, but for whatever reason has been missed by some.

Brian K. Wheeler has parted ways with his co-author Bill Clark for this offering, which is excellent. Along with Hawks From Every Angle by Liguori, this field guide has the best raptor identification photos I've seen. Along with Liguori's book, it will be the other reference I bring to Beamer on count days.

The guide has received favourable reviews from others as well, including Ron Pittaway, who refers to it as a 'superb reference for the serious hawkwatcher'. My only complaint, which has been voiced by others as well, is that the text is printed very close to the spine. This may create additional wear and tear on the binding and cause pages to fall out after repeated use.

Raptors of Eastern North America should be available at your local book store, but is also available online at amazon.ca and chapters.indigo.ca. For whatever reason though, Amazon does not offer this book at a discounted price ($30.06), whereas Chapters-Indigo does ($19.76).

NEW HAWKWATCH SITE - ARGENTINEAN PATAGONIA

As mentioned in the President's Corner, the NPH has donated funds to help set up a new hawkwatch in Argentina, which has one of the highest bird diversities in the world. The site is located at Cerro Chenqueco in the Andes Mountains, just above the treeline, at an elevation of 1,690 metres (see map at right).



The funds provided by the NPH will be used mainly to purchase high-quality optics, which will be used to identify 19 species of migratory raptors expected to be seen at the site, such as:

- Andean Condor
- Black-chested Buzzard-eagle
- Chimango Caracara
- White-tailed Hawk
- Aplomado Falcon

They also expect to count a number of species seen regularly (or occasionally) at Beamer, including Turkey Vulture, Black Vulture, American Kestrel, Peregrine Falcon, and Swainson's Hawk.

In 2008, the counts will begin on March 15 and end on April 15. Data will be made available to HMANA, and we hope the count results will be published at a future date. *(Continued next page...)*

Conservation Implications

Relatively little is know about raptor migration in Argentinean Patagonia. Most reports available are anecdotal and based on non-systematic observations. Other hawkwatch sites, as of yet undescribed, might be important areas for bird migration. However, habitat destruction by increasing human population and sheep-herding may be reducing stopover habitat for migrants. Human persecution is also a threat to raptor populations locally.

Studies to define and map major migration routes through the region are needed in order to establish and protect key areas for migratory birds. In addition, studies on the migration ecology of the raptor species of Argentinean Patagonia are also needed, to learn not only about raptor migration patterns and routes, migration behavior, and ecology, but also to attempt to document possible key conservation areas for these species, which will assist in developing long-term conservation and management plans.

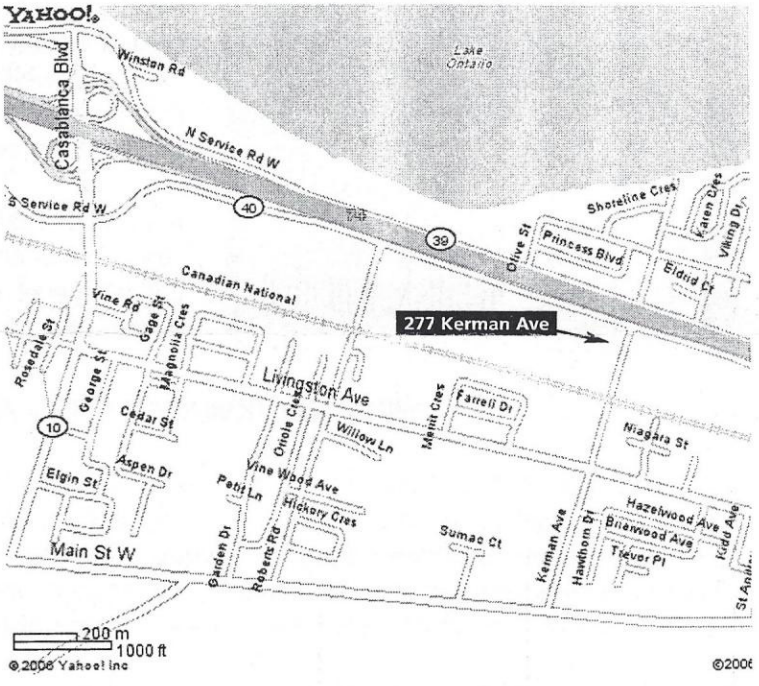
DIRECTIONS TO ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

From Hamilton, Burlington, Oakville, Toronto:

- Take the QEW Niagara to Grimsby and exit at Casablanca Blvd
- From the offramp, turn south on Casablanca and then make an immediate left onto South Service
- Proceed east on the South Service Road to Kerman Avenue, turn right (south) onto Kerman and the Curling Club is on the right hand side.

From St. Catharines, Niagara Falls:

- Take the QEW Niagara to Grimsby and exit at the Maple Ave/Ontario Street/Christie Street exit
- Continue on the offramp to Christie Street and then turn left and head south to the South Service Road
- Turn right on the South Service Road and proceed west to Kerman Avenue
- Turn left (south) onto Kerman Avenue and the Curling Club is on the right hand side.



2008 Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Executive

President: John Stevens, 16 Old Orchard Rd, St. Catharines, ON L2R 3R4 (905) 685-6734 - jrstevens@cogeco.ca

Secretary: Glenn Barnett, 87 Highland Park Drive, Dundas, ON L9H 6G5 (905) 628-2093 - gbarnett3@cogeco.ca

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Membership Director: Linda Cherriere, 506 - 575 Queenston Rd, Hamilton, ON L8K 1K1 (905) 560-7476 - bcherriere@cogeco.ca

Special Projects: Tom Thomas, 10 Tynedale Crt, Carlisle, ON L0R 1H2 (905) 689-5920 - tthomas@cogeco.ca

Special Projects: Barry Cherriere, 506 - 575 Queenston Rd, Hamilton, ON L8K 1K1 (905) 560-7476 - bcherriere@cogeco.ca

Editor/Website/Statistics: Keith Dieroff, 75 Houghton Ave S, Hamilton, ON L8K 2M9 (905) 545-5859 - kdieroff@yahoo.ca

Counter Co-ordinator: Mike Street, 73 Hatton Drive, Ancaster, ON L9G 2H5 (905) 648-3737 - mikestreet1@gmail.com

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH MIGRATION CALENDAR FOR BEAMER MEMORIAL CONSERVATION AREA

NOTES:

1. Species initals and Right (>) or Left (<) arrow:
   This combination indicates the start (>) or end (<) of the normal (at Beamer) migration period for that species. The same in bold type indicates the start or end of a noticeable peak period for that species. The box in which this combination is located indicates the day and month on which the period is likely to start or end.

2. A number, followed by species initial, followed by a slash (/)and a two digit number:
   In this combination, the largest number of that species ever seen in one day is given first; the two-digit number following the / indicates the year in which this occurred. The box in which this combination is located indicates the day and month on which the event occurred. Example: 655 RS/94 in the March 23rd box indicates that the highest number of Red-shouldered Hawks recorded in one day was 655, seen on March 23rd, 1994.

TV - Turkey Vulture
BV - Black Vulture
OS - Osprey
SK - American Swallow-tailed Kite

BE - Bald Eagle
GE - Golden Eagle
NH - Northern Harrier

SS - Sharp-shinned Hawk
CH - Cooper's Hawk
NG - Northern Goshawk
RS - Red-shouldered Hawk
RT - Red-tailed Hawk
SW - Swainson's Hawk
RL - Rough-legged Hawk
FH - Ferruginous Hawk

AK - American Kestrel
ME - Merlin
PF - Peregrine Falcon
PR - Prairie Falcon
GF - Gyrfalcon
BW - Broad-winged Hawk

The following information, based on 30+ years of data has been updated to show significant events up to the year 2007.

Largest number of raptors in one season: 19,724 in 1985.

NH>, SS>, CH>, RT>, RL>, AK> begin February 20th.

MARCH						
1 **RT>** NG> BE> TV>	2 GE>	3 RS>	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11 **RL>**	12 **AK>**	13 **CH>** **RS>**	14 44AK/90
15	16 744 RT/96 1 GF/06*	17	18 **BE>**	19	20 **TV>** ME> PF>	21
22	23 **NH>** 655 RS/94	24 11 NG/84 19 BE/03	25	26 **SS>** 2 PF/91 1,355 TV/88	27	28 2 PF/90
29 46 RL/04	30	31 1 BV/00*				

Largest # of raptors in month: 5,670 in March 1988; largest # of raptors in one day in month: 2,080 on March 26th, 1988

APRIL						
1 OS>	2	3 2 PF/91	4 1 BV/92*	5 50 CH/93 1 BV/04*	6	7
8 **OS><RS**	9	10 BW> 1 SW/74*	11	12 16 OS/92	13 1 FH/92*	14
15 **BW>** SW> 1 SK/94*	16 **<BE** 2 PF/90	17	18 35 NH/96 1,556 SS/76 1 SW/96*	19 1 PR/95**	20 1 GF/77* 1 SW/93*	21 6,007 BW/85 1 SW/85* 1 SW/88*
22	23 1 FH/98	24 **<OS** 1 FH/02*	25 **<TV** 6 ME/96 2 PF/94	26	27	28 4 GE/96
29 2 SW/98	30 **<RL**					

Largest # of raptors in month: 15,012 in April 1984; largest # of raptors in one day in month: 7,007 on April 21st, 1985

MAY						
1 **<SS**	2 2 SW/97	3	4 **<RT**	5 <SW	6 <PF	7
8	9	10 <GE	11 1 MK/97*	12 **<NH** **<AK**	13 **<CH** <BE	14 <SS 1 MK/03*
15 **<BW** <RL <ME	16	17	18 1 MK/75*	19	20	21
22	23	24	25 <OS	26	27	28
29	30	31 <TV<NH <CH<NG <RS<AK	*Immature BW and RT continue beyond May 31st...*			

Largest # of raptors in month: 2,685 in May 1980; largest # of raptors in one day in month: 1,492 on May 4th, 1989

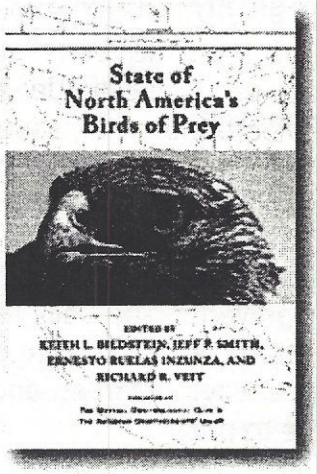
** Sighting accepted by the Ontario Bird Records Committee*
*** First accepted Prairie Falcon record in Ontario*

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch

Newsletter

August 2008 **Newsletter #37**

STATE OF NORTH AMERICA'S BIRDS OF PREY



The Hawk Migration Association of North America (HMANA) is pleased to announce the publication of 'State of North America's Birds of Prey'.

Written by 22 well known raptor specialists, this book is the first publication resulting from the work of the Raptor Population Index, a collaborative effort between HMANA, Hawk Mountain Sanctuary and HawkWatch International, which began in 2003.

Migration count data from across the continent have been analyzed to inform scientific and conservation purposes, as well as the general public, about trends in raptor populations.

Published by The Nuttall Ornithological Club and the American Ornithologists' Union's Series in Ornithology, State of North America's Birds of Prey can be purchased at Buteo Books in the USA and should soon be available through Chapter's/Indigo.

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2008 ROUND UP

The NPH Open House was held on Good Friday, March 21. Despite the very early date, the weather and birds cooperated.

Even though the mercury didn't get much above 0 degrees Celsius, 103 raptors were counted, including one Bald Eagle and two Golden Eagles. Unfortunately, both Goldens Eagles were seen after the Open House had ended.

We look forward to next year, when Good Friday falls on April 10th - a slightly more reasonable date.

The Annual General Meeting (aka the 'Banquet') took place on Saturday, April 26 at the Grimsby Curling Club. Attendance was the highest it has ever been and Barry Cherriere delivered an excellent presentation about the Hawkwatch, which included a DVD slideshow - with some marvellous pictures of both hawks and local characters.

A big thank you goes out to John Merriman, sommelier extraordinaire, who provided an excellent selection of wines for the evening.

Thank you also to everyone who donated prizes for the bucket raffle. We were overwhelmed by your generosity, and your contributions were much appreciated!

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by John Stevens

We have experienced quite an up and down season in 2008. Shortly after preparing the February Newsletter, we learned of the death of Dave Copeland, the founder and leading advocate of the hawkwatch at Beamer. Ever affable Dave was one of the main reasons that I became a hawkwatcher and I learned much from him. His passing has left a big hole in our ranks and he has been greatly missed.

From that low point we went to a high at the well-attended Counter's Workshop, where several new members joined and a group of people expressed an interest in helping with the counts. However, this was followed by another low when Tom Reavley advised that his medication would prevent him from being a counter in 2008 and the scramble was on to find counters to cover all the weekdays that Tom has been doing for us. He was able to put in several appearances, particularly on mild overcast days but never for very long. We're all pulling for the drugs to do their thing Tom and we can get you back in the rotation next year.

We were elated that the earliest Open House ever was fortunate to get great weather and even a few migrants although the best of the flight occurred later in the afternoon after most visitors had left. New heights were reached at the Annual Meeting, where a record crowd filled the Curling Club lounge for Barry Cherriere's tribute presentation on the history of our hawkwatch. As someone who has been visiting the watch since the late 1970's, I particularly enjoyed checking the old photos for glimpses of people from the past.

For the hawks it was a real oHIo type of season, with a dismal start, a wonderful five weeks in the middle, and then things dried up in May. We logged about 550 hours in 2008, during the 76 days that we cover, for an average of seven hours and fifteen minutes each day, including snow and rain days. I'm sure Dave Copeland would be proud of our efforts.

While auditing the data, it became apparent to me that as a group we are becoming much more skilled as hawkwatchers. Even when birds are listed as being very high (category 4 requiring 10X binoculars), we are recording a lot fewer unidentified birds than in the past. I hope this reflects the excellent optics that many people are now using and the overall improvement in knowledge and skill, rather than a lack of recording unidentified birds.

In my last column I discussed the need to strive and increase our membership base. As reported at the Annual Meeting, there has been a good rise in membership for the year. This is great to see and partially reflects the recruiting efforts of several of the executive, in particular, Linda Cherriere, Mike Street, and Tom Thomas.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

- Bill and Jackie Boros
- Toni Carson
- Ed Couture
- Sandy Darling
- Gord and Wendy Fletcher
- Clive Hodder
- George Holland
- Susan Kitchener
- Deborah MacLeod
- Angus and Beverly MacMillan
- Tony Nicholls
- Roland Parks
- Wayne Parnall
- Don Pfeffer
- Ian Richards
- Marion Robertson
- Eric Single
- Terry and Celia Slaughter
- Doris Southwell
- Richard Tofflemire
- Ann Toner

REMEMBERING DAVID W. COPELAND

By Bob Curry

As Glenda and I drove to Dave's memorial service, I deliberately took the Red Hill Parkway (note here the euphemistic "parkway" rather than expressway). I vowed never to use this road but decided, today, to make an exception. I wanted to see what the road had done to Dave's beloved Red Hill Valley. For Dave, as for many of us in those days, this was his local patch, where he first encountered and enjoyed our birds. The day of his service was a bright sunny cold day – the kind that shows off the landscape at its best this time of year. What we saw was a long deep flesh wound, the kind that leaves a large area of scarred tissue on both sides. It will never quite be the same.

Dave had a long association with the Hamilton Naturalists' Club and the local birding community. As a young man, his first submissions to the Noteworthy Bird Records were of passerines and owls. The first record we note is of Hamilton's earliest spring Henslow's Sparrow on April 25, 1969 at Mohawk Road near the East Mountain Brow. His first Red Hill record was a Long-eared Owl at Mt. Albion on December 20, 1969.

But passerines did not long hold his attention. Dave latched on to diurnal raptors in 1971, reporting 40 Red-tailed Hawks over the city on March 27. Although Grimsby has been noted for its hawk flights for generations, it was Dave who realized the full potential of Grimsby Peak (Beamer Conservation Area). Beginning in 1975, Dave initiated the formal hawkwatch and he was the site coordinator for the first 12 years, from 1975 through 1986. Dave and the Grimsby Hawkwatch were responsible for the discovery that far larger numbers of Red-shouldered Hawks entered the province each spring than had previously been realized. Today Beamer is an important monitoring station for diurnal raptors in eastern North America. Dave's daily laconic presence on the tower will remain a significant part of the lives of many of us.

In spite of his love of hawks, Dave took other birding adventures. I was privileged to share one particularly memorable trip with him. The Hudson Bay coastline of Ontario was and is a remote and desirable destination for Ontario birders. It so happened that Dave's brother Gary was a bush pilot. So, on June 30, 1978, five of us left for Mount Hope airport bound for Ontario's far north. Hopping from Timmins to Moosonee to Attawapiskat, we eventually touched down on the gravel strip at abandoned Radar Site 416, west of Cape Henrietta Maria. We had a wonderful day and a half of tundra birding on June 30 and July 1. That night wind and rain set in and the next day, during a lull in the storm, we had a hair-raising take-off and flight south. We have but one people photo commemorating the trip. On a sunny afternoon at Attawapiskat, five young men lean casually against our Piper Cherokee: Dave and Gary Copeland, Barry Cherriere, Alan Wormington, and me.

Dave was the principal atlasser for two squares during the first Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas from 1981 – 1985. One of these, which he surveyed for the second Atlas 2001 – 2005, was the city of Hamilton that included the Red Hill Valley. In the first period he found breeding evidence for Saw-whet Owl and Yellow-breasted Chat, two of several species that no longer occur in the Valley. He would have continued to lament the destruction of our beloved valley.

More of Dave's contributions to the natural history of the Hamilton Area and the HNC relate to his professional career. At the time of our club's Diamond Jubilee in 1979 Dave was Director of Advertising at the Hamilton Spectator. Dave rounded up an entire page of corporate sponsors to congratulate the Club on this milestone, the messages surrounding a Barry Cherriere photo of a Great Gray Owl. So when it came to consider production and promotion for Birds of Hamilton, I

wanted none other than Dave, who became a member of the production and launch committee. Through his groundwork and his contacts from a long career in advertising, he acquired for us announcements and reviews in all the media in the Hamilton region, not only the newspapers but radio and TV spots. More than that, his knowledge of Hamilton bird history and his enthusiasm for the project kept us on track through all stages of producing the book.

Dave was an accomplished artist. He painted scenes from the Canadian Shield where he and his family loved camping and from across Canada. Some of his most evocative work involved his paintings of the Red Hill Creek and the Valley. He had several art exhibits in the Hamilton/Burlington area, and his works hang in many private collections across Ontario.

Dave loved the old Bushnell Custom binoculars. Indeed the large clear image through the 10 X 50s is unsurpassed by today's expensive binoculars. Their main problem was their bulk and weight. About 10 years ago my neck couldn't take them anymore but Dave remained a loyal Bushnell man. So in exchange for his generous sponsorship of us on the Baillie Birdathon, Dave took my old Bushnells as a back-up.

My favourite Beamer image is of Dave tilting his head up at an angle to examine the sky and pick up distant hawks through the Customs. Dave almost invariably found the hawks first and would exclaim, "Over the hempine" or "Over the farmhouse".



Photo courtesy of Tim Foran

When I hear these phrases in spring, they will conjure up that picture of Dave Copeland.

BOOK REVIEW

by John Stevens

WINGED WONDERS, A Celebration of Birds in Human History by Peter Watkins and Jonathan Stockland, published in North America by Bluebridge in 2007, 201 pages.

The authors of this book are an English vicar (Watkins) and a former deputy director of Oxfam (Stockland), who originally published it in Great Britain in 2005. The book attempts to demonstrate that our current fascination with birds is nothing new and since the beginning of recorded history, man has been observing birds, associating certain species with human and mythical traits and worshiping others. Through discussion via sixteen generic species, including the eagle and the falcon, the authors tell the story of how man has incorporated birds into our lives through assembly of historical references from cave paintings and hieroglyphs, Judeo-Christian writings, poetry, indigenous peoples' beliefs, and other primarily English language writings, nursery rhymes and artwork.

The version issued in North America has clearly been reworked with numerous references to this continent's species. Occasionally this has affected the flow of the narrative although for this reviewer, having the familiar species referenced increased the enjoyment.

There is a fascinating amount of historical references in this work, including lots of interesting trivia. One small paragraph provides words for the noises that birds make. Some are quite familiar such as the coo of a dove, hoot of an owl and gobble of a turkey, but did you know that a falcon's noise is described as a chant? I assume this is correct, although the authors have mixed up the noises of crows and ravens in their account.

I would not put this book in the must have category for a birder but it does provide an interesting read and a compilation of the pervasiveness of birds in our history.

2008 MIGRATION SUMMARY

by Keith Dieroff

There were not one but two rarities seen at Beamer this spring. The first, a Black Vulture, was seen on April 1 - a great way to start the month. The second, a Swainson's Hawk, was seen on May 3, a day I was supposed to be official counter. However, I switched days at the request of the counter coordinator - just my luck!

In addition, an almost pure white Red-tailed Hawk and another Red-tail, strongly resembing a Krider's Hawk, were seen on March 29. Both sightings had observers talking for days.

In addition, two new records were set this spring. The season total of 6,109 Turkey Vultures was an all time high, as was the season total of 15 Golden Eagles. The previous best for Goldens was 13 in 1996, 2000, and again in 2006.

More good news - only 5 species of raptors were below both their short-term (5-year) and long-term (20-year) averages, this spring:

- Cooper's Hawk
- Northern Goshawk
- Red-tailed Hawk
- Rough-legged Hawk
- Merlin

All the other raptor species counted at Beamer this spring were above either their short-term and/or long-term average.

It was an average year for Ospreys, Red-shouldered Hawks, and Broad-winged Hawks. All three were between their short-term and long-term averages.

At 65, Bald Eagle sightings recovered nicely, after a dip to 54 during the 2007 count year.

The 2008 count year saw a sharp increase in the number of Northern Harriers. After posting an all time high count of 223 during the 2004 count period, Harriers slipped to 128, 96, and 115 during the following three seasons, but bounced back up to 173 this spring.

Sharp-shinned Hawk numbers also increased dramatically. The 2008 count of 2,562 birds was 71% higher than 2007, and represents the highest count since 1998.

Rounding out the species accounts, despite a drop in Merlin numbers, both American Kestrels and Peregrine Falcons had strong showings this spring. Kestrel numbers were well above both the short and long-term averages, posting the highest count since 1994. Peregrine Falcons matched their high count of 7 during the 2000 and 2003 migration periods, but missed the all time high of 9, set in 2006.

Last but not least, as mentioned by John Stevens in the President's Corner, the number of unidentified raptors continues to decrease, from a high of 737 in 2002 to an all time low of 96 in 2008.

Thanks very much once again to all the counters who agreed to count or assist on one or more days during the 2008 Hawkwatch:

Glenn Barnett, Bouwe Bergsma, John Black, Peter Booker, Geoff Carpentier, Toni Carson, Barry Cherriere, Linda Cherriere, Jim Coey, Ed Couture, Bob Curry, Sandy Darling, Sandra Davey, Keith Dieroff, John Djukic, Chris Escott, Tim Foran, Denys Gardiner, Ann Gray, Brian Gray, Brian Hawthorne, Clive Hodder, Colin Horstead, Sandra Horvath, Marcie Jacklin, Tim King, Derrick Lyon, Jennifer Lyon, Bruce Mackenzie, Kevin McLaughlin, Gord McNulty, George Meyers, Brian Mishell, George Naylor, Tom Reavley, Marion Robertson, Ian Richards, Glenda Slessor, Bill Smith, Terrie Smith, Janet Snaith, Doris Southwell, John Stevens, Mike Street, Tom Thomas, Phil Waggett, David Weare, Joyce Wong.

If anyone's name has been omitted please accept our apologies and let Mike Street know.

2008 Monthly Counts

Species	February	March	April	May	Total
Black Vulture	0	0	1	0	**1**
Turkey Vulture	0	2,691	3,300	118	**6,109**
Osprey	0	0	45	7	**52**
Bald Eagle	0	34	25	6	**65**
Northern Harrier	0	25	132	16	**173**
Sharp-shinned Hawk	0	74	2,315	263	**2,652**
Cooper's Hawk	1	49	65	8	**123**
Northern Goshawk	0	1	3	1	**5**
Red-shouldered Hawk	0	338	320	0	**658**
Broad-winged Hawk	0	0	2,935	36	**2,971**
Swainson's Hawk	0	0	0	1	**1**
Red-tailed Hawk	1	1,116	1,268	72	**2,457**
Rough-legged Hawk	0	32	27	0	**59**
Golden Eagle	0	5	4	6	**15**
American Kestrel	0	15	99	6	**120**
Merlin	0	1	8	1	**10**
Peregrine Falcon	0	2	5	0	**7**
Unidentified Accipiter	0	4	5	0	**9**
Unidentified Buteo	0	7	36	3	**46**
Unidentified Falcon	0	1	2	0	**3**
Unidentified Eagle	0	1	0	0	**1**
Unidentified Raptor	0	5	29	3	**37**
Total	**2**	**4,401**	**10,624**	**547**	**15,574**
Hours Counted	**3.0**	**222.6**	**229.6**	**96.4**	**551.5**
Birds/Hour	***0.7***	***19.8***	***46.3***	***5.7***	***28.2***

2008 Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Executive

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March 2008

Species	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Total
Black Vulture	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Turkey Vulture	0	0	0	0	0	7	5	0	0	1	2	7	0	5	47	8	17	0	1	8	43	82	95	208	106	384	266	138	406	847	8	**2,691**
Osprey	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Bald Eagle	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	7	1	3	0	0	0	1	1	5	1	2	3	0	0	2	1	1	**34**
Northern Harrier	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	5	3	6	1	0	1	4	**25**
Sharp-shinned Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	2	3	3	0	1	2	0	2	2	0	7.	9	16	4	7	12	2	**74**
Cooper's Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	0	1	4	3	4	0	1	1	1	2	2	2	4	7	7	0	1	4	1	**49**
Northern Goshawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
Red-shouldered Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	14	0	11	0	0	0	4	14	16	12	3	34	112	5	56	53	3	**338**
Broad-winged Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Swainson's Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Red-tailed Hawk	1	3	2	7	0	3	4	0	4	7	2	18	6	4	91	56	84	1	0	10	50	172	118	56	4	60	91	16	93	150	3	**1,116**
Rough-legged Hawk	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	4	0	0	1	0	2	3	1	1	2	1	0	4	8	1	**32**
Golden Eagle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	**5**
American Kestrel	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	1	0	0	1	0	0	3	0	**15**
Merlin	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	**1**
Peregrine Falcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	**2**
Unidentified Accipiter	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	**4**
Unidentified Buteo	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	1	0	**7**
Unidentified Falcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
Unidentified Eagle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
Unidentified Raptor	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**5**
Total	**1**	**4**	**2**	**8**	**0**	**12**	**9**	**0**	**5**	**11**	**5**	**32**	**8**	**13**	**173**	**71**	**134**	**2**	**3**	**23**	**103**	**276**	**246**	**281**	**135**	**505**	**500**	**164**	**571**	**1081**	**23**	**4,401**
Hours Counted	*5.5*	*6.0*	*8.0*	*8.0*	*1.0*	*7.0*	*0.0*	*4.5*	*5.0*	*8.0*	*8.0*	*8.0*	*7.0*	*7.0*	*7.5*	*8.0*	*8.8*	*8.0*	*4.5*	*7.5*	*8.5*	*8.0*	*8.8*	*9.0*	*7.5*	*8.9*	*8.0*	*8.5*	*10.9*	*10.3*	*7.0*	***222.6***

April 2008

Species	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	Total
Black Vulture	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
Turkey Vulture	269	705	262	0	766	91	186	161	26	99	0	21	45	64	80	38	55	83	62	39	5	45	8	19	13	58	73	10	10	7	**3,300**
Osprey	0	0	1	0	7	2	1	2	2	5	0	3	4	0	2	2	0	3	3	2	0	1	1	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	**45**
Bald Eagle	1	4	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	5	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	**25**
Northern Harrier	11	6	2	0	9	6	7	4	1	4	0	3	2	4	4	6	4	19	10	13	4	2	1	0	0	1	7	0	1	1	**132**
Sharp-shinned Hawk	6	27	148	0	127	76	53	45	13	11	0	18	17	13	48	101	236	487	167	259	180	27	3	30	3	28	159	5	13	15	**2,315**
Cooper's Hawk	2	9	5	0	4	3	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	2	1	5	12	4	3	2	5	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	**65**
Northern Goshawk	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	**3**
Red-shouldered Hawk	9	86	130	0	36	12	7	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	5	21	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	5	0	0	0	**320**
Broad-winged Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	24	80	522	926	172	793	58	109	1	76	0	12	148	0	5	6	**2,935**
Swainson's Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Red-tailed Hawk	25	172	157	0	291	44	95	57	13	36	0	2	29	22	21	12	65	123	10	7	12	20	1	8	1	4	28	1	6	6	**1,268**
Rough-legged Hawk	1	3	5	0	5	1	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**27**
Golden Eagle	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**4**
American Kestrel	2	2	1	0	4	6	2	8	3	1	0	2	0	0	5	2	5	19	21	7	6	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	**99**
Merlin	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**8**
Peregrine Falcon	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**5**
Unidentified Accipiter	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	**5**
Unidentified Buteo	2	2	2	0	9	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	2	4	0	0	0	4	1	0	2	2	**36**
Unidentified Falcon	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**2**
Unidentified Eagle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Unidentified Raptor	0	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	18	0	0	0	2	0	4	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**29**
Total	**329**	**1,020**	**714**	**0**	**1,267**	**242**	**357**	**283**	**58**	**156**	**0**	**51**	**119**	**110**	**187**	**248**	**903**	**1,704**	**459**	**1,126**	**269**	**219**	**16**	**136**	**17**	**110**	**431**	**17**	**39**	**37**	**10,624**
Hours Counted	*7.8*	*9.8*	*8.3*	*0.0*	*9.0*	*7.8*	*8.0*	*8.5*	*5.0*	*6.3*	*0.0*	*8.5*	*7.5*	*8.0*	*9.8*	*9.3*	*8.0*	*10.0*	*10.5*	*10.0*	*9.0*	*8.5*	*5.0*	*9.0*	*8.0*	*8.0*	*8.0*	*7.0*	*9.0*	*6.3*	***229.6***

May 2008

Species	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Total
Black Vulture	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Turkey Vulture	17	0	9	5	18	20	13	15	0	0	17	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**118**
Osprey	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**7**
Bald Eagle	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**6**
Northern Harrier	1	0	1	0	5	1	1	0	0	0	4	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**16**
Sharp-shinned Hawk	13	0	25	8	173	19	10	0	3	1	7	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**263**
Cooper's Hawk	0	0	1	0	3	2	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**8**
Northern Goshawk	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
Red-shouldered Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Broad-winged Hawk	4	0	1	0	19	6	1	0	3	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**36**
Swainson's Hawk	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
Red-tailed Hawk	4	0	1	5	17	21	5	4	4	4	5	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**72**
Rough-legged Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Golden Eagle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**6**
American Kestrel	0	0	3	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**6**
Merlin	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
Peregrine Falcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Unidentified Accipiter	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Unidentified Buteo	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**3**
Unidentified Falcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Unidentified Eagle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Unidentified Raptor	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**3**
Total	**41**	**0**	**43**	**18**	**244**	**70**	**32**	**20**	**15**	**6**	**42**	**10**	**2**	**3**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**547**
Hours Counted	*8.0*	*1.3*	*7.6*	*6.2*	*10.0*	*8.0*	*6.5*	*4.8*	*4.0*	*7.0*	*8.5*	*9.5*	*4.5*	*6.0*	*4.5*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	***96.4***

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Annual Summaries

Species	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	'88-'07 Avg	'03-'07 Avg	'75-'07 Total
Black Vulture	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0.2	0.2	4
Turkey Vulture	2,331	1,406	1,463	1,785	1,990	1,852	3,189	2,151	2,946	3,092	3,277	3,376	2,971	3,402	4,065	5,026	4,623	5,158	5,934	5,385	6,109	3,271	5,225	78,833
Osprey	41	36	40	46	64	45	69	47	56	28	42	43	46	71	48	59	51	47	64	50	52	50	54	1,319
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.1	0.0	1
Mississippi Kite	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0.1	0.2	2
Bald Eagle	16	17	15	17	22	14	40	24	33	17	32	30	25	30	54	65	62	71	85	54	65	36	67	855
Northern Harrier	162	175	194	219	209	126	177	177	172	125	84	91	125	108	135	97	223	128	96	115	173	147	132	4,388
Sharp-shinned Hawk	3,108	3,576	7,004	3,767	3,418	3,475	4,846	2,136	3,290	3,047	2,816	1,983	2,468	2,551	3,134	2,351	2,310	1,756	1,753	1,551	2,652	3,017	1,944	111,284
Cooper's Hawk	229	180	311	220	199	209	263	256	295	221	187	240	177	167	272	219	252	183	202	207	123	224	213	6,270
Northern Goshawk	27	14	24	20	34	28	73	15	37	16	14	6	3	14	9	6	11	12	6	8	5	19	9	695
Red-shouldered Hawk	861	1,102	1,341	761	1,187	1,030	1,419	705	694	796	549	678	498	459	566	455	524	641	679	641	658	779	588	24,346
Broad-winged Hawk	2,910	2,304	4,428	2,063	2,761	1,963	2,335	1,779	1,550	1,849	3,886	1,833	2,368	5,229	3,668	3,327	2,532	5,537	2,026	2,413	2,971	2,838	3,167	108,749
Swainson's Hawk	1	1	0	0	0	2	2	0	1	2	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.7	0.0	15
Red-tailed Hawk	3,567	2,615	3,482	3,023	3,861	2,684	2,890	2,861	3,584	2,572	2,235	2,216	2,616	2,358	2,033	2,258	2,513	2,693	3,099	2,209	2,457	2,768	2,554	91,445
Ferruginous Hawk	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.2	0.0	3
Rough-legged Hawk	87	45	127	145	128	35	62	87	98	44	32	69	49	71	22	40	204	120	100	75	59	82	108	2,494
Golden Eagle	3	7	10	8	12	6	10	4	13	6	6	10	13	6	8	8	8	8	13	7	15	8	9	239
American Kestrel	148	132	207	180	92	93	122	70	61	84	77	69	95	77	99	102	87	45	63	77	120	99	75	3,182
Merlin	5	4	9	11	12	9	23	14	22	14	15	10	22	6	19	11	21	15	13	18	10	14	16	323
Peregrine Falcon	4	2	6	5	6	2	4	1	2	2	4	1	7	3	6	7	5	5	9	2	7	4	6	104
Gyrfalcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0.1	0.2	2
Prairie Falcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.1	0.0	1
Unidentified Raptor	634	592	582	2,681	681	534	452	480	249	189	227	340	160	281	737	328	234	183	178	134	96	494	211	16,697
Total	**14,134**	**12,208**	**19,243**	**14,951**	**14,678**	**12,107**	**15,977**	**10,808**	**13,103**	**12,105**	**13,487**	**10,995**	**11,644**	**14,833**	**14,877**	**14,360**	**13,661**	**16,602**	**14,321**	**12,946**	**15,574**	**13,852**	**14,378**	**436,675**
Hours Counted	*608.2*	*499.3*	*574.5*	*548.5*	*541.5*	*538.5*	*531.0*	*555.7*	*454.5*	*508.4*	*499.0*	*502.8*	*527.4*	*545.0*	*556.3*	*532.0*	*495.5*	*495.2*	*534.5*	*507.1*	*551.5*	***527.7***	***512.9***	***16,288***
Birds/Hour	23.2	24.5	33.5	27.3	27.1	22.5	30.1	19.4	28.8	23.8	27.0	21.9	22.1	27.2	26.7	27.0	27.6	33.5	26.8	25.5	28.2	**26.2**	**28.0**	**26.8**

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch

Newsletter

February 2009 **Newsletter #38**

GENERAL MEETING & BANQUET APRIL 25, 2009

This year's Annual General Meeting and dinner (aka "the banquet") will be held on Saturday, April 25, 2009 at the Grimsby Curling Club. The guest speaker will be Dick Benoit.

Some of you may remember that Dick spoke about Holiday Beach at one of our earlier banquets. This time around, he'll be presenting a program on hawkwatching in Texas, where the number and variety of migrating raptors, as well as the weather (e.g. Hurricane Ike) make hawkwatching an interesting endeavour.

Socializing and the bucket raffle begin at 5:00pm. The pre-supper wine and cheese starts at 5:15, and as per tradition, a member of the NPH will select the wines for the evening in advance. Dinner will start around 6:15.

Donations are still needed for the bucket raffle. Please contact John Merriman or Audrey Gamble by April 18, 2009 at (905) 522-8447 or John.Merriman@sympatico.ca.

Tickets are priced at $25 for members and their spouses/partners, and $35 for non-members (includes annual membership to the NPH). Please call John Stevens at (905) 685-6734 or Keith Dieroff at (905) 545-5859 to make arrangements for tickets.

The Grimsby Curling Club is located at 277 Kerman Avenue, Grimsby. Please see page 6 of this newsletter for directions.

Mark your calendars. See you there!

2009 NPH OPEN HOUSE

The NPH will once again hold it's annual Open House on Good Friday, April 10, 2009 at Beamer Memorial Conservation Area in Grimsby.

This year's activities will include displays, nature groups, 'hawk talks' by Mike Street, and the children's program presented by Carla Carlson of Niagara Nature Tours. James Cowan and Sandra Davey will be on hand with live birds. In the past, they have provided close up looks at Red-tailed Hawks, Golden Eagles, American Kestrels, and more...

All are welcome. Please invite your family and friends. It should be a good day for them, and the birds too!

NOTE TO COUNTERS

There are still some days uncovered in March, April and May of this season. Anyone who can help count is asked to contact the counter coordinator, Mike Street. Anyone who would like to learn to count raptors should also get in touch with Mike.

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by John Stevens

As our organization was formed in the spring of 1990, we are about to start our twentieth season. 2009 will be the thirtieth year for which complete seasonal coverage of the migration has been conducted at the Beamer Memorial Conservation Area. In addition, this will be the thirty-fifth consecutive year that records of raptor migration have been obtained for the site. So we have a history. For more than a generation, hawk watchers have been gathering at Beamer to greet old friends after the winter and observe the spectacle of the spring raptor migration. Sadly, our good friend Tom Reavley will not be with us again, having succumbed to the cancer that plagued him for many years. We've made a donation in Tom's memory to the Raptor Population Index program.

We now have eighteen years (1991-2008) of complete records entered into HawkCount, the online database of the Hawk Migration Association of North America (HMANA). Efforts are underway to enter earlier data but copies of the original data sheets have not been located and we are struggling to collect as much as we can. The daily totals are available but some of the hourly data is missing. If any of you have retained copies of your old green sheets from the 1980s, we would be interested in borrowing them to enable us to get the data into the system.

Recently, I have been preparing a contribution to the Birds of Niagara project of John Black and Kayo Roy. As a result, it became obvious to me that the hawkwatch data represents the most scientifically sound data set that is available on birds in the region, certainly for the last twenty years or so after we stopped including birds seen elsewhere than the parking lot. However, we can do better and I believe that we should strive to record the colour morphs of all the Rough-legged Hawks (and all the buteos for that matter), the sex of the Northern Harriers and the age of the Bald and Golden Eagles. This should be a goal for 2009. We have become pretty good at documenting the age of the eagles in recent years but the other data is less consistent. Counters are encouraged to consult with other observers about both identifications and numbers. It is not possible to watch all the birds all the time they are in view and often a critical identifying feature may be seen by one person that is missed by another, who was watching other birds. If there is doubt or confusion about an identification, it is better to record the sighting as a UA, UF, UB or even UR.

HMANA is organizing a mini-conference this May to discuss various aspects of raptor migration in the Great Lakes area. Details are provided elsewhere in this issue. It is being held at a very interesting location, Chautauqua Institution (see www.ciweb.org), just south of Lake Erie and less than 200 km from Beamer. Chautauqua is both a place and a noun. The noun means a cultural program of lectures, music, drama, etc. A chautauqua can be held anywhere but it originated in the late 19th century in Chautauqua NY, which is a beautiful site on a small lake with extensive grounds. The Institution has been declared a US National Historic Landmark. This conference will be held before the season begins so it should be peaceful. I plan to attend and would be happy to carpool with others.

I encourage hawkwatchers to become a member of HMANA, which for 35 years has borne the burden of being the repository of all the collected records from the various watches across North America. Membership costs $25 (US) a year and comes with two issues of their journal, called Hawk Migration Studies, which is actually a glossy magazine covering all aspects of hawks and hawk watching in North America. One issue each year discusses the spring migration and one the fall. For many years this was an all-volunteer group but since the advent of the Raptor Population Index (RPI) program, they now have one full and one part-time employee, although most work is still conducted on a volunteer basis. Both the

organization and the RPI program are worthy of your support.

There seem to be lots of Rough-legged Hawks around this winter and it has been colder this year than it has been for a number of years. It will be interesting to see if this has driven the raptors further south and we get more migrants coming through this spring. It won't be long now before the rallying cry is heard, "Here they come". See you soon at Beamer!

TOM REAVLEY - 1943 TO 2008

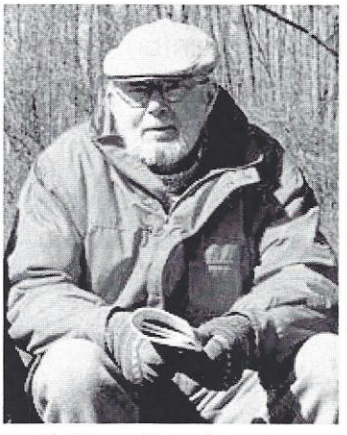


Photo courtesy of Jean Iron

Tom Reavley, a Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch stalwart who had been counting raptors at Beamer CA since 1992, died on 19 October 2008, just two days after his 65th birthday.

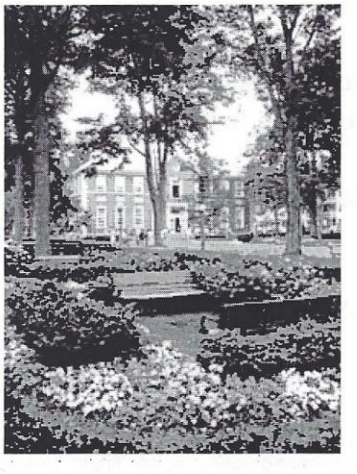
A high school History teacher who worked in Kapuskasing in Northern Ontario, Tom retired early due to Chrohn's disease. Urged by his mother to find a hobby to help with the transition from teaching, Tom took up hawkwatching after reading a Hamilton newspaper story about the migration over Beamer. He soon teamed up with the late Jack Ryan and between them many week days were covered over the years. When George Meyers had to step back as our main weekday counter, Tom came forward. Until just two years ago he looked after three days a week, and often came out on weekends to help where he could.

Tom's interests were many and varied. In spring and summer he led weekly hikes through the Grimsby area for the Bruce Trail Association, and he was active in a local cycling club. His interest in reading led him to the local library where he also discovered the Internet. He often said that the best years of his life were the last ten, spent with his wife Ria in their home not far from Beamer CA and hawkwatching.

One of Tom's favourite activities was looking after the small native plant prairie he established on his front lawn. A memorial for Tom will be held, rain or shine, at his and Ria's home at 368 Ridge Road West, Grimsby at 3:30pm on Friday, April 10, 2009, immediately after the annual Hawkwatch Open House at Beamer. All of Tom's friends are welcome to attend.

GREAT LAKES RAPTOR CONFERENCE TO BE HELD MAY 22-24, 2009 AT CHAUTAUQUA INSTITUTION, NEW YORK

HMANA will sponsor a Great Lakes regional conference from May 22 through 24, 2009, at world-famous Chautauqua Institution in western New York. The conference is especially designed for raptor enthusiasts in the western and eastern Great Lakes regions, from Minnesota east through Ontario and New York but all interested hawkwatchers are encouraged to attend.



Program topics include reports from Great Lakes watch sites, the challenges of data-collection and protocols for lake-front raptor watches, trend results for Great Lakes region, and global climate change impacts on migration. The conference promises to be a great opportunity to learn and exchange information, but it's also a wonderful weekend getaway, including an organized birding trip to Presque Isle, a unique peninsula on the shore of Lake Erie that

offers exciting concentrations of passerine, raptor, shorebird and other migrants (see www.presqueisle.org and www.presqueisle.org/audubon).

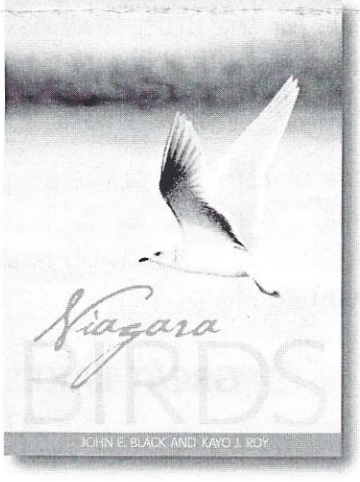
Chautauqua Institution on the shores of Chautauqua Lake provides a rich historical venue for the conference with reasonably priced accommodations and meals and professional meeting facilities (see www.ciweb.org). Saturday night's dinner at Noble Winery overlooking the scenic south shore of Lake Erie will follow a wine tasting provided by several local wineries at the site (see www.noblewinery.com). A trip to the Roger Tory Peterson Institute also is possible.

Chautauqua Institution is about a ninety minute drive from Buffalo International Airport and less than 30 minutes from Jamestown, New York, home of the Roger Tory Peterson Institute. Up-to-date information about the conference program, trips, housing and registration materials are available at HMANA's web site, www.hmana.org.

Program costs per person, including meals, accommodations and programs, range from $187 for double occupancy, shared bath to $270 for single occupancy, private bath. Costs for just the Saturday afternoon program are $39, for just Saturday evening, $38 (no accommodations). Please contact Gil Randell with any questions at janngil@fairpoint.net or call 716-753-2333 or by mail at 6901 Moore Road, Mayville, NY 14757.

COMING SOON - NIAGARA BIRDS

The cover illustration shown here introduces the new book, Niagara Birds, a work in progress by Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch members John Black and Kayo Roy.



This 600 plus page book describes in detail bird life in the Niagara Region during the forty-one year period from 1966 to 2006. Full data on relative abundance, breeding evidence and early and late dates are presented in 373 species accounts of birds found in the Region in each of the four seasons: spring, summer, fall and winter. Fully documented as well are the details of the extremely rare stragglers that have made their way into the Region over the many years records have been kept.

Added to this are twenty-seven articles written by prominent members of Ontario's birding community, including an article by John Stevens on hawk migration at Beamer.

Exceptional colour photographs and high quality black and white drawings of birds observed in the Region are to be found throughout the book.

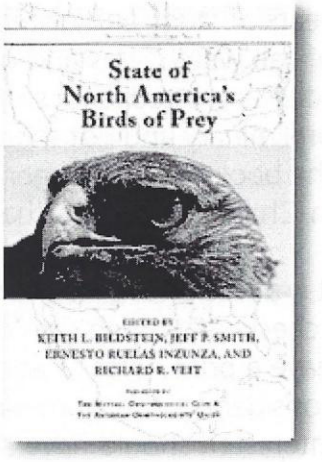
Niagara Birds, priced at $55.00 until July 1, 2009 ($60.00 thereafter), can be purchased by sending a cheque payable to Niagara Birds to Kayo Roy, 13 Kinsman Court, Fonthill, ON L0S 1E3.

Publication date is expected to be in the fall of 2009.

Welcome to the following new members - Ken Bauman & Sandra Horvath

BOOK REVIEW

by John Stevens



State of North America's Birds of Prey edited by Keith L. Bildstein, Jeff P. Smith, Ernesto Ruelas Inzunza and Richard R. Veit, published in 2008 by The Nuttall Ornithological Club & The American Ornithologists' Union. 466 pages.

This book, Series in Ornithology No. 3 of the publishing organizations, represents the first real product of the Raptor Population Index (RPI) program, a joint venture of Hawk Mountain Sanctuary and the Hawk Migration Association of North America (HMANA). Its origin is the proceedings of an RPI symposium held at a joint meeting of the Raptor Research Foundation and HMANA held at Hawk Mountain, Pennsylvania in 2007.

There are twelve chapters contributed by various authors, often as a team. One of the longest is a description of raptor migration in North America with Laurie Goodrich as co-author. This discusses each species or sub-species using watch site data and banding recoveries to document migration routes in the spring and fall, migration behaviour, concentration points, etc. I found this to be one of the most useful sections although much remains to be learned, particularly about what birds go where.

There are chapters on the principle and practice of the RPI, each with David Hussell as a co-author, that demonstrate how the long term monitoring data from sites like ours can be used to estimate population trends. This reviewer is not qualified to assess whether the statistical methods described are sound but these chapters are needed as a basis for the subsequent scientific assessments. The trends are then discussed in three chapters covering the northeast (1974-2004), the west (8 to 22 years ending in 2005) and around the Gulf of Mexico (1995-2005). There are lots of small graphs in these chapters showing the trends for the various species at the different study sites. What struck me was how a species that showed long-term declines at some sites would have long-term increases at others.

The chapter on the watch sites used for the study was prepared by Inzunza. One of the sites whose data was used is Holiday Beach near Windsor. I don't know if Ernesto has ever been there but he placed it in the Niagara Peninsula and said the peninsula "funnels migrants in the region", so we obviously made an impression on him when he came to address us in 2006.

The longest chapter, titled Conservation Status of North America's Birds of Prey (should have included Diurnal as no owls are mentioned), discusses each species in turn for the various regions of North America providing lots of facts and what the population estimates have been, both historically and from RPI, Christmas Bird Counts, Breeding Bird Surveys and other studies. Numerous maps with arrows depicting trends detected at specific locations reveal how confusing the data can be and how interpretations must be regionally based. It is also obvious to me from the data that the "trends" are variable both in degree and direction. One has to be careful about what period is being examined as the populations appear to ebb and flow. They are not all straightforward like the increase in Bald Eagles in the east over the last 25 years.

There are also chapters on the RPI website, the future of raptor migration monitoring, and recommended methods for population monitoring at migration watch sites. This last was written by Ernesto, David and Ricky Dunn. It was pleasing to see that our site is almost a model for how the monitoring should be done.

A lot of effort has gone into this book. It is a rich source of information on raptor migration. The writing is generally clear and concise while the maps and graphs are legible and illustrative. Some of the authors point out that it is an ongoing study and far more data are needed to improve the assessments, both in years of study and distribution of watch sites. However, it is an early study that has used a limited number of fall watch sites and only considered fall migration data for the RPI analysis even though spring watch sites are listed and some chapters use spring information. Consequently, the findings may be very preliminary and not that reliable. I am also concerned about the accuracy of the information and whether the book may have been rushed into print. There are two mistakes just in the listings for Beamer in a table in Chapter 10 and if that is typical, it doesn't speak well.

It is a reference text and would not appeal to most people. No price is given and NPH received a free copy. I checked the web sites of Nuttall, AOU and HMANA but none of them even mentioned the book let alone gave a price. Nos. 1 and 2 of the series are priced at $40 US so I suspect this one will be at least as much considering the number of graphs, coloured maps and tables that are in it. Those of you that are interested should have a look at our copy, which we'll arrange to get to Beamer.

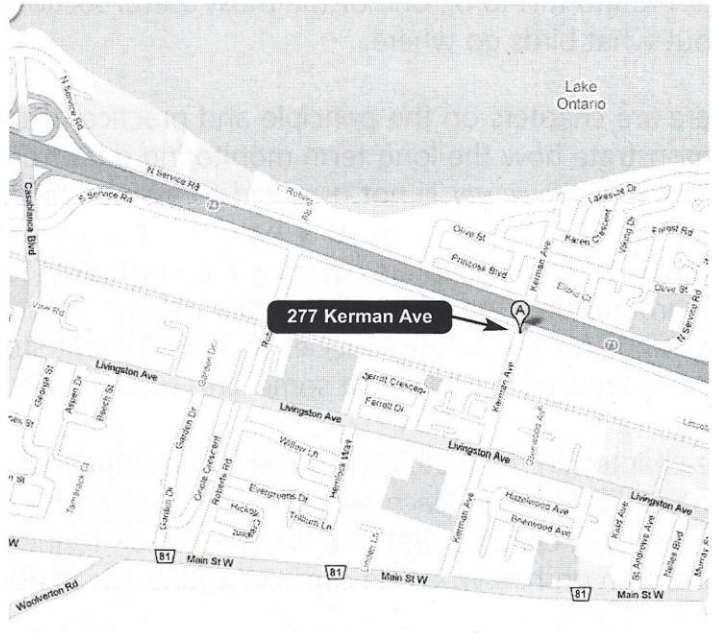
DIRECTIONS TO ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & BANQUET

From Hamilton, Burlington, Oakville, Toronto:

- Take the QEW Niagara to Grimsby and exit at Casablanca Blvd
- From the offramp, turn south on Casablanca and then make an immediate left onto South Service
- Proceed east on the South Service Road to Kerman Avenue, turn right (south) onto Kerman and the Curling Club is on the right hand side.

From St. Catharines, Niagara Falls:

- Take the QEW Niagara to Grimsby and exit at the Maple Ave/Ontario Street/Christie Street exit
- Continue on the offramp to Christie Street and then turn left and head south to the South Service Road
- Turn right on the South Service Road and proceed west to Kerman Avenue
- Turn left (south) onto Kerman Avenue and the Curling Club is on the right hand side.



2009 Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Executive

President: John Stevens, 16 Old Orchard Road, St. Catharines, ON L2R 3R4 (905) 685-6734 - jrstevens@cogeco.ca
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Editor/Website/Statistics: Keith Dieroff, 75 Houghton Ave S, Hamilton, ON L8K 2M9 (905) 545-5859 - keith.dieroff@sympatico.ca

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH MIGRATION CALENDAR FOR BEAMER MEMORIAL CONSERVATION AREA

NOTES:

1. Species initials and Right (>) or Left (<) arrow:
   - This combination indicates the start (>) or end (<) of the normal (at Beamer) migration period for that species. The same in bold type indicates the start or end of a noticeable peak period for that species. The box in which this combination is located indicates the day and month on which the period is likely to start or end.

2. A number, followed by species initial, followed by a slash (/)and a two digit number:
   - In this combination, the largest number of that species ever seen in one day is given first; the two-digit number following the / indicates the year in which this occurred. The box in which this combination is located indicates the day and month on which the event occurred. Example: 655 RS/94 in the March 23rd box indicates that the highest number of Red-shouldered Hawks recorded in one day was 655, seen on March 23rd, 1994.

TV - Turkey Vulture
BV - Black Vulture
OS - Osprey
SK - American Swallow-tailed Kite
MK - Mississippi Kite
BE - Bald Eagle
GE - Golden Eagle
NH - Northern Harrier
SS - Sharp-shinned Hawk
CH - Cooper's Hawk
NG - Northern Goshawk
RS - Red-shouldered Hawk
RT - Red-tailed Hawk
SW - Swainson's Hawk
RL - Rough-legged Hawk
FH - Ferruginous Hawk
AK - American Kestrel
ME - Merlin
PF - Peregrine Falcon
PR - Prairie Falcon
GF - Gyrfalcon
BW - Broad-winged Hawk

The following information, based on 30+ years of data has been updated to show significant events up to the year 2008. Largest number of raptors in one season: 19,724 in 1985.

BE>, NH>, SS>, CH>, RT>, RL>, AK> begin February 20th.

MARCH						
1 **RT>** NG>	2 GE>	3 RS>	4	5	6	7
8 TV>	9	10	11 **RL>**	12 **AK>**	13 **CH>** **RS>**	14 44AK/90
15	16 744 RT/96	17	18 **BE>**	19	20 **TV>** ME> PF>	21
22	23 **NH>** 655 RS/94	24 11 NG/84 19 BE/03	25	26 **SS>** 2 PF/91 1,355 TV/88	27	28 2 PF/90
29 46 RL/04	30	31 OS> 1 BV/00*				

Largest # of raptors in month: 5,670 in March 1988; largest # of raptors in one day in month: 2,080 on March 26th, 1988

APRIL						
1 BV/08*	2	3 2 PF/91	4 1 BV/92	5 50 CH/93	6	7
8 **OS><RS**	9	10 BW>	11	12 16 OS/92	13 1 FH/92	14
15 **BW>** SW> 1 SK/94	16 **<BE** 2 PF/90	17	18 35 NH/96 1,556 SS/76	19 1 PR/95**	20 1 GF/77	21 6,007 BW/85
22	23 1 FH/98*	24 **<OS** 1 FH/02*	25 **<TV** 6 ME/96 2 PF/94	26	27	28 4 GE/96
29 2 SW/98*	30 **<RL**					

Largest # of raptors in month: 15,012 in April 1984; largest # of raptors in one day in month: 7,007 on April 21st, 1985

MAY						
1	2 2 SW/97*	3 1 SW/08*	4 **<RT**	5 <SW	6 <PF	7
8	9	10	11 1 MK/97* 4 GE/08	12 **<NH** **<AK**	13 **<CH** <BE	14 **<SS** 1 MK/03*
15 **<BW** <RL <ME <GE	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25 <OS	26	27	28
29	30	31 <TV<NH <SS<CH <NG<RS <AK	*BW and RT continue beyond May 31st...*			

Largest # of raptors in month: 2,685 in May 1980; largest # of raptors in one day in month: 1,492 on May 4th, 1989

** Sighting not reviewed / accepted by Ontario Bird Records Committee*
*** First accepted Prairie Falcon record in Ontario*

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch

Newsletter

October 2009 **Newsletter #39**

DESTINATION EAGLE



Using satellite telemetry, Bird Studies Canada (BSC) has been tracking the movements of 26 eaglets hatched in southern Ontario since 2004.

The purpose of the project is to determine if southern Ontario eaglets have shorter lifespans, due to the accumulation of mercury and lead in their system.

Nine of the eaglets are still active and can be tracked on an interactive 'Eagle Tracker' map on the BSC website.

The map shows their location during the past two weeks, previous month, and so on. The 'Eagle Tracker' also allows you to isolate individual birds and view their movements over time.

When viewing a year's worth of data, the tracker shows the annual migration pattern of each eaglet, including where they were on what date. Even though the purpose of the project is to measure the lifespan of eagles, the data provided by their movements are just as scientifically valuable.

To learn more about Destination Eagle, and view the 'Eagle Tracker', visit the BSC website at the following url:

http://www.birdscanada.org/research/speciesatrisk/baea/index.jsp?targetpg=destinationeagle

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2009 ROUND UP

The NPH Open House was held on Good Friday, April 10th. This year's event will be hard to top in terms of weather, attendance and birds.

The weather was terrific: sunny, light winds and about 10 degrees celsius, and people came to Beamer from as far away as Owen Sound and Ohio.

For their part, the birds showed up too, including two Bald Eagles, one Osprey, five Northern Harriers and hundreds of Turkey Vultures and Red-tails. The total was 246 birds for the day.

Next year, Good Friday falls on April 2nd. The 2009 count for April 2nd was over 2,200 birds, so it could be a big day!

The Annual General Meeting (aka the 'Banquet') took place on Saturday, April 25th at the Grimsby Curling Club.

Attendance was good and Dick Benoit's presentation about hawks and hawkwatching in Texas was interesting and informative.

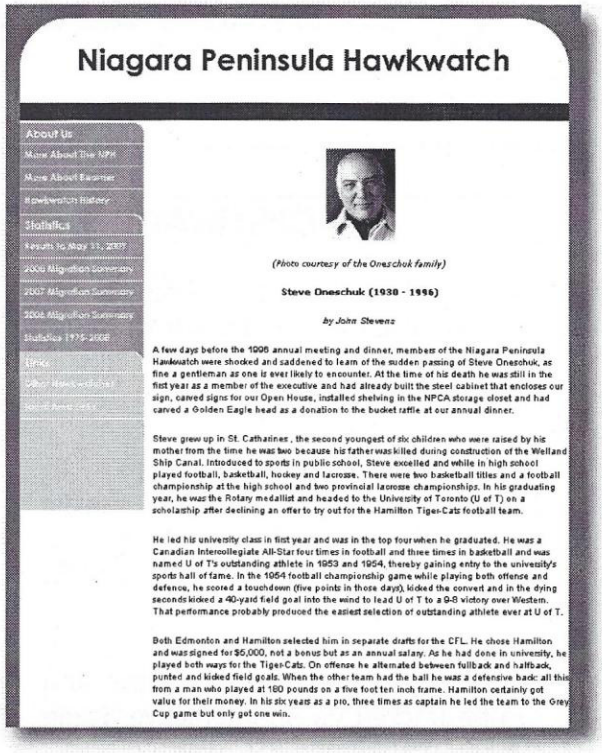
The dinner and wine-tasting were excellent, as usual. A big thank you goes out to John Merriman, sommelier extraordinaire, who provided a great selection of wines for the evening.

A few more notes of appreciation: thank you to Audrey Gamble for running the bucket raffle this year. There were no shortage of prizes, so thank you to those who attended the banquet for their generous prize donations again this year!

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by Keith Dieroff

Quite often, when I reflect on the membership of the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch, I am amazed by the diversity I see within our group. We come from all walks of life, and many different cultural and historical backgrounds.


Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch

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(Photo courtesy of the Oneschuk family)

Steve Oneschuk (1930 - 1996)

by John Stevens

A few days before the 1996 annual meeting and dinner, members of the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch were shocked and saddened to learn of the sudden passing of Steve Oneschuk, as fine a gentleman as one is ever likely to encounter. At the time of his death he was still in the first year as a member of the executive and had already built the steel cabinet that encloses our sign, carved signs for our Open House, installed shelving in the NPCA storage closet and had carved a Golden Eagle head as a donation to the bucket raffle at our annual dinner.

Steve grew up in St. Catharines, the second youngest of six children who were raised by his mother from the time he was two because his father was killed during construction of the Welland Ship Canal. Introduced to sports in public school, Steve excelled and while in high school played football, basketball, hockey and lacrosse. There were two basketball titles and a football championship at the high school and two provincial lacrosse championships. In his graduating year, he was the Rotary medallist and headed to the University of Toronto (U of T) on a scholarship after declining an offer to try out for the Hamilton Tiger-Cats football team.

He led his university class in first year and was in the top four when he graduated. He was a Canadian Intercollegiate All-Star four times in football and three times in basketball and was named U of T's outstanding athlete in 1953 and 1954, thereby gaining entry to the university's sports hall of fame. In the 1954 football championship game while playing both offense and defence, he scored a touchdown (five points in those days), kicked the convert and in the dying seconds kicked a 40-yard field goal into the wind to lead U of T to a 9-8 victory over Western. That performance probably produced the easiest selection of outstanding athlete ever at U of T.

Both Edmonton and Hamilton selected him in separate drafts for the CFL. He chose Hamilton and was signed for $6,000, not a bonus but as an annual salary. As he had done in university, he played both ways for the Tiger-Cats. On offense he alternated between fullback and halfback, punted and kicked field goals. When the other team had the ball he was a defensive back: all this from a man who played at 180 pounds on a five foot ten inch frame. Hamilton certainly got value for their money. In his six years as a pro, three times as captain he led the team to the Grey Cup game but only got one win.

When I read about Gordon Bellerby, I am amazed by his exploits during the second world war, flying 100 missions in unarmed Spitfires above and far into enemy territory in Africa and all over Europe.

When I read about Bruce Duncan, I am amazed by the impact one person can have on the lives of so many in the world of conservation. He was one of the first people I met when I started birding - first at the Merrick Field Centre in the Dundas Valley, and then at the early Bird Study Group meetings at the RBG Arboretum.

When I read about Steve Oneschuk, I am amazed by his pure athletic ability. In the 1954 football championship game while playing both offence and defence, he scored a touchdown (five points in those days), kicked the convert and in the dying seconds kicked a 40-yard field goal into the wind to lead U of T to a 9-8 victory over Western.

These three are just a sample. I could go on to mention David Copeland, Walter Klabunde, Roy Baker, and Tom Reavley, but I'll leave these to you.

In the coming months, we hope to add more pages to our website, so you, our membership, can learn more about our history, and remember those who have left us. We have a rich history and the individuals who have influenced this organization make me proud to be a hawkwatcher and a member of the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch. I'm certain they'll make you proud too.

2009 MIGRATION SUMMARY

by John Stevens

In the end, the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch had a very successful season with 17,577 birds counted, the fourth highest total ever recorded at the site. However, our expectations for a record year with three weeks to go were dashed by a very disappointing flight in May, with only a very small flight of Sharp-shinned Hawks and virtually no immature Broad-winged Hawks.

What set up the potential record were unusual conditions during March. For the first time in memory, there was no snow cover for the entire month. Total snowfall amounted to 0.4 cm, which is about two per cent of normal, with only traces ever being present on the ground. This can be compared to the 54.8 cm we had in March 2008. We did have more than twice the normal amount of rain but no days were totally rained out, although there was one zero-count day. There was a stretch of two weeks, beginning on March 12, during which good counts were obtained every day. Without having any really big days, the March total of 5,548 was the third highest on record.

A big day arrived on April ,2 when a huge flight of Turkey Vultures across a broad front occurred. The tally at the tower was 2,272 birds in total, including 2,021 TVs, but that represented only a fraction of the number passing through the peninsula. In the morning, groups of up to 100 TVs were moving along the lakeshore (with many seen turning to head across the lake), while in the afternoon, the flight line moved further and further south.

There were several days during the month when rain and/or snow led to zero or very low counts as once again precipitation was more than twice normal for the month. But then on April 24, the birds flooded through between 10:00am and about 3:45 pm EST before abruptly stopping. The count of 4,912, including 4,316 Broad-winged Hawks, represents the second highest daily total for Beamer, behind only the 7,007 of April 21, 1985.

At this point in the season, we'd counted over 15,500 raptors. There was a good flight on the morning of April 27, but the final 18 days of the season produced fewer than 600 birds, so with a season total of 17,577, we didn't come close to the record for a full season (19,275 in 1985).

Our effort this year of 525.7 hours was about average and combined with the above average count resulted in our second highest birds-per-hour value of 33.4. This was achieved despite the fact that the May count of 383 birds was the second lowest on record and the birds-per-hour value of 4.3 was just one-eighth of what it was 20 years ago in May 1989. Could this be further evidence of climate change?

Species Highlights

Despite the good number of birds counted, only the fifteen regular transients were observed in 2009. The totals for four of the five most commonly seen species, Turkey Vulture, Broad-winged Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk and Red-shouldered Hawk, were above their recent five-year averages, and of these, only the Red-shouldered Hawks were below their long-term (20-year) average. By contrast, the number of Sharp-shinned Hawks was below their five-year average and only 53% of their long-term average. In fact, the Sharpie count was the second lowest that has ever been recorded for our site since full season coverage was initiated in 1980. One result of this season's counts is that for the first time since 1976, the Sharpie is not our highest recorded species having been passed by the Broad-winged Hawk. Of course, it appears that it will be only a matter of a few years before Turkey Vultures overtake both these species although they still rank fourth behind Red-tailed Hawks as well.

For the less common species seen at Beamer, 2009 was generally a below average season. Notable exceptions to this were the 76 Bald Eagles and the 8 Peregrine Falcons, each representing their second greatest counts, as well as the 12 Golden Eagles, a total which was above both their five-year and long-term averages but somewhat disappointing in light of the record high count of this species in the fall of 2008 at Hawk Cliff.

For the remaining group of seven species with below average counts, the 67 American Kestrels and 136 Cooper's Hawks, continue trends that have seen their recent five-year averages fall below their long-term averages. The 39 Ospreys represent only 74% of the five-year average and was their second lowest total in the last 20 years. Probably the three nearest-to-Beamer occupied nest sites in 2008 were unoccupied in 2009 (Mike Street, pers. comm.). Considering that the ballpark where the Blue Jays train in Dunedin alone had three active nests at the end of February this year, maybe the Ospreys are finding that the fishing is better in Florida.

This was not an irruptive year for Northern Goshawks and their count of 6 was well below the long-term average. The Rough-legged Hawk (92) and Merlin (13) counts in 2009 were above their long-term averages but the Northern Harrier total of 121 was below both the five-year and long-term averages. This is consistent with the Harrier count from Hawk Cliff in the fall of 2008, which was well below their normal range.

Finally, a partially albino Red-tailed Hawk passed the watch on April 24th during the big flight of Broad-wings. Either this bird or, possibly, a similar one was seen five days later at the Grimsby Airpark, 5 km southwest of Beamer, by Colin Horstead.

Thanks to the following individuals without whom the 2009 count could not have been carried out. Our apologies to anyone whose name has been omitted; please advise Mike Street of any errors.

OFFICIAL COUNTERS: Glenn Barnett, Bouwe Bergsma, Peter Booker, Geoff Carpentier, Barry Cherriere, Linda Cherriere, Ed Couture, Bob Curry, Sandy Darling, Keith Dieroff, Tim Foran, Sandra Horvath, Marcie Jacklin, Bruce Mackenzie, Gord McNulty, George Meyers, Brian Mishell, Glenda Slessor, Bill Smith, Terrie Smith, Janet Snaith, John Stevens, Mike Street, Tom Thomas, Phil Waggett.

OBSERVERS: John Black, Toni Carson, John Djukic, Dave Don, Denys Gardiner, Jaques Giraud, Brian Hawthorne, Clive Hodder, Brandon Holden, Eric Holden, Colin Horstead, Frank Horvath, Tim King, Mike Kirchin, Derrick Lyon, Jennifer Lyon, Mike Matthews, Kevin McLaughlin, John Niewiadomski, Terry Osborne, Roland Parks, Ron Pittaway, Keith Sealy, Marty Shimano, Dave Sked, Art Slaughter, Ian Smith, Doris Southwell, Ed Taylor, Peter Thoem, Richard Tofflemire, Ryan Tofflemire, Joe Turner, David Weare, Mike Williamson, Joyce Wong.

2009 Monthly Counts

Species	February	March	April	May	Total
Turkey Vulture	0	2,326	3,629	136	**6,091**
Osprey	0	2	35	2	**39**
Bald Eagle	0	47	22	7	**76**
Northern Harrier	0	31	84	6	**121**
Sharp-shinned Hawk	0	197	1,424	100	**1,721**
Cooper's Hawk	0	84	46	6	**136**
Northern Goshawk	0	2	4	0	**6**
Red-shouldered Hawk	0	697	33	0	**730**
Broad-winged Hawk	0	0	5,457	40	**5,497**
Red-tailed Hawk	0	2,018	770	64	**2,852**
Rough-legged Hawk	0	51	37	4	**92**
Golden Eagle	0	4	8	0	**12**
American Kestrel	0	16	51	2	**69**
Merlin	0	1	7	5	**13**
Peregrine Falcon	0	5	2	1	**8**
Unidentified Accipiter	0	4	2	1	**7**
Unidentified Buteo	0	20	10	2	**32**
Unidentified Falcon	0	0	0	0	**0**
Unidentified Eagle	0	0	0	0	**0**
Unidentified Raptor	0	43	25	7	**75**
Total	**0**	**5,548**	**11,646**	**383**	**17,577**
Hours Counted	**0**	**225.9**	**211.3**	**88.4**	**525.7**
Birds/Hour	***0***	***24.6***	***55.1***	***4.3***	***33.4***

March 2009

Species	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Total
Black Vulture	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Turkey Vulture	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	4	0	1	23	37	60	68	90	111	10	69	90	103	41	140	83	483	26	362	162	0	101	260	**2,326**
Osprey	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	**2**
Bald Eagle	3	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	5	2	10	5	2	0	8	0	0	3	3	1	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	**47**
Northern Harrier	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	8	3	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	6	2	0	0	1	**31**
Sharp-shinned Hawk	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	12	1	6	7	13	4	5	8	16	2	2	7	16	1	33	16	5	6	32	**197**
Cooper's Hawk	0	0	1	0	2	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	2	5	1	5	5	3	4	8	4	1	4	6	0	1	16	1	0	2	8	**84**
Northern Goshawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**2**
Red-shouldered Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	43	21	26	38	58	21	8	146	111	6	29	66	12	2	59	8	0	1	39	**697**
Broad-winged Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Red-tailed Hawk	12	5	2	24	36	8	0	4	29	0	3	56	319	159	63	109	125	20	31	243	119	57	54	117	69	0	180	51	3	8	112	**2,018**
Rough-legged Hawk	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	7	2	2	0	5	0	0	6	4	0	3	2	2	0	4	3	0	0	3	**51**
Golden Eagle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**4**
American Kestrel	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	6	2	0	0	2	**16**
Merlin	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
Peregrine Falcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	**5**
Unidentified Accipiter	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	**4**
Unidentified Buteo	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	5	0	0	0	4	0	2	0	5	0	0	0	0	**20**
Unidentified Falcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Unidentified Eagle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Unidentified Raptor	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	9	**43**
Total	**15**	**5**	**3**	**28**	**50**	**11**	**2**	**7**	**35**	**0**	**10**	**89**	**441**	**257**	**194**	**250**	**328**	**62**	**123**	**505**	**360**	**109**	**243**	**286**	**585**	**30**	**680**	**246**	**8**	**118**	**468**	**5,548**
Hours Counted	*7.0*	*6.6*	*5.3*	*7.0*	*8.0*	*7.0*	*4.0*	*4.1*	*7.6*	*3.0*	*8.0*	*8.3*	*7.0*	*7.5*	*8.5*	*8.3*	*8.5*	*8.0*	*8.0*	*8.0*	*9.3*	*8.0*	*9.3*	*9.0*	*7.0*	*5.5*	*8.5*	*9.5*	*3.0*	*9.0*	*8.3*	***225.9***

April 2009

Species	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	Total
Black Vulture	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Turkey Vulture	56	2,021	0	31	438	0	7	5	280	123	20	41	42	29	55	10	15	61	61	0	9	3	12	119	93	11	37	0	2	48	**3,629**
Osprey	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	2	2	0	0	1	1	5	2	0	0	0	4	4	1	2	4	0	1	0	**35**
Bald Eagle	0	3	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	9	1	0	0	0	2	1	**22**
Northern Harrier	2	5	0	0	5	0	0	0	6	2	3	1	7	3	2	5	0	4	2	0	9	0	5	9	3	0	7	0	4	0	**84**
Sharp-shinned Hawk	14	63	0	0	58	0	0	1	36	42	15	1	36	2	22	18	13	135	32	0	37	11	27	344	83	12	354	0	35	33	**1,424**
Cooper's Hawk	2	4	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	2	0	3	0	0	0	4	0	1	0	0	7	3	3	3	0	1	5	**46**
Northern Goshawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	**4**
Red-shouldered Hawk	4	13	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	4	0	2	0	**33**
Broad-winged Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	109	75	0	16	4	175	4,316	127	5	500	0	127	1	**5,457**
Red-tailed Hawk	16	143	0	3	109	0	0	3	24	70	20	10	78	6	26	20	8	41	48	0	3	3	12	84	6	2	10	0	22	3	**770**
Rough-legged Hawk	0	4	0	0	4	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	3	2	0	1	0	6	2	2	0	5	0	3	1	**37**
Golden Eagle	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**8**
American Kestrel	2	1	0	1	2	0	0	1	3	5	1	0	3	0	0	0	4	11	1	0	0	0	1	9	1	1	4	0	0	0	**51**
Merlin	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	1	1	**7**
Peregrine Falcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	**2**
Unidentified Accipiter	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	**2**
Unidentified Buteo	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	**10**
Unidentified Falcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Unidentified Eagle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Unidentified Raptor	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	1	11	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	3	0	**25**
Total	**96**	**2,272**	**0**	**35**	**623**	**0**	**7**	**10**	**356**	**246**	**64**	**55**	**177**	**41**	**110**	**57**	**45**	**370**	**240**	**0**	**77**	**21**	**244**	**4,912**	**322**	**38**	**932**	**0**	**203**	**93**	**11,646**
Hours Counted	*7.8*	*9.8*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*9.0*	*7.8*	*8.0*	*8.5*	*5.0*	*6.3*	*0.0*	*8.5*	*7.5*	*8.0*	*9.8*	*9.3*	*8.0*	*10.0*	*10.5*	*0.0*	*9.0*	*8.5*	*5.0*	*9.0*	*8.0*	*8.0*	*8.0*	*7.0*	*9.0*	*6.3*	***211.3***

May 2009

Species	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Total
Black Vulture	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Turkey Vulture	0	29	38	8	1	0	29	12	0	10	0	0	0	0	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**136**
Osprey	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**2**
Bald Eagle	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**7**
Northern Harrier	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**6**
Sharp-shinned Hawk	0	25	32	2	3	4	6	5	4	4	0	1	12	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**100**
Cooper's Hawk	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**6**
Northern Goshawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Red-shouldered Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Broad-winged Hawk	0	7	6	3	0	1	1	0	0	0	5	1	1	0	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**40**
Red-tailed Hawk	0	7	20	6	1	0	6	1	2	4	10	0	4	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**64**
Rough-legged Hawk	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**4**
Golden Eagle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
American Kestrel	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**2**
Merlin	0	0	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**5**
Peregrine Falcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
Unidentified Accipiter	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
Unidentified Buteo	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**2**
Unidentified Falcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Unidentified Eagle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Unidentified Raptor	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**7**
Total	**0**	**73**	**103**	**22**	**8**	**6**	**44**	**21**	**6**	**19**	**19**	**3**	**26**	**1**	**32**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**383**
Hours Counted	*0.0*	*1.3*	*7.6*	*6.2*	*10.0*	*8.0*	*6.5*	*4.8*	*4.0*	*7.0*	*8.5*	*9.5*	*4.5*	*6.0*	*4.5*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	***88.4***

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Annual Summaries

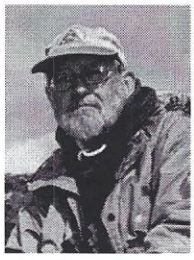
Species	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	'89-'08 Avg	'04-'08 Avg	'75-'09 Total
Black Vulture	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	**0.2**	**0.4**	**6**
Turkey Vulture	1,406	1,463	1,785	1,990	1,852	3,189	2,151	2,946	3,092	3,277	3,376	2,971	3,402	4,065	5,026	4,623	5,158	5,934	5,385	6,109	6,091	**3,460**	**5,442**	**97,142**
Osprey	36	40	46	64	45	69	47	56	28	42	43	46	71	48	59	51	47	64	50	52	39	**50**	**53**	**1,462**
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0.1**	**0.0**	**1**
Mississippi Kite	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0.1**	**0.0**	**2**
Bald Eagle	17	15	17	22	14	40	24	33	17	32	30	25	30	54	65	62	71	85	54	65	76	**39**	**67**	**1,061**
Northern Harrier	175	194	219	209	126	177	177	172	125	84	91	125	108	135	97	223	128	96	115	173	121	**147**	**147**	**4,855**
Sharp-shinned Hawk	3,576	7,004	3,767	3,418	3,475	4,846	2,136	3,290	3,047	2,816	1,983	2,468	2,551	3,134	2,351	2,310	1,756	1,753	1,551	2,652	1,721	**2,994**	**2,004**	**118,309**
Cooper's Hawk	180	311	220	199	209	263	256	295	221	187	240	177	167	272	219	252	183	202	207	123	136	**219**	**193**	**6,652**
Northern Goshawk	14	24	20	34	28	73	15	37	16	14	6	3	14	9	6	11	12	6	8	5	6	**18**	**8**	**711**
Red-shouldered Hawk	1,102	1,341	761	1,187	1,030	1,419	705	694	796	549	678	498	459	566	455	524	641	679	641	658	730	**769**	**629**	**26,392**
Broad-winged Hawk	2,304	4,428	2,063	2,761	1,963	2,335	1,779	1,550	1,849	3,886	1,833	2,368	5,229	3,668	3,327	2,532	5,537	2,026	2,413	2,971	5,497	**2,841**	**3,096**	**120,188**
Swainson's Hawk	1	0	0	0	2	2	0	1	2	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	**0.7**	**0.2**	**17**
Red-tailed Hawk	2,615	3,482	3,023	3,861	2,684	2,890	2,861	3,584	2,572	2,235	2,216	2,616	2,358	2,033	2,258	2,513	2,693	3,099	2,209	2,457	2,852	**2,713**	**2,594**	**99,211**
Ferruginous Hawk	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0.2**	**0.0**	**3**
Rough-legged Hawk	45	127	145	128	35	62	87	98	44	32	69	49	71	22	40	204	120	100	75	59	92	**81**	**112**	**2,704**
Golden Eagle	7	10	8	12	6	10	4	13	6	6	10	13	6	8	8	8	8	13	7	15	12	**9**	**10**	**281**
American Kestrel	132	207	180	92	93	122	70	61	84	77	69	95	77	99	102	87	45	63	77	120	69	**98**	**78**	**3,491**
Merlin	4	9	11	12	9	23	14	22	14	15	10	22	6	19	11	21	15	13	18	10	13	**14**	**15**	**356**
Peregrine Falcon	2	6	5	6	2	4	1	2	2	4	1	7	3	6	7	5	5	9	2	7	8	**4**	**6**	**126**
Gyrfalcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	**0.1**	**0.2**	**2**
Prairie Falcon	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0.1**	**0.0**	**1**
Unidentified Raptor	592	582	2,681	681	534	452	480	249	189	227	340	160	281	737	328	234	183	178	134	96	114	**467**	**165**	**17,003**
Total	**12,208**	**19,243**	**14,951**	**14,678**	**12,107**	**15,977**	**10,808**	**13,103**	**12,105**	**13,487**	**10,995**	**11,644**	**14,833**	**14,877**	**14,360**	**13,661**	**16,602**	**14,321**	**12,946**	**15,574**	**17,577**	**13,924**	**14,621**	**485,400**
Hours Counted	*499.3*	*574.5*	*548.5*	*541.5*	*538.5*	*531.0*	*555.7*	*454.5*	*508.4*	*499.0*	*502.8*	*527.4*	*545.0*	*556.3*	*532.0*	*495.5*	*495.2*	*534.5*	*507.1*	*551.5*	*525.7*	***524.9***	**516.8**	***17,917***
Birds/Hour	24.5	33.5	27.3	27.1	22.5	30.1	19.4	28.8	23.8	27.0	21.9	22.1	27.2	26.7	27.0	27.6	33.5	26.8	25.5	28.2	33.4	**26.5**	**28.3**	**27.1**

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch

Newsletter

February 2010 Newsletter #40

DAVID HUSSELL TO SPEAK ABOUT RPI FINDINGS AT AGM ON APRIL 24, 2010



The speaker at this year's Annual General Meeting (aka the Banquet) will be David Hussell. David will be providing an update on the latest RPI findings.

Trained as a civil engineer in England, David came to Canada in 1957 and worked for the Ontario Department of Highways (now MTO) until 1963. Soon after arriving in Canada, he joined the Ontario Bird Banding Association and chaired the committee that founded Long Point Bird Observatory (LPBO, 1960-1968) and was a member of the LPBO Board (1968-1974, 1987-1993, 1996-1998) and chair (1990-1992).

In 1964, he registered as a student at the University of Michigan and received his Ph.D. in Ornithology in 1970. He did 4 seasons (1966-1969) of fieldwork on Devon Island in the Canadian arctic studying Lapland Longspurs and Snow Buntings, culminating in a thesis on 'Factors affecting clutch size in arctic passerines'. Recently he returned to the Arctic, starting research on Northern Wheatears breeding on Baffin Island.

As LPBO's first Executive Director (1974-1982), he initiated the Baillie Birdathon, started a long-term study of breeding Tree Swallows, which continues today, and developed methods to estimate trends in populations of migrating birds – methods that have been applied to birds monitored at LPBO and other stations in the Canadian Migration Monitoring Network. David left LPBO to become a Wildlife Research Scientist with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR), where he remained until his retirement in 1999.

In 1991, he instigated the founding of Thunder Cape Bird Observatory, with support from OMNR. Since 2003, David has worked with the Hawk Migration Association of North America (HMANA) to help form the Raptor Population Index (RPI) program. He is a member of the Steering and Scientific Committees of the RPI partnership, whose goal is to promote the conservation of raptors by using migration counts from the continental network of hawk watches, such as the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch, to monitor changes in raptor populations.

David has published over 75 scientific articles on ornithological topics. Two of them were pertinent to raptors and our work at Beamer CA. In 1984, he published Analysis of Hawk Migration Counts for Monitoring Population Levels, and in 1992, Population changes in diurnally migrating raptors at Duluth, Minnesota (1974-1989) and Grimsby, Ontario (1975-1990). Both reports were prepared for the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Maple, Ontario.

David plans to attend our annual meeting with his wife, Erica Dunn. 'Ricky', who is well known in ornithological circles in her own right, was for many years the Coordinator of Bird Studies Canada's 'Feeder Watch' program.

The meeting/banquet will take place on Saturday, April 24, 2010 at St. Andrew's church, 7 St. Andrew's Avenue, Grimsby. Socializing and the bucket raffle begin at 5:00pm. The pre-supper wine and cheese starts at 5:15, and dinner will start around 6:15. Donations are still needed for the bucket raffle - please contact Keith Dieroff at (905) 545-5859.

Tickets are priced at $30 for members and their spouses/partners, and $40 for non-members (includes annual membership to the NPH). Please contact a member of the NPH executive (see page 4) to make arrangements for tickets.

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

By Keith Dieroff

In my allocated space this issue, I'd like to take a few moments to acknowledge a proverbial changing of the guard within the NPH executive. Over the past year or so, a number of people have stepped up to take on a larger role, and I'd like to say, 'thank you'.

Linda and Barry Cherriere have very quietly and very effectively expanded their roles: Linda as Membership Director, and Barry as the new Counter Coordinator. We also welcome Sandy Darling to our team. Sandy will be taking over duties as Newsletter Editor in the coming months. Welcome, Sandy.

These changes allow a number of our executive to take a well deserved step back from their roles. After more than a decade of service, Mike Street has condensed his role to Treasurer, and John Stevens has redefined his role as Past President and Conservation Liaison. Thank you both for your excellent work in the past, but you're not off the hook yet!

With more time on his hands, John Stevens has penned a very informative article about the Great Lakes Raptor Conference which took place this past May. I look forward to more contributions from John to the newsletter in the future.

As for Mike Street, we will be required to share him with the numerous other organizations and occupations in which he is involved. Regardless, I will be relying on both John and Mike's experience for guidance in my new role as well.

Preparations are under way for the upcoming spring migration season. Barry is filling up the calendar with counters, our annual Open House is set to take place on Good Friday, April 2, and the AGM is scheduled for Saturday, April 24 (at a new location). Now all we need is some birds. It has been a warm winter, and I wonder how this will affect the spring flight. Without a significant rarity in 2009, my mood is buoyant for 2010. I hope to see you at Beamer in the coming weeks. ❖

2010 HMANA CONFERENCE DULUTH, MINNESOTA

The 2010 Hawk Migration Association of North America (HMANA) Conference, hosted by Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory, will take place April 15 to 18, 2010, in Duluth, Minnesota.

Positioned at the southwestern tip of magnificent Lake Superior, Duluth offers a mix of great birding, picturesque scenery and a terrific spring raptor migration.

The 2010 conference will feature scientific presentations, informative posters, entertaining keynote speakers, a silent auction, fantastic northern-specialty field trips, as well as free shuttle service from the conference site to Hawk Ridge's spring hawk count site.

You may register online, by mail or by phone. Field trips and banquets are optional, so you can customize your conference weekend to suit your greatest interests. Detailed conference schedule, open call for papers, registration forms, lodging/travel information and other conference information are available at our website, accessible through either www.hmana.org or www.hawkridge.org.

2010 NPH OPEN HOUSE APRIL 2, 2010

The 2010 NPH Open House is scheduled for Good Friday, April 2, 2010 at Beamer. The usual agenda of activities will take place, including hawk talks with Mike Street and the children's program by Carla Carlson.

Bruce Manion of the Bruce Trail Association will lead a hike from the Grimsby Lions Pool to the pumphouse, and then up to Beamer to the Open House. This will be a moderately difficult hike of 10km, and might be a great way for those who have attended the Open House numerous times before to add a little variety to the day. To attend the hike, please meet at the Grimsby Lions Pool parking lot at 9:00am.

Bruce will be leading some additional hikes in the Grimsby/Beamer area this spring. Details are as follows:

Saturday, April 24, 8:30am (2hrs)
Raptor Festival at Peach King Centre

Meet at the entrance to the Peach King Centre for a hike to Beamer to learn about the hawks and birds of prey migration and hike back to the Centre. Stay to see bigger and better Raptor festivities with naturalist displays, birds of prey and wild animal demonstrations. Bring your children or grandchildren to enjoy the numerous tables with hands on displays.

Difficulty Level: Medium-Moderate
Leader: Bruce Manion (289) 235-9192

Saturday, May 8, 9:00am (3hrs)
Blossom Time Route - Beamer Conservation Area

Meet at Grimsby's Lions pool parking lot for a loop hike in the area of Adam Dopko Trail and Beamer. See the blossoms overlooking Grimsby or what's left of them.

Difficulty Level: Medium-Moderate
Leaders: Carol and Randy (289) 235-9480

Sunday, May 16, 9:00am (12kms)
Blossom Time Route - Jordan and Balls Falls Hike

Meet at km 50.9 on Glen Road in Jordan where the trail crosses. We car pool to Quarry Road in Beamsville and hike back. Brunch to follow, is optional.

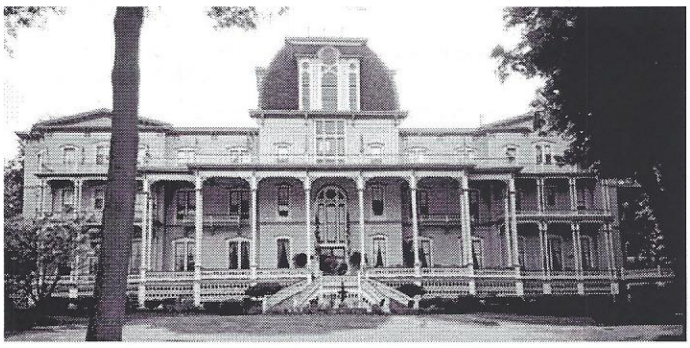
Leaders: Bruce and Bea Manion (289) 235-9192 ❖

GREAT LAKES RAPTOR CONFERENCE MAY 22-24, 2009

By John Stevens

After our watch season ended last year, Carol and Mike Street and I attended the Great Lakes Raptor Conference in Chautauqua, NY. It was hosted by the Ripley Hawk Watch and organized by Gil Randell and Mike Ceci.

We arrived on the Friday afternoon, registered and checked into our rooms in Bellinger Hall. These were comfortable, dormitory-style with adjoining rooms sharing a bathroom but with so many rooms available for the number of attendees, people were spread out so that everyone had their own en-suite. This building also contained the dining room and meeting room so that the conference was all under one roof.



Hotel facing the lake

As the first event was not until 6 pm and the weather was perfect, I walked around some of the grounds of the Chautauqua Institution admiring the early 20th century buildings, the outdoor covered amphitheatre, the beautiful old trees and the spring flowers but saw no raptors.

Returning to the centre, I grabbed a beer and mingled with the assembled group, which was small, but I'd have to say select. Included were Laurie Goodrich from Hawk Mountain in Pennsylvania, David Hussell and Erica Dunn from Simcoe, HMANA President, Vic Berardi, and his wife from Illinois. as well as the conference host, Gil Randell and his wife Jann. (Gil has recently become the new HMANA President.)

After dinner and a welcoming talk from Gil, we were given pitches for the two options available for the morning. One was a trip to the Roger Tory Peterson Institute in Jamestown, NY and the other was an outing to Presque Isle State Park in Erie, PA. The former would highlight Peterson's art, photographs, skins collection and the educational mission of the Institute. I opted for the birding trip and after an early breakfast and about an hour's drive, we arrived at the park. It was glorious weather and being the Memorial Day weekend, there were lots of people already there. Initially, we took a pontoon boat ride. No petrol-powered craft are allowed in the marsh and our boat had an electric motor. We saw or heard about 40 species including Bald Eagle, Osprey and Red-tailed Hawk. The highlight for me came later when we saw a Least Bittern and its nest not five metres away from the edge of the water. As this year's rushes had just begun to grow, visibility was excellent although last years rushes camouflaged the location very well. Later we went to a banding station where, among other tasks, the staff were collecting any ticks on the birds and preserving them in individual tubes for later analysis for Lyme disease.

Talks during the afternoon session were on a variety of topics. Mike and I described our site and how we operate, which seemed to draw a lot of interest from other sites. Paul Sweet of the Illinois Beach State Park Hawkwatch, north of Chicago, described ways in which non-statisticians can glean useful information from their data. Daena Ford of Braddock Bay Raptor Research described their site's operations as did Gil Randell for the Ripley Hawk watch. Vic Berardi's talk featured his wonderful photography that is often featured in the HMANA Journal.

A round table discussion followed that dealt mainly with what were acceptable monitoring methods to

make the data useful for the Raptor Population Index (RPI) program. With the exception of Hawk Mountain, Beamer was the only site of those present that collects data in a suitable manner and in fact as some of you may know, our data has been used during the analysis of the spring data. David Hussell and Erica Dunn were adamant that sites with moving watch locations could not be used for the present analyses unless each location was treated as a separate site. As several watches have long time practices of collecting data from two or more locations in an effort to maximize the counts, I suspect the models will have to be changed to accommodate this form of monitoring, although it flies in the face of a scientific method. In general, the migration monitoring programs were not established as scientific exercises but only as a way of comparing one year's migration with another.

Saturday's evening dinner was held at the facilities of Noble Winery, which is located near the top of a ridge overlooking Lake Erie. An excellent buffet dinner was provided after a wine-tasting mixer that included wines of an adjacent winery. I was surprised to discover that the majority of the wineries in the area still concentrate on the labrusca grape varieties, which have almost all been replaced with vinifera or hybrid grapes in Niagara. After dinner, Julie Tilden of HMANA's RPI program presented an overview of the results to date for Great Lakes watches, which included the Beamer data. (So far as I know, these results have not yet been published).



Residences on the Chautauqua grounds

The Sunday morning session included a presentation by Daena Ford of the hawk (primarily Red-tail) movement along the southern shore of Lake Ontario at Braddock Bay, mainly during August. This is termed natal dispersion and raises the question as to whether a similar flight occurs at Beamer.

Another round table discussion followed on issues and concerns pertaining to Great Lakes watches in particular. It was decided to establish an informal organization with internet connection to allow ready dissemination of discussions. If you are interested in joining, go to greatlakeshawks-subscribe@bbrr.org, put the word 'subscribe' in the subject line and send it, then follow the instructions on the return e-mail.

Another topic felt worthy of consideration at future conferences was how to deal with lake effect winds, which clearly are a major influence on counts in the Great Lakes area. One of the more interesting topics discussed was the use of various chairs for hawkwatching. Mike Ceci from the Ripley watch probably has the most elaborate of those described. He has a tilting armchair that he has fitted with wheels, which he brings to the site on a trailer. The major downside that I see with this type would be the likelihood of the counter dozing off during times of little action or when the conversation becomes boring. Of course, with the counter being on the tower at Beamer, use of this type of chair would be confined to assistants.

My overall impression of the conference was that it was quite beneficial to those who bothered to attend. I was disappointed that none of the sites at the western end of Lake Erie were represented, nor were major watches such as Derby Hill, Duluth and Whitefish Point, although the northern sites would still have been counting at the time of the conference. However, despite my disappointment with the wine, I had a good time as it was nice to meet people with similar interests in hawk migration who came from a variety of sites, some from as far away as Omaha, Nebraska. ❖

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Executive

President	Keith Dieroff	Tel: (905) 545-5859 keith.dieroff@sympatico.ca
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Open House Coordinator	Tom Thomas	Tel: (905) 689-5920 tthomas@cogeco.ca
Newsletter Editor	Sandy Darling	Tel: (905) darlinga@cogeco.ca

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH MIGRATION CALENDAR FOR BEAMER MEMORIAL CONSERVATION AREA

NOTES:

1. Species initials and Right (>) or Left (<) arrow:
   This combination indicates the start (>) or end (<) of the normal (at Beamer) migration period for that species. The same in bold type indicates the start or end of a noticeable peak period for that species. The box in which this combination is located indicates the day and month the period is likely to start or end.
2. A number, followed by species initial, followed by a slash (/)and a two digit number:
   In this combination, the largest number of that species ever seen in one day is given first; the two-digit number following the / indicates the year in which this occurred. The box in which this combination is located indicates the day and month on which the event occurred. Example: 655 RS/94 in the March 23 box indicates that the highest number of Red-shouldered Hawks recorded in one day was 655, seen on March 23, 1994.

TV - Turkey Vulture
BV - Black Vulture
OS - Osprey
SK - American Swallow-tailed Kite
MK - Mississippi Kite
BE - Bald Eagle
GE - Golden Eagle
NH - Northern Harrier
SS - Sharp-shinned Hawk
CH - Cooper's Hawk
NG - Northern Goshawk
RS - Red-shouldered Hawk
RT - Red-tailed Hawk
SW - Swainson's Hawk
RL - Rough-legged Hawk
FH - Ferruginous Hawk
AK - American Kestrel
ME - Merlin
PF - Peregrine Falcon
PR - Prairie Falcon
GY - Gyrfalcon
BW - Broad-winged Hawk

The following information, based on 30+ years of data has been updated to show significant events up to the year 2009.

Largest number of raptors in one season: 19,724 in 1985.

BE>, NH>, SS>, CH>, RT>, RL>, AK> begin February 20th.

MARCH						
1 **RT>** NG>	2 GE>	3 RS>	4	5	6	7
8 TV>	9	10	11 **RL>**	12 **AK>**	13 **CH>** **RS>**	14 44 AK/90
15	16 744 RT/96	17 1 GY/06	18 **BE>**	19	20 **TV>** ME> PF>	21
22	23 NH> 655 RS/94	24 11 NG/84 19 BE/03	25	26 **SS>** 2 PF/91	27	28 2 PF/90
29 46 RL/04	30	31 OS> 1 BV/00*				

Largest # of raptors in month: 5,670 in March 1988; largest # of raptors in one day in month: 2,080 on March 26, 1988.

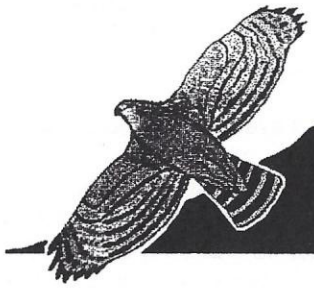
APRIL						
1	2 2,021 TV/09	3 2 PF/91	4 1 BV/92	5 1 BV/04 50 CH/93	6	7 1 BV/08
8 **OS><RS**	9	10 BW>	11	12 16 OS/92	13 1 FH/92	14
15 **BW>** SW> 1 SK/94	16 **<BE** 2 PF/90	17	18 35 NH/96 1,556 SS/76	19 1 PR/95**	20 1 GY/77	21 6,007 BW/85
22	23 1 FH/98*	24 **<OS** 1 FH/02*	25 **<TV** 6 ME/96 2 PF/94	26	27	28 4 GE/96
29 2 SW/98*	30 **<RL**					

Largest # of raptors in month: 15,012 in April 1984; largest # of raptors in one day in month: 7,007 on April 21, 1985.

MAY						
1	2 2 SW/97*	3	4 **<RT**	5 <SW	6 <PF	7
8	9	10	11 1 MK/97* 4 GE/08	12 **<NH** **<AK**	13 **<CH** <BE	14 **<SS** 1 MK/03*
15 **<BW** <RL <ME <GE	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31 <TV <NH <SS <CH <NG <RS <AK	*BW and RT continue beyond May 31st…*			

Largest # of raptors in month: 2,685 in May 1980; largest # of raptors in one day in month: 1,492 on May 4, 1989.

** Sighting not reviewed / accepted by Ontario Bird Records Committee*
*** First accepted Prairie Falcon record in Ontario*



Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Newsletter

July 2010 **Newsletter #41**

President's Column

Keith Dieroff

The Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch has been in existence (officially) since 1990. We have a stable membership and an excellent core group of experienced counters. We record our observations of raptor migration each spring and submit our data to HawkCount. Life is good, right? Yes, but the question that has been on my mind since becoming your president is: where do we go from here?

We learned from David Hussell at this year's AGM and banquet that we have one of the longest running spring counts in eastern North America. Only a half dozen sites in the east have complete records for more than ten years (we have 20+). We also learned that our data collection methods are good. It turns out having a number of different counters throughout the season is preferable to having one paid (or unpaid) counter for the entire season. Here's the reason, as I understand it. Hawkwatch sites that have one counter often show a dramatic shift in raptor numbers from year to year *when a new counter is introduced.* Is the change because of the new counter, or is it something happening within the raptor population? Statistically, it's hard to be sure. For this reason, having multiple counters produces more useful data. To sum up, we have a long record of scientifically useful data. I think it goes without saying we should continue our efforts in this regard!

We had an extremely successful Open House on Good Friday, April 2nd. The buzz in the local media was strong this year and I get the sense we're reaching some sort of critical mass with respect to public awareness. Raising our profile will ultimately allow us to grow our membership and recruit new counters, so we can continue the good work we do. In the future, I'd like to expand our education role in the community and elevate our profile even further. We missed a golden opportunity this past April to be a keynote speaker at RaptorFest in Grimsby. A few years ago this event was attended by a few hundred people – this year it was a few thousand. Next April, we'll be there. I also hear we used to make presentations to local schools about raptors and raptor migration. With some additional help, we could start this program up again and perhaps inject some youth into our membership.

Last but certainly not least, we have an opportunity to support the monitoring of raptor migration financially. At the AGM, David Hussell provided a recap of the findings produced thus far by the Raptor Population Index (RPI) Project. The results were interesting and in some cases surprising. However, the most startling thing I learned was that funding for RPI will run out within the next two years. RPI has just spread its proverbial wings and now it needs to get off the ground. I think we can help in this regard and I will be discussing how we can do this at the next Executive meeting this coming fall.

I am telling all of you this because I'd like to hear your feedback on the direction we're heading as an organization. I am excited to be leading the NPH into a new decade and I think having a clear focus for our efforts is important. From time to time, I'll provide an update on what we're doing in this column and in future, I hope to be able to share more good news. See you at Beamer!

PS - If you'd like to contact me, I can be reached at keith.dieroff@sympatico.ca or (905) 545-5859

What's Inside

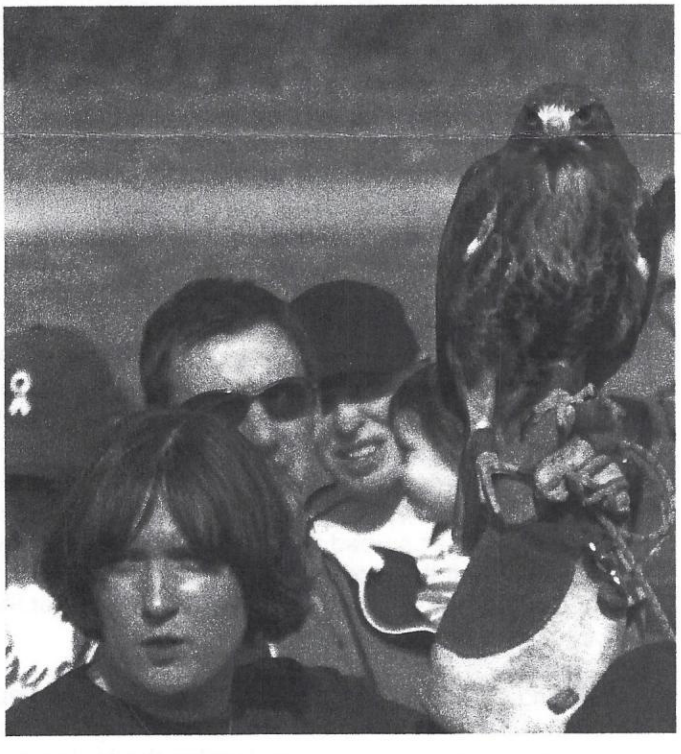
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2010 ROUND UP

The NPH Open House was held on Good Friday, April 2nd, an unseasonably warm day with temperatures up to 24 C with high hazy clouds and winds from the south-west. The good weather brought out hundreds of visitors, and no doubt many were enticed by the high counts of the two previous days. In total 908 raptors passed by with the most common being Turkey Vultures, Sharp-shinned Hawks, and Red-tailed Hawks, with 2 Ospreys being the highlights.

Closer to ground visitors were able to see a noisy Merlin and Red-tailed Hawk brought by Sandra Davey of Mountsberg Conservation Area, and a Great-horned Owl, Golden Eagle and a Red-tailed Hawk brought by James Cowan of Canada Raptor Conservancy. These exhibits are always greatly appreciated, and we thank both Sandra and James for their help.

As usual we had a variety of exhibitors – eight in total. Tom Thomas and all the other volunteers did a great job in organizing and excellent day. Mark in your diaries Friday April 22nd, 2011 for next year's Open House, and let's hope that there is a big flight of Broad-winged Hawks.



Sandra Davey with Merlin; James Cowan (right) with Great-horned Owl

The annual meeting and banquet was held on Saturday, April 24th in the hall at St Andrew's, Grimsby, and the speaker was David Hussell. David used a power-point presentation to speak about the Raptor Population Index (RPI) Project. The purpose of the project is to develop a model to facilitate monitoring and tracking of populations trends in raptor migration across the continent. He divided his talk into three sections: a description of the monitoring system, the trends and conservation status, and the future of the RPI Project.

In speaking about monitoring systems, David showed the sites across North America, and the need to standardize protocols, forms and data recording. A standardized data base, Hawkcount, is used and most of the counters at Beamer enter data directly to the data base and so know how it may be used. Our counters also receive detailed instructions on how to record the various elements of data and what birds to count; this is the kind of standardization needed for robust data that can be analysed for longitudinal studies.

The trends are monitored by a standardized annual index using a polynomial trajectory to smooth out the shifts that can occur in annual data. David then showed the trends for most of the raptors encountered at Beamer and compared these to the trends at other sites around the Great Lakes.

In talking of the future, David identified some of the methodological improvements that the project wishes to make. He showed some interesting results of satellite tracking to show migration routes of raptors starting from different locations. He concluded with a description of the sponsors and the need for continuing support. The presentation reinforced the usefulness of the data collected each year, and we hope that counters on the cold days of early March will appreciate how valuable their work is!



FALL MIGRATION AT HAWK CLIFF

If you enjoy the spring migration at Beamer, you may want to consider the reverse migration in the fall at Hawk Cliff on the north shore of Lake Erie near Port Stanley. From St Thomas one can take highway 22 and, after it crosses highway 24, it becomes Hawk Cliff Road. (There are faster routes, which you can learn from a map and experience.) The location of viewing will shift along the road according to where the raptors are streaming.

The count period is from September 1st to November 30th, but there are peak periods within this. Over the last five years the average migration has been over 90,000 in the count period.

Most Broad-winged Hawks migrate in a relatively short period of September 13th to 20th with a peak around the 15th. The record day count is 130,640! Also around that time is the peak for Ospreys, Sharp-shinned Hawks, American Kestrels and Merlins. Bald-headed Eagles tend to peak later in September, and the Peregrines in the last days of September and the beginning of October.

Turkey Vultures reach a peak in mid-October. Late October is the peak period for Cooper's Hawks, Northern Goshawks, and Red-shouldered and Red-tailed Hawks. Golden Eagles start showing up in mid- to late-October with the juveniles first and continue to migrate in significant numbers in the first part of November.

The best flights generally occur with north-west winds, and north winds can produce big counts too. The worst winds are those from the south-east. Good viewing!

EAGLES AT BEAMER 2006-10

Mike Street

In 2006 the NPH started tracking the ages of Bald Eagles (BE) and Golden Eagles (GE) counted at Beamer CA. Counters were asked to record ages, and were contacted as soon as the data sheet arrived if this information was missing. We now have five years of data, shown in the tables below. Eagles unidentified as to species are not included.

Table 1

Bald Eagles									
Year	Adult	Juv	4+	4th	3rd	2nd	1st	Unk	Total
2006	44	31	1	2	2	11	15	10	85
2007	41	12	0	1	4	3	4	1	54
2008	33	19	1	4	5	2	7	13	65
2009	45	29	0	1	6	8	14	2	76
2010	39	22	1	1	3	11	6	3	64

Table 2

Golden Eagles									
Year	Adult	Juv	4+	4th	3rd	2nd	1st	Unk	Total
2006	1	3	1	0	0	0	2	9	13
2007	3	3	0	0	0	1	2	1	7
2008	8	6	0	0	2	0	4	1	15
2009	10	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	12
2010	6	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	8

Juv = birds of any age below full adult; Unk = Unknown age

Observations: Other than that our counters are definitely making the effort to age any eagle that passes by, it is hard to draw any firm conclusions from the data at this time. It does appear that the rate of increase in numbers of Bald Eagles has reached a plateau. More in-depth analysis and comparison to other spring sites at our latitude and higher is needed.

Bald Eagles: While the number of full adult BEs seen each year at Beamer has remained within a range, juvenile numbers have fluctuated widely. Where we would hope to see more third and fourth year birds over time, this has not happened. Based on the sighting of more than 20 sub-adult BEs near Nanticoke in one day at the end of February 2007, it could be that, if weather conditions are right, young Bald Eagles either overwinter and/or move north before our counting season starts or, for some reason, do not come by Beamer CA at all. It is possible that younger BEs travel east of us for some reason. Examination of our monthly data and comparisons to Braddock Bay and Derby Hill may yield additional insight. As far as full adult BEs are concerned, my own feeling is that the birds coming later in April and in early May are heading further north than those seen earlier, i.e. they do not travel until the snow and ice have retreated from their normal ranges.

Golden Eagles: Given the huge numbers of GEs that are seen each fall only 175km west at Hawk Cliff, Beamer CA is definitely NOT on a major spring migration route for the species. I expect that comparisons with Braddock Bay and Derby Hill data will show that GEs prefer travelling in that line; this makes sense given that there are populations of GEs in northern Quebec/ Nunavik and in eastern Labrador.

2010 SPRING MIGRATION SUMMARY FOR BEAMER MEMORIAL CA

John Stevens

Average, typical, so-so and concentrated are some of the terms that could be applied to the 2010 migration at Beamer Memorial Conservation Area (Beamer) atop the Niagara Escarpment in Grimsby, Ontario. Of course within that average year are several atypical observations, many of which were determined by weather conditions.

For the second year in succession, the season was virtually free of any snowfall (0.2 cm or about 1% of normal) but at least at the beginning of March there was some snow cover. That had all melted by March 10th so except for the early Red-shouldered Hawk on February 28, we were denied the pleasure of seeing this species with under lighting this year as their migration didn't start in earnest until March 16. The absence of snow did not mean there wasn't precipitation as four days in March were totally wiped out and five other days in the month were partly affected by rain. In general the temperatures were above normal during March but the migration was very slow until the 16th with the only really good day occurring on the 31st when 1,077 raptors were counted. That helped the total count for the month to be a respectable 3,925.

April 2010 was very warm, particularly at the beginning of the month, with the mean daily temperature being 4.4 degrees above normal. This produced the seventh best April count since full coverage began in 1981, 10,736 birds. Over half of this total passed during the first four days with the April 1 total of 2,049 being the greatest daily count of the season. There were also two days in April of inclement weather with no flight recorded.

For the third year in a row, the May count of 511 was very low with only May 1 and May 3 having more than 100 birds. Only 12 days received any coverage in May, partly because poor weather

wiped out two days but the hours counted was particularly low as rain curtailed activities on five other days. It is becoming increasingly difficult to find counters in May, especially those willing to put in a full day when movement can occur from early morning to late afternoon. Overall, May was also above normal in temperature although not particularly during the first half when we provide coverage and half of those days had precipitation.

The season's total count of 15,175 birds of 16 species was about a thousand above the 30-year average but slightly below the most recent 5-year average of 15,404. The 518 hours of records in 2010 represents about an average of recent years despite the low total in May. It is somewhat less than the 30-year average because of the first eight years when coverage extended to the end of May. The total hours was helped by many days in March and April with extensive coverage when Barry Cherriere stayed for an hour or two after the assigned counter left.

Species Highlights

Both Turkey Vultures and Peregrine Falcons set new annual count records this year while the Merlin count of 22 tied their previous high that was first set in 1996 and matched in 2000. The Turkey Vulture total of 6,732 was 10% above the previous record from 2008 and continues the steady upward trend in their numbers that has been ongoing since full-season counting began at Beamer in 1980. In 31 years, on only two occasions have we had to wait more than one year for the Turkey Vulture count to set an annual record. The two exceptions were the periods following 1988 and 1994, years when the counts had very large increases that took six and four years, respectively, to be matched.

The Peregrine Falcon has only ever been seen infrequently at Beamer. The resident population increase that has occurred in Ontario for this species since the recovery program, instituted after the ban on chlorinated pesticides was imposed, never resulted in a significant increase in their counts at Beamer. As recently as 2007, only 2 were recorded in the entire season. This year's total of 12 was 33% above the previous high count of 9 set in 2006 and the three birds on April 27th mark the first time we've had more than two on any day. We can hope that this signals the start of a greater flight at our watch site of this exciting bird although it is possible that a nearby resident was being observed repeatedly this year.

Goodrich and Smith in *State of North America's Birds of Prey* (2008) state that "Black Vultures are expanding their range in Eastern North America". We had seen single birds in 1992, 2000, 2004 and 2008. This year counter Tom Thomas recorded Black Vultures on separate days over a month apart. One bird was moving westward, the normal route at Beamer, while the second went eastward, a direction more often seen near the end of the migration period. It is possible that the same bird was seen twice but it seems unlikely. At Braddock Bay, located less than 200 km to the east at a similar latitude to Beamer, 11 Black Vultures were recorded in 2010 compared to the usual average of one. It appears that the range expansion may be reaching the southern shores of Lake Ontario.

Two other positive findings were made in 2010. The Osprey count at 53 birds rebounded from last year's below average total of 39 and was the best count in four years although still well below the seasonal record of 71. The Bald Eagle total of 64 was below the recent 5-year average of 70 but is double the long-term average and was the sixth highest count for the species at Beamer.

The findings for most of the remainder of the fifteen species that are regularly seen at Beamer were below average. All the Buteo species had markedly lower counts in 2010 compared to 2009. In more perspective, Red-shouldered Hawks were 33% below, Broad-winged Hawks were 17% below and Red-tailed Hawks were 23% below their respective 30-year averages. A dark morph Broad-winged Hawk was seen on April 13th.

The 29 Rough-legged Hawks counted represents the second lowest count that we've ever had for this somewhat irregular migrant, and is 63% below the 30-year average and 67% below the recent 5-year average. The count for this species last fall at Cranberry Marsh on the northern shore of Lake Ontario was also relatively low so perhaps the low Beamer total in 2010 was to be expected.

Moving to the Accipiters, the 2010 results somewhat mixed with the Sharp-shinned Hawk count 24% above the recent 5-year average although still well below the 30-year average. In contrast, the Cooper's Hawk total was just 125 birds representing the third lowest count since 1980 and 26% below the recent 5-year average. It is possible that the counters are becoming more experienced at identifying the local Coops and they are not being tallied as they may have been previously.

The Goshawk count of 8 was typical of a non-irruption year but somewhat surprising in light of the higher counts last fall at watches on the northern shore of Lakes Erie and Ontario. Most of those that passed the site this year seemed to be quite accommodating by allowing the counters excellent views to confirm their identity.

The Golden Eagle count was on the 30-year average but below the most recent 5-year average. We have had several years with greater numbers of this species recently and this total marks a return to a more characteristic number.

The average number of Northern Harriers seen in a year at Beamer is 141 but significant variation occurs from year to year with little in the way of trends being evident. In 2010, the count was only 109, the eighth lowest total on record. This is below the recent 5-year average by 14%.

The American Kestrel count was below both the recent 5-year and long term (30-year) averages and at 55 birds was less than half the 120 seen in 2008. This was the second lowest total for this species that we've had over the 31 years of full season coverage, greater only than the 45 birds seen in 2005. A widespread decline in the population of American Kestrels in the northeast has been detected during the RPI analyses for fall watch sites and, except for 2008, the springtime observations at Beamer appear to confirm this trend.

Lucky Tom Thomas was also the counter on April 11 when 13 species were counted, missing only Northern Goshawk and Peregrine from our 15 regular migrants. No other day had more than 11 species. Finally, it should be noted that if next season has slightly more birds than this year, some time near the middle of May 2011 we should record the 500,000th raptor since the watch started in 1975.

Thanks go to the following volunteers for accepting responsibility as designated counters: Bouwe Bergsma, Peter Booker, Barry Cherriere, Bob Curry, Geoff Carpentier, Ed Couture, Sandy Darling, Keith Dieroff, Chris Escott, Tim Foran, Sandra Horvath, Marcie Jacklin, Bruce McKenzie, Gord McNulty, George Naylor, Don Peuramaki, Bill Smith, Janet Snaith, John Stevens, Mike Street, Tom Thomas, Phil Waggett and Rob Waldhuber.

Thanks also to the numerous observers who put in lots of time assisting. These include Glenn Barnett, Frank Butson, Toni Carson, Linda Cherriere, Bob Copeland, Mark Cranford, Dave Don, Jaques Giraud, Brian Hawthorne, Noel Henderson, Brandon Holden, Eric Holden, George Holland, Colin Horstead, Frank Horvath, Rhondda James, Tim King, Mike Kirchin, Cody Law, Charles Liddle, Doug Lockrey, Derek Lyon, Jennifer Lyon, Rob Maciver, Stuart McKenzie, Kevin McLaughlin, John Niewiadomski, Terry Osborne, Roland Parks, Norman Schipper, Keith Sealy, Marty Shimano, Eric Single, Bill Siverns, Dave Sked, Glenda Slessor, Ian Smith, Terrie Smith, Doris Southwell, Jim Watt, David Weare, Angie Williams and Ken Williams, plus several others, many of whom come from a great distance and appear occasionally.

February/March 2010

	Feb. 28	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	March Species Totals
Black Vulture																				1													1
Turkey Vulture					1		2					1				2	14	40	30	39	53	43	5		374	42	57	86	90	70	212	822	1,983
Osprey																																	0
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite																																	0
Mississippi Kite																																	0
Bald Eagle			1		1				2	7		3					2	2	3	5	1	4			3								34
Northern Harrier												1				1	2	4	3	3	1		1		3			1			2	2	24
Sharp-shinned Hawk			1			1	1	1		3						1	1	3	10	35	2				14	2	5	15	10	7	9	57	178
Cooper's Hawk		1	2	4						2		2				2	2	4	8	15	3	5			7	1	2	3	1	1	1	5	71
Northern Goshawk							2			1											1	1			1				1				7
Red-shouldered Hawk	1																17	10	28	61	71	52			26	10	1	45	6	11	14	51	403
Broad-winged Hawk																																	0
Swainson's Hawk																																	0
Red-tailed Hawk	2	5	10	3	15	13	7	2	5	40	25	22				8	126	34	158	133	110	61	1		64	3	29	85	5	9	64	135	1,172
Ferruginous Hawk																																	0
Rough-legged Hawk							1			2							3		3		3	2							1			2	17
Golden Eagle																		3			2												5
American Kestrel					1			1				1										1										1	5
Merlin		1																		1					3				1	1			7
Peregrine Falcon																			2		1	1			1						1	1	7
Gyrfalcon																																	0
Prairie Falcon																																	0
Unid. Accipiter								1											1													1	3
Unid. Buteo										1															3				1				5
Unid. Falcon																																	0
Unid. Eagle																																	0
Unid. Raptor										1						1														1			3
Total Raptors	3	7	14	7	18	14	13	5	7	57	25	30	0	0	0	15	167	100	246	293	248	170	7	0	499	58	94	235	116	100	303	1,077	3,925
Hours Counted	*4.25*	*7.00*	*6.75*	*8.00*	*8.00*	*8.00*	*7.50*	*8.17*	*7.83*	*8.00*	*7.33*	*8.00*	*0.00*	*0.00*	*0.00*	*8.25*	*8.00*	*8.17*	*8.00*	*8.00*	*7.50*	*8.17*	*4.50*	*0.00*	*8.00*	*4.25*	*8.00*	*8.50*	*7.00*	*8.00*	*9.50*	*8.50*	*207*
Precipitation													R	R	R	F						R	R	R		R			R				

APRIL 2010

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	April Species Totals
Black Vulture																											1				1
Turkey Vulture	1,564	538	677	901	130	21	14		15	114	169	53	79	37	57	13	3	9	27	28	9	5	11			7	5	100	49	24	4,659
Osprey	2	2	3	2	3					2	3	1	7		2	2	1	2	2		2	3	3				2		4	2	50
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite																															0
Mississippi Kite																															0
Bald Eagle	3		2	5						2	3										4	2					1		2	2	26
Northern Harrier	13	7	6	6	1	1				4	8	1	3	1	4			1	4	6	3	2	2				2	4	2		81
Sharp-shinned Hawk	233	242	397	163	33	24	7		4	94	167	23	34	5	102	18	1	7	11	34	88	27	26	28		7	8	3	25	82	1,893
Cooper's Hawk	3	1	3	1	5	1					4	6	1	2	1				4				2	2		2	2	3	2	4	49
Northern Goshawk																															0
Red-shouldered Hawk	52	20	11	14						2	1		2	3									2								107
Broad-winged Hawk										7	65	2	5	2	96	26	4	105	87	414	894	305	405	9		11		3	146	272	2,858
Swainson's Hawk																															0
Red-tailed Hawk	171	110	97	167	14	2			2	31	50	39	34	26	33	1		11	9	19	15	14	17	2		4	7	19	27	8	929
Ferruginous Hawk																															0
Rough-legged Hawk	3	2	2								1			1				1													10
Golden Eagle				1							1										1										3
American Kestrel	4	6	6	2	3					2	6				4	2					3		1	1		1			1	2	44
Merlin	1		2								4													1					1	1	10
Peregrine Falcon																											3				3
Gyrfalcon																															0
Prairie Falcon																															0
Unid. Accipiter																															0
Unid. Buteo																		1	2										2		5
Unid. Falcon													1																	1	2
Unid. Eagle																															0
Unid. Raptor					1								1								1									3	6
Total Raptors	2,049	928	1,206	1,262	190	49	21	0	21	258	482	125	167	77	299	62	9	137	146	501	1,020	358	469	43	0	32	31	132	261	401	10,736
Hours Counted	*8.00*	*9.00*	*10.00*	*9.00*	*9.67*	*4.25*	*5.00*	*0.00*	*5.00*	*7.25*	*8.00*	*9.42*	*9.00*	*8.00*	*9.00*	*7.00*	*6.50*	*7.50*	*10.00*	*9.25*	*9.00*	*9.55*	*8.00*	*8.00*	*0.00*	*9.50*	*8.00*	*8.50*	*8.83*	*9.75*	*229.97*
Precipitation						R	R	R										R							R						

MAY 2010

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	May Species Totals
Black Vulture																0
Turkey Vulture		9	35	20	1	2	12			9	2					90
Osprey		1		1		1										3
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite																0
Mississippi Kite																0
Bald Eagle			2	2												4
Northern Harrier	1		1		2											4
Sharp-shinned Hawk	71	49	50	38	27	8	4			14	4		2		1	268
Cooper's Hawk	2		2	1												5
Northern Goshawk							1									1
Red-shouldered Hawk			1		1											2
Broad-winged Hawk	28	10	17	1	2		1			2	2				1	64
Swainson's Hawk																0
Red-tailed Hawk	3	4	18		4	5				16	1				2	53
Ferruginous Hawk																0
Rough-legged Hawk					1						1					2
Golden Eagle																0
American Kestrel	1	2	1	1	1											6
Merlin		2				1				1			1			5
Peregrine Falcon	1	1														2
Gyrfalcon																0
Prairie Falcon																0
Unid. Accipiter																0
Unid. Buteo			1													1
Unid. Falcon																0
Unid. Eagle																0
Unid. Raptor			1													1
Total Raptors	**107**	**78**	**129**	**64**	**39**	**17**	**18**	**0**	**0**	**42**	**10**	**0**	**3**	**0**	**4**	**511**
Hours Counted	*3.50*	*10.50*	*8.17*	*8.75*	*8.00*	*8.00*	*3.00*	*0.00*	*0.00*	*9.75*	*6.00*	*4.50*	*3.08*	*0.00*	*4.08*	*77.33*
Precipitation	R						R	R	R		R	F	R	R		

ANNUAL SUMMARIES BY SPECIES SINCE 1991

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2005-2009 Average	1980-2009 Average
Black Vulture		1								1				1				1		2	**0.20**	**0.13**
Turkey Vulture	1793	1990	1853	3189	2154	2963	3092	3277	3384	2971	3532	4065	5026	4623	5158	5934	5385	6107	6091	6732	**5735.00**	**2795.73**
Osprey	47	64	44	69	47	56	28	42	42	46	71	48	59	51	47	64	50	52	39	53	**50.40**	**43.67**
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite				1																	**0.00**	**0.03**
Mississippi Kite							1						1								**0.00**	**0.07**
Bald Eagle	17	22	15	39	24	33	20	32	30	25	30	54	66	62	71	85	54	65	76	64	**70.20**	**30.90**
Northern Harrier	218	209	127	176	177	171	122	85	91	125	108	115	98	223	128	96	115	173	121	109	**126.60**	**141.30**
Sharp-shinned Hawk	3783	3418	3474	4651	2136	3291	3048	2822	2002	2467	2541	3173	2350	2310	1756	1753	1551	2652	1721	2339	**1886.60**	**3261.67**
Cooper's Hawk	221	199	209	263	256	295	221	179	241	181	169	244	220	252	183	202	207	123	136	125	**170.20**	**201.77**
Northern Goshawk	20	34	28	72	15	25	16	14	6	3	14	9	6	11	12	6	8	5	6	8	**7.40**	**21.80**
Red-shouldered Hawk	763	1187	1030	1419	705	706	796	553	675	508	458	566	455	524	641	679	641	658	730	513	**669.80**	**761.70**
Broad-winged Hawk	2085	2761	1963	2335	1779	1549	1849	3886	1833	2368	5229	3668	3327	2532	5537	2026	2413	2971	5497	2922	**3688.80**	**3500.83**
Swainson's Hawk			2	2		1	2	3				1						1			**0.20**	**0.50**
Red-tailed Hawk	3030	3861	2684	2890	2861	3589	2571	2159	2218	2617	2351	2031	2258	2513	2693	3099	2209	2457	2852	2156	**2662.00**	**2814.93**
Ferruginous Hawk		1						1				1									**0.00**	**0.10**
Rough-legged Hawk	155	128	36	62	87	97	44	33	69	50	74	22	40	204	120	100	75	59	92	29	**89.20**	**77.63**
Golden Eagle	8	12	6	10	4	12	6	6	10	13	6	8	8	8	8	13	7	15	12	8	**11.00**	**8.07**
American Kestrel	180	92	93	122	70	62	84	77	69	95	77	99	102	87	45	63	77	120	69	55	**74.80**	**99.17**
Merlin	12	12	9	23	14	22	14	15	10	22	6	19	11	21	15	13	18	10	13	22	**13.80**	**11.03**
Peregrine Falcon	5	6	2	5	1	2	2	4	1	7	3	6	7	5	5	9	2	7	8	12	**6.20**	**3.67**
Gyrfalcon																1					**0.20**	**0.03**
Prairie Falcon					1																**0.00**	**0.03**
Unid. Raptors	2682	681	534	442	480	249	190	227	345	165	282	737	327	234	183	178	134	96	114	26	**141.00**	**514.53**
Total Raptors	15019	14678	12109	15970	10811	13123	12106	13415	11026	11664	14951	14866	14361	13661	16602	14321	12946	15572	17577	15175	**15403.60**	**14289.30**
Hours Counted	548.5	541.5	538.5	531.0	555.7	454.5	508.4	499.0	502.8	527.4	545.0	556.3	532.0	495.5	495.2	534.5	507.1	552.6	520.3	518.4	**521.93**	**543.27**
Birds per Hour	27.4	27.1	22.5	30.1	19.5	28.9	23.8	26.9	21.9	22.1	27.4	26.7	27.0	27.6	33.5	26.8	25.5	28.2	33.8	29.3	**29.56**	**26.30**

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch

Newsletter

February 2011 **Newsletter #42**

CHRIS EARLEY TO SPEAK ON "RAPTOR APPRECIATION" AT AGM ON APRIL 30

Our speaker at the 2011 Annual General Meeting and Banquet will be Chris Early, the Interpretive Biologist and Education Coordinator at the Arboretum of the University of Guelph. Chris will talk about Raptor Appreciation.

Chris built upon a long-standing interest in the natural world by completing a B.Sc. in Zoology at the University of Guelph, and is currently studying the competition of European Paper Wasps with cavity nesting birds for nest sites as part of his M.Sc. degree requirements. He has written four books on warblers, sparrows and finches, hawks and owls, and waterfowl.

Chris has worked at the arboretum for over 18 years, and his job is to provide information in a variety of forms for the public and students. He prepares written materials, leads tours and gives special lectures. He does this in a manner that engages interest and entertains. He also tracks wildlife sightings around the arboretum.

Chris leads tours for Quest Nature Tours both in Canada and abroad. He plays soccer and basketball regularly, and is married and has two children. His wife Jiffy, will be with him at the banquet. We welcome them both and look forward to a most interesting talk.

The Annual Meeting/ Banquet on Saturday, April 30 will again be held at St Andrew's Church Hall, 7 St Andrew's Avenue, Grimsby. Socializing and the bucket raffle begin at 5:00 p.m., and the pre-supper wine and cheese at 5:15. Dinner will start around 6:15. Donations are still needed for the bucket raffle – please contact Keith Dieroff at (905) 545 5859.

Tickets are $30 for members and $40 for non-members. Please contact a member of the NPH executive (see page 3) to obtain tickets.

2011 NPH OPEN HOUSE FRIDAY, APRIL 22

The 2011 Open House will be on Good Friday, April 22 at Beamer. This is close to the peak of the Broad-winged Hawk migration, and we hope that good weather will draw large crowds. The usual agenda of activities will take place. Mike Street will talk about hawks, and we hope that there will be a children's program.

As usual there will be a number of exhibits, including one at which John Black and Kayo Roy will be selling the recently published *Birds of Niagara.* We expect to have some raptors on display, and the NPCA, as our partners in this event will be selling food and beverages. Come out and bring your friends!

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Keith Dieroff

This April promises to be a busy month for hawk-watchers (and hopefully hawks too). Things kick off with the Grimsby Raptorfest on Saturday, April 16th. This year, the NPH will have an expanded program at Raptorfest, with the aim of attracting more visitors to Beamer. Coinciding nicely with this, at Raptorfest, we will be promoting our annual Open House, which takes place at Beamer just 6 days later, on Good Friday, April 22nd. The following weekend is our Annual General Meeting (aka the banquet) on Saturday, April 30th. More about the Open House and banquet can be found elsewhere in this newsletter. April will be a busy time for your NPH Executive, and any help you can offer would be greatly appreciated.

A couple of other noteworthy items have been on my mind during the off-season. One is Black Vultures. I have heard some interesting reports of wintering Black Vultures in the Niagara area. I did not realize that Black Vultures are larely non-migratory. I always assumed the birds we see at Beamer, including the 2 seen this past spring, are migratory overshoots. How long can it be before there are resident Black Vultures in southern Ontario? My guess is within the next few years.

The other thing that has been on my mind is wind power. I believe it will have a negative impact on raptors. I've seen research that both confirms the damage done by wind turbines and refutes it. I'm not sure what is truth and what is fiction, but my gut tells me it will be bad for raptors and birds in general. The thing that worries me most of all is that appeals from conservation groups, and the NPH in particular, seem to be falling on deaf ears. However, it appears that local residents can influence the location of wind turbines. If wind power comes to the Beamer area, we may need to mobilize ourselves and the residents of Grimsby to protect the raptors and Beamer.

Well, by the time you read this newsletter, it will almost be the start of another hawkwatching season. I look forward to seeing you all at Beamer this spring!

ANOTHER LOOK

John Stevens

Many analyses of hawk migration data compare individual species counts on a daily, weekly, monthly or annual basis for a given watch site. Owing to the major influence that weather conditions have on migration behavior, these interpretations may say more about the weather than the species' populations.

Analyses are also often done on a birds-per-hour basis. This has always bothered me because counts are invariably conducted when flights are good but often not done, or done for lesser periods of time, when migration is slow. The birds per hour numbers are thus biased to the high side and comparisons from period to period are more likely to reveal more about the dedication of the counters than it does about the actual flight.

For the Beamer Parking Lot (Tower) site, we now have 31 years of reasonably complete coverage for the 76 days between March 1 and May 15, all conducted by volunteers. It is only reasonably complete because volunteers can have other commitments that result in late arrivals, early departures, etc., for which getting replacements is very difficult. Most of us participate in the counting for personal enjoyment and satisfaction rather than as part of a scientific study. Nevertheless, we are conducting a form of citizen science. We've done our best to this point, for which the many counters over the years can take great pride.

Recently I came across an article that used the proportion of the total flight by species (or percentages) for comparison and wondered what could be learned from that kind of analysis of our data. In Table 1, the annual percentages for the regular species that we see have been calculated. The first thing to note from this is the way the five most commonly seen species (TV, SS, RS, BW and RT) have dominated the counts. Including unidentified birds that will primarily be one of these five, they have comprised between 93.23% and 97.36 % of the annual totals.

There are only four instances where one of the less commonly seen species has constituted more than 2% of the annual count; being three times for Cooper's Hawk (1995, 1996 and 1999) and once

for Northern Harrier (1987). In all four of these cases, the annual total of all species was well below an average count including our three lowest annual counts. Note also that in 2009 and 2010, not one of the less common species represented even 1% of the count.

To demonstrate the changing mix that we are seeing at Beamer, the percentages of the five common species are plotted over the 31-year period on Figure 1 (page 4). The BW trend has been plotted as a dashed line to distinguish it from the rest as their counts are highly variable from year to year and this may be the species whose counts are most affected by weather conditions. Years of high BW counts, which have occurred in seven years on a percentage basis (1981, 1984, 1985, 1998, 2001, 2005 and 2009), depress the proportions of the other species and are mainly responsible for the saw-tooth patterns observed for the TV, SS and RT lines on Figure 1. Because of their generally low proportion of the counts, the Red-shouldered Hawk trend line does not show this pattern at the scale used on the figure.

This graph quite dramatically shows how Turkey Vulture is becoming the dominant species, rising from around 5% in the early 1980s to 35-45% in recent years. It also shows how the Sharpie counts have been declining markedly from around 30% in the early 1980s to about half of that today. The Red-shouldered Hawk counts peaked in the late 80s to early 90s but in recent years have comprised a comparable proportion of the count as they did in the early 80s. The Red-tail proportions peaked around this same period and in recent years have represented about 15% of the total flight compared to the average of 20% that they did 30 years ago.

Another way to look at the data in Table 1 (page 5) is to consider that 0.1% represents one bird in a thousand. In the early 1980s, we saw an eagle (Bald or Golden) about every thousand birds. In recent years, we get one of these about every 200 birds. In the same manner, Turkey Vultures have gone from being one of every 20 birds to being eight of every 20 birds that we count.

This analysis has not revealed anything new or startling from what can be gleaned from the actual count numbers but provides a different perspective on what we are seeing.

THE YOUNG ORNITHOLOGISTS' WORKSHOP
Teen Birders Invited to Apply

The 2011 Doug Tarry Young Ornithologists' Workshop will be held at Long Point Bird Observatory near Port Rowan, Ontario, from Friday, July 29 to Sunday, August 7. Participants will receive hands-on field ornithology training, including bird banding, conducting a census, field identification, birding trips, preparing museum specimens, guest lectures, and more! Six of Canada's most promising ornithologists between the ages of 13-17 will be selected to attend, and will receive the Doug Tarry Bird Study Award to cover all on-site expenses. Stuart Mackenzie and Brandon Holden from this area have previously attended this workshop. Applications are due April 15, 2011. For more information and an application form, contact the Landbird Programs Coordinator of Bird Studies Canada at lpbo@birdscanada.org.

IN MEMORIAM – MICHAEL MYERS

One of our members, Michael Myers, died on December 10 and his obituary appeared in the *Globe and Mail* on February 2. Michael grew up in High Wycombe, England and attended the college of art and technology there, where he specialized in furniture design, From there he went to the Royal College of Art in London, and after working for television stations founded a London-based film production company, where he made some of the first rock videos. He came to Canada in 1973 to join his Canadian wife, Toni. In his active and creative life he was a painter, sculptor, producer and filmmaker. He enjoyed his visits to Beamer, and we are pleased that Toni is continuing membership.

Niagara Peninsular Hawkwatch Executive

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Figure 1 - Annual Percentages of the Five Common Species

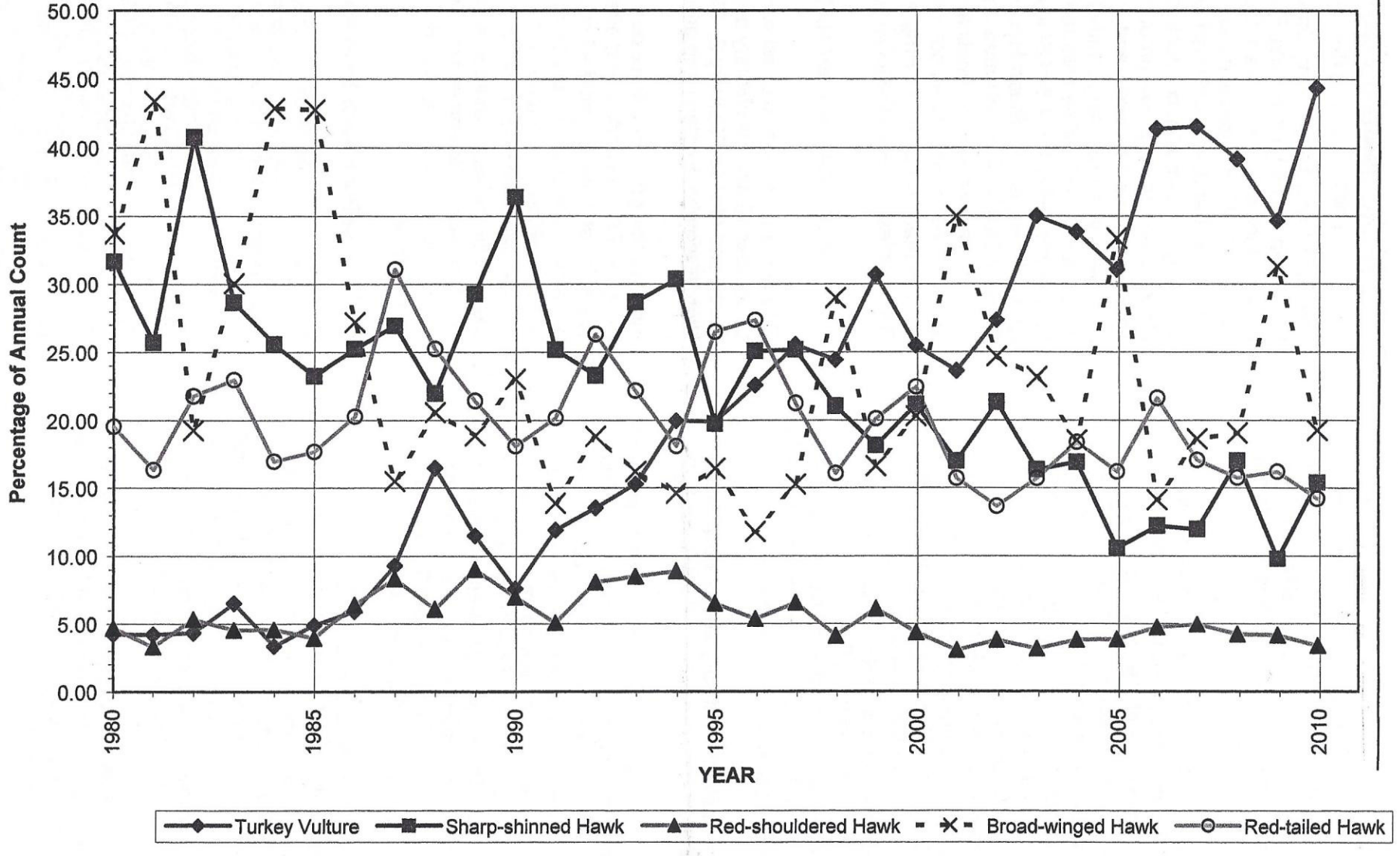


TABLE 1 - REGULAR SPECIES ANNUAL MIGRANT COUNTS AT BEAMER AS A PROPORTION OF THE TOTAL FLIGHT

(all values expressed as a percentage)

YEAR	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Turkey Vulture	4.25	4.21	4.35	6.53	3.37	4.92	5.95	9.30	16.49	11.52	7.60	11.94	13.56	15.30	19.97	19.92
Osprey	0.16	0.12	0.23	0.15	0.21	0.19	0.23	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.21	0.31	0.44	0.36	0.43	0.43
Bald Eagle	0.05	0.01	0.06	0.05	0.03	0.05	0.10	0.07	0.11	0.14	0.08	0.11	0.15	0.12	0.24	0.22
Northern Harrier	0.49	0.64	1.09	0.91	0.69	0.59	1.02	2.07	1.15	1.43	1.01	1.45	1.42	1.05	1.10	1.64
Sharp-shinned Hawk	31.66	25.72	40.78	28.67	25.59	23.24	25.25	26.94	21.99	29.29	36.40	25.19	23.29	28.69	30.38	19.76
Cooper's Hawk	0.93	1.12	1.01	1.17	1.04	0.79	1.39	1.89	1.62	1.47	1.62	1.47	1.36	1.73	1.65	2.37
Northern Goshawk	0.02	0.05	0.43	0.53	0.37	0.13	0.15	0.30	0.19	0.11	0.12	0.13	0.23	0.23	0.45	0.14
Red-shouldered Hawk	4.69	3.32	5.33	4.55	4.58	3.96	6.41	8.34	6.09	9.03	6.97	5.08	8.09	8.51	8.89	6.52
Broad-winged Hawk	33.72	43.36	19.26	30.04	42.86	42.74	27.20	15.49	20.59	18.87	23.01	13.88	18.81	16.21	14.62	16.46
Red-tailed Hawk	19.54	16.35	21.78	22.98	16.97	17.69	20.29	31.07	25.24	21.42	18.09	20.17	26.30	22.17	18.10	26.46
Rough-legged Hawk	0.25	0.26	1.09	0.43	0.46	0.25	0.32	0.73	0.62	0.37	0.66	1.03	0.87	0.30	0.39	0.80
Golden Eagle	0.02	0.03	0.03	0.06	0.03	0.06	0.05	0.06	0.02	0.06	0.05	0.05	0.08	0.05	0.06	0.04
American Kestrel	0.69	0.72	0.85	0.52	0.31	0.78	0.90	0.81	1.05	1.08	1.08	1.20	0.63	0.77	0.76	0.65
Merlin	0.007	0.01	0.04	0.01	0.01	0.03	0.04	0.11	0.04	0.03	0.05	0.08	0.08	0.07	0.14	0.13
Peregrine Falcon	0.007	0.019	0.025	0.000	0.000	0.010	0.007	0.010	0.028	0.016	0.031	0.033	0.041	0.017	0.031	0.009
Unid. Raptors	3.49	4.06	3.63	3.41	3.50	4.57	10.70	2.53	4.49	4.85	3.02	17.86	4.64	4.41	2.77	4.44
Common 5+Unid.	97.36	97.03	95.14	96.17	96.85	97.13	95.80	93.67	94.88	94.98	95.10	94.12	94.69	95.28	94.72	93.56

YEAR	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Turkey Vulture	22.58	25.54	24.43	30.69	25.47	23.62	27.34	35.00	33.84	31.07	41.44	41.60	39.22	34.65	44.36
Osprey	0.43	0.23	0.31	0.38	0.39	0.47	0.32	0.41	0.37	0.28	0.45	0.39	0.33	0.22	0.35
Bald Eagle	0.25	0.17	0.24	0.27	0.21	0.20	0.36	0.46	0.45	0.43	0.59	0.42	0.42	0.43	0.42
Northern Harrier	1.30	1.01	0.63	0.83	1.07	0.72	0.77	0.68	1.63	0.77	0.67	0.89	1.11	0.69	0.72
Sharp-shinned Hawk	25.08	25.18	21.04	18.16	21.15	17.00	21.34	16.36	16.91	10.58	12.24	11.98	17.03	9.79	15.41
Cooper's Hawk	2.25	1.83	1.33	2.19	1.55	1.13	1.64	1.53	1.84	1.10	1.41	1.60	0.79	0.77	0.82
Northern Goshawk	0.19	0.13	0.10	0.05	0.03	0.09	0.06	0.04	0.08	0.07	0.04	0.06	0.03	0.03	0.05
Red-shouldered Hawk	5.38	6.58	4.12	6.12	4.36	3.06	3.81	3.17	3.84	3.86	4.74	4.95	4.23	4.15	3.38
Broad-winged Hawk	11.80	15.27	28.97	16.62	20.30	34.97	24.67	23.17	18.53	33.35	14.15	18.64	19.08	31.27	19.26
Red-tailed Hawk	27.35	21.24	16.09	20.12	22.44	15.72	13.66	15.72	18.40	16.22	21.64	17.06	15.78	16.23	14.21
Rough-legged Hawk	0.74	0.36	0.25	0.63	0.43	0.49	0.15	0.28	1.49	0.72	0.70	0.58	0.38	0.52	0.19
Golden Eagle	0.09	0.05	0.04	0.09	0.11	0.04	0.05	0.06	0.06	0.05	0.09	0.05	0.10	0.07	0.05
American Kestrel	0.47	0.69	0.57	0.63	0.81	0.52	0.67	0.71	0.64	0.27	0.44	0.59	0.77	0.39	0.36
Merlin	0.17	0.12	0.11	0.09	0.19	0.04	0.13	0.08	0.15	0.09	0.09	0.14	0.06	0.07	0.14
Peregrine Falcon	0.015	0.017	0.030	0.009	0.060	0.020	0.040	0.049	0.037	0.030	0.063	0.015	0.045	0.046	0.079
Unid. Raptors	1.90	1.57	1.69	3.13	1.41	1.89	4.96	2.28	1.71	1.10	1.24	1.04	0.62	0.65	0.17
Common 5+Unid.	94.09	95.37	96.34	94.84	95.13	96.27	95.79	95.70	93.23	96.18	95.45	95.26	95.95	96.75	96.79

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH MIGRATION CALENDAR FOR BEAMER MEMORIAL CONSERVATION AREA

NOTES:

1. Species initials and Right (>) or Left (<) arrow:
   This combination indicates the start (>) or end (<) of the normal (at Beamer) migration period for that species. The same in bold type indicates the start or end of a noticeable peak period for that species. The box in which this combination is located indicates the day and month the period is likely to start or end.
2. A number, followed by species initial, followed by a slash (/)and a two digit number:
   In this combination, the largest number of that species ever seen in one day is given first; the two-digit number following the / indicates the year in which this occurred. The box in which this combination is located indicates the day and month on which the event occurred. Example: 655 RS/94 in the March 23 box indicates that the highest number of Red-shouldered Hawks recorded in one day was 655, seen on March 23, 1994.

TV - Turkey Vulture
BV - Black Vulture
OS - Osprey
SK - American Swallow-tailed Kite
MK - Mississippi Kite
BE - Bald Eagle
GE - Golden Eagle
NH - Northern Harrier
SS - Sharp-shinned Hawk
CH - Cooper's Hawk
NG - Northern Goshawk
RS - Red-shouldered Hawk
RT - Red-tailed Hawk
SW - Swainson's Hawk
RL - Rough-legged Hawk
FH - Ferruginous Hawk
AK - American Kestrel
ME - Merlin
PF - Peregrine Falcon
PR - Prairie Falcon
GY - Gyrfalcon
BW - Broad-winged Hawk

The following information, based on 30+ years of data has been updated to show significant events up to the year 2009.

Largest number of raptors in one season: 19,724 in 1985.

BE>, NH>, SS>, CH>, RT>, RL>, AK> begin February 20th.

MARCH						
1 **RT>** NG>	2 GE>	3 RS>	4	5	6	7
8 TV>	9	10	11 **RL>**	12 **AK>**	13 **CH>** **RS>**	14 44 AK/90
15	16 744 RT/96	17 1 GY/06	18 **BE>**	19	20 **TV>** ME> PF>	21
22	23 NH> 655 RS/94	24 11 NG/84 19 BE/03	25	26 **SS>** 2 PF/91	27	28 2 PF/90
29 46 RL/04	30	31 OS> 1 BV/00*				

Largest # of raptors in month: 5,670 in March 1988; largest # of raptors in one day in month: 2,080 on March 26, 1988.

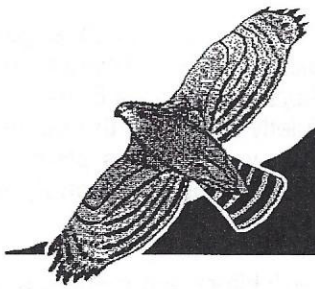
APRIL						
1	2 2,021 TV/09	3 2 PF/91	4 1 BV/92	5 1 BV/04 50 CH/93	6	7 1 BV/08
8 **OS><RS**	9	10 BW>	11	12 16 OS/92	13 1 FH/92	14
15 **BW>** SW> 1 SK/94	16 **<BE** 2 PF/90	17	18 35 NH/96 1,556 SS/76	19 1 PR/95**	20 1 GY/77	21 6,007 BW/85
22	23 1 FH/98*	24 **<OS** 1 FH/02*	25 **<TV** 6 ME/96 2 PF/94	26	27	28 4 GE/96
29 2 SW/98*	30 **<RL**					

Largest # of raptors in month: 15,012 in April 1984; largest # of raptors in one day in month: 7,007 on April 21, 1985.

MAY						
1	2 2 SW/97*	3	4 **<RT**	5 <SW	6 <PF	7
8	9	10	11 1 MK/97* 4 GE/08	12 **<NH** **<AK**	13 **<CH** <BE	14 **<SS** 1 MK/03*
15 **<BW** <RL <ME <GE	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31 <TV <NH <SS <CH <NG <RS <AK	*BW and RT continue beyond May 31st…*			

Largest # of raptors in month: 2,685 in May 1980; largest # of raptors in one day in month: 1,492 on May 4, 1989.

** Sighting not reviewed / accepted by Ontario Bird Records Committee*
*** First accepted Prairie Falcon record in Ontario*



Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Newsletter

July 2011 **Newsletter #43**

HAWKWATCH NEEDS YOUR HELP!

The Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch is a volunteer organization that needs the help of its members to function. Two hard-working members of our executive have had to resign because of other time commitments. Keith Dieroff and Barry Cherriere both did work beyond their positions of President and Count Coordinator respectively, and we thank them for all their hard work. Now we need you to pick up what they were doing.

Cody Law has agreed to be Count Coordinator, but as he is relatively new to NPH it would be useful to have someone to help him in this role.

We urgently need someone to coordinate the work of all the members of the Executive - a President, in other words - and welcome offers to take this on, or suggestions. As we look at tasks that need to be done, we would welcome offers to assist in any or all of the following:

- Counting during the season (this is how you can improve your skills);
- Site maintenance during the season (e.g. set-up and take-down at beginning and end of season, keeping the bird feeders supplied, making sure brochures and ID sheets are available);
- Maintaining our web site (Keith did this for us);
- Assisting in organizing the annual meeting/ banquet;
- Preparing the newsletter (help is available).

If you can help, please contact me or any other member of the executive.

Sandy Darling
Newsletter Editor
darlinga@cogeco.ca

REFLECTIONS ON THE NPH

Keith Dieroff

On June 20, 2011, I started a new job in International Banking. With every promotion comes additional responsibility and with this one, the requirement to travel quite a bit. For these reasons, I have recently stepped down from the NPH Executive.

Over the years, I have met many unique and interesting people through the NPH, as our members come from diverse backgrounds. There are mechanics, steelworkers, teachers, doctors, lawyers, executives, and engineers, just to name a few. I have truly enjoyed spending time with and getting to know those who share a passion for raptors.

A few very special people stand out in my memory, as they have had a lasting impact on my life. As a teenager, one of the first people I met within the birding community was Bruce Duncan. I remember running in to Bruce at the Merrick Field Station in the Dundas Valley, and even though he was often busy with his interpretive duties, he would point me in the direction of a good bird. I also remember Bruce as the leader of the Hamilton Bird Study Group. I would eagerly anticipate each monthly meeting of the BSG at the RBG Arboretum. The setting and mix of personalities at those early meetings was electrifying.

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Another person who stands out is Mike Street. He was always willing to spare a few minutes for a rookie like myself and when I did start getting more involved in the hawkwatch, he put his faith in me, without really knowing what I was (or wasn't) capable of. As many of you know, Mike is involved in many different activities and somehow manages to 'keep all the balls in the air' at all times. He was and is a person I respect and admire.

And then there were the hawks...over the years I've seen a few. I've seen Bald and Golden Eagles at treetop level, I've seen icy-grey Goshawks and skies full of Broad-wings. Unfortunately, I have never been present at Beamer for any of the true rarities, like the Ferruginous Hawk in '92, the Swallow-tailed Kite in '94, or the Prairie Falcon in '95. I have seen these birds in other parts of the world, but not at Beamer.

Like many of you, I have watched trends develop over the years. In the early nineties, there were fewer Turkey Vultures and Ospreys and more Sharp-shins, Red-shoulders and Goshawks. Both Peregrine Falcon and Bald Eagle were still on the Endangered Species list. It has been fascinating to see how things change over the long-term. Many of you will remember how tall (or short) the trees were at Beamer two decades ago – no tower was necessary to see a bird when someone yelled 'over the quarry'. And during this past spring, a number of our oldest landmarks, such as the 'Hempine', were eradicated during a fierce storm.

All in all, the people and raptors of the NPH have enriched my life considerably. Being a member for 20 years and on the Executive for more than a decade, I have come to appreciate the hard work involved in running a wholly volunteer organization. Unfortunately, that hard work often falls on the shoulders of a few people, who organize and run the events enjoyed by the entire membership.

In closing, I would like to say thank you to the members of the NPH Executive I have worked with over the years. Your hard work, insight and guidance have been most valuable. Thank you also to the members, counters, and general public whom I have encountered over the years. It has been great fun getting to know you. To all, I will not say good-bye, as I sincerely hope to make it to Beamer once in a while. If you see me there, bring me up to date on the recent sightings and I hope to be able to regale you with stories of raptors from my travels abroad.

2011 OPEN HOUSE

As usual the Open House was held on Good Friday, April 22, right in the middle of the Broad-winged Hawk migration, and what a day it was! The total number of raptors was 2,023 and 1,749 were Broad-wings. Thirteen species were recorded, including 1 Osprey, 6 Bald Eagles, 10 Northern Harriers, 2 Rough-legged Hawks, and one of all three falcon species. Towards the end of the day, after most visitors had gone, a Saw-whet Owl was discovered sitting quietly in one of the cedars on the path to the quarry. The weather was pleasant and there was enough cloud to pick out the high-flying birds.

As usual, there were various exhibitors and members of the Hawkwatch executive were on hand to provide explanations of the birds flying to our guests. Wendy VerKerk of St. Catharines won the binoculars donated by David and Eleanor Woods of Wild Birds Unlimited in Burlington, and Scott Cherwaty of Peterborough, Ontario won the raptor book.

A popular item is provided by the raptors brought especially for the day, and visitors love the opportunity to see these splendid birds at close quarters. Sandra Davey brought a noisy Merlin and a Broad-winged Hawk from Mountsberg, and James Cowan and his family from the Canadian Raptor Conservancy brought a Red-tailed Hawk, a Swainson's Hawk, a Bald Eagle and two seven-week old Barn Owls. The youngsters were the stars of the show. Special thanks are due to Tom Thomas for organizing the day, and all those who helped. We still don't know where he kept over 2,000 raptors to release on this day!



Young Barn Owl *Photo: Tom Thomas ©*

ANNUAL BANQUET AND GENERAL MEETING

For the second year the banquet was held in the hall at St Andrew's Church in Grimsby. It is a good facility with space for people to move around and chat with other. We thank John Merriman for selecting and serving five special wines, and all those who donated prizes for the bucket raffle. The hard work of our president, Keith, and his helpers resulted in a most enjoyable evening. Thank-you!

Chris Earley, our speaker and the Interpreter at the Guelph University Arboretum, was entertaining, enthusiastic, and informative. His topic was "Enraptured with Raptors", and his love of his topic shone through. The photos were both excellent and relevant to his subject. He started with reminiscences of birds he saw as a boy, which have since declined -- Barn Owls near his home in south-west Ontario, and Burrowing Owls and Swainson's Hawks near his uncle's farm in Saskatchewan. He talked of some of his experience training hawks, especially Chucky, a Red-tailed Hawk, and of a Harris's Hawk that developed a homing instinct very quickly. He showed photos of other North American raptors, and told some great tales, such as that about Socrates, a Turkey Vulture that liked only women (and Chris), and of a Peregrine using stones to "bomb" an intruder, thereby displaying tool-use behavior. He had a series of photos of African raptors, which brought back great memories for this writer, and concluded his talk by teaching his audience owl calls. After teaching people owl calls, he used four of the newly taught to accompany him as he played an "owl-call tune".

RAPTORFEST 2011 RECAP

Keith Dieroff

On Saturday, April 16th, 2011, the annual Grimsby Raptorfest was held at the Peach King Centre in Grimsby. This year's event featured a program of live bird and animal demonstrations, as well as booths set up by local exhibitors and merchants.

The live bird demonstrations were provided by James Cowan and the folks at the Raptor Conservancy, a group familiar to many NPH members via our Open House. The exhibitors included eco-tourism outfits, local nature clubs, and yours truly, manning the NPH booth.

Attendance was good, with close to 1,000 people visiting throughout the day. Many of those I talked to were already aware of the hawkwatch and Beamer in particular. Most of the attendees were local residents, but a few came from as far afield as Toronto and Owen Sound.

Over the years, this event has grown and taken on a life of its own. As an organization, I feel that the NPH has missed the boat a bit with respect to Raptorfest. A few years ago, a presentation about raptor migration by a member of the NPH would have been a central attraction at Raptorfest. This year, we weren't even invited to be part of the day's program.

In the future, I expect Raptorfest to continue to gain momentum, as it has the backing of local merchants and the Grimsby Chamber of Commerce. As Raptorfest co-founder, Rick Quirk, said to me, 'If we were in the U.S., this would be a week-long festival'. What remains to be seen is what role the NPH will play in Raptorfest as it develops in the years to come.

WANTED – PAID RAPTOR COUNTER (DETROIT)

The Detroit River Hawk Watch needs and will pay a counter to continue raptor migration monitoring. Over 28 years of data have been collected at this nationally acclaimed migration corridor at the Detroit River-mouth at the Lake Erie Metropark and Point Mouillee State Game Area. The organization puts an emphasis on data consistency, dissemination, and appropriate analyses. A primary counter is needed to spend each day with appropriate weather at the site performing the basic monitoring protocol and regular data entry into the HawkCount database from 1 September to 30 November 2011. This is a tremendous opportunity for an already accomplished hawk counter to collect migration data at a site with spectacular fall flights of broad-winged hawks, golden eagles, and all eastern raptors, including reliable passages of Swainson's Hawk. The Hawk Watch seeks an individual with meticulous data entry skills. The contract will be through the International Wildlife Refuge Alliance. Please contact: GREG NORWOOD, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. E-mail: Greg_Norwood@fws.gov (PH: 734-692-7611 or 734-341-3858) 9311 Groh Road, Grosse Ile, MI 48138.

CAPTIVE GOLDEN EAGLES BREED

Since Canyon, a male Golden Eagle, became the roommate of Cherokee (female) at the Hawk Creek Wildlife Center in the Town of Aurora, Cherokee has produced eggs the past couple of years, but they never hatched. This year a chick, Legacy, hatched on May 16. A second egg laid this year wasn't fertile.

Cherokee is estimated to be about 40 years old, based on her coloring; the life spans for golden eagles can exceed 30 years in the wild and approach 50 years in captivity. Cherokee was hit by a car some years ago, and part of a wing has been amputated. She was rescued from illegal captivity in Indiana by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and spent time at World Bird

Sanctuary in St. Louis before coming to Hawk Creek in July 2003.

Canyon is estimated to be 20 years old. He was hit by a plane in Moab, Utah, and suffered permanent nerve damage to his left wing. He's been at Hawk Creek since November 1995.

There is no active breeding program at the Sanctuary; Tanya Lowe, director of wildlife education, said "This is something that kind of happened." The chick, Legacy appears perfectly healthy, but the gender will not be known until the bird is an adult. Legacy will stay with its parents through the summer until it is fully grown in August and will be flying on its own. At that time, it will be driven to the World Bird Sanctuary in Missouri and tagged by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Then, it will be put in a flight pen with another young golden eagle, and both will be released during the September migration to points south.

[Source of original story: Buffalo News]

TWO EVENTFUL DAYS IN APRIL

Mike Street and Sandy Darling

Wednesday April 27 and Thursday April 28 were memorable days at Beamer. On the Wednesday Mike Street and his helpers were busy counting 5,291 raptors of 14 different species. Thursday brought wild weather and a change in the landscape. As counters for those two days, we are sharing our experiences with you.

The BIG Day!

When I (Mike) left home for Beamer Conservation Area on the morning of Wednesday, 27 April 2011, things did not bode well for a reasonable count day. The temperature was only 9°C and fairly thick fog lay over Ancaster and the West Mountain of Hamilton. As I progressed eastward on the Linc and then Mud Street I got further away from the fog, but it was still heavy over the edge of the Niagara Escarpment. Around 10th Road East in Stoney Creek I could see that there was very little fog over Grimsby. When I reached Beamer, it was 16°C with light fog, the sun peeking through and getting stronger, and a decent east wind to help birds move freely. A cold front was predicted for later in the day. Things were looking up, but little did I know what was in store.

Just 18 birds came through between 0800 and 0900 EST. In the next hour there were 226 more. As the clock moved toward 1100, it was obvious that something was going on. There were only 273 raptors in that hour, for an overall total of 517, but most of them came in the last 15 minutes or so. The floodgates had opened. In the next four hours we counted an amazing 4774 raptors! There were so many birds that I spent almost all my time writing, only occasionally getting a good view of what was going on overhead. I didn't even have time to do hourly tallies or update the count board, and had to be relieved every 90 minutes or so to get a bite to eat and give my fingers a rest.

When rain shut down the count at 1500, we knew that a lot of birds had passed by but really had no idea of the total number. At home I had to do the final count in a spreadsheet to make sure the numbers jotted down during the day were added up correctly. Even having been there, the total of 5291 raptors of 14 species for the day was incredible. We learned later that in addition to being the second highest single day count at Beamer since 1975, we had also set new site records for the most Broad-winged Hawks in a season as well as for the most birds in a season, AND had tallied the 500,000th raptor counted at Beamer since the beginning of the count in 1975!

My thanks again to Tom Thomas, Brian Hawthorne, Tim King, Stuart Laughton and John Stevens on the tower, as well as the many observers on the ground who helped by pointing out kettles of Broad-wings and single eagles. Without their help the count would have been impossible. Thinking about it afterwards I felt that it had been my reward for 22 years of volunteering at the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch. What a day!!!

The BIG wind

I (Sandy) realized that Wednesday was a big day when I saw a kettle of over 20 Broad-wings over Patterson Road in Dundas at 1230 EST as I drove to downtown, Hamilton. I arrived back home on Rock Chapel Road at 1315 to find 6 Broad-wings perched in trees on the edge of the escarpment at the back of our property. In the next 50 minutes 69 raptors were counted before rain and wind shut down the flight. In an evening walk I encountered 8 Broad-wings either perched in trees or flying up from the ground, and so it appeared that there were more birds to come and that there could be a good up-flight on the next day.

On the Thursday I left early to be at Beamer by 0730, and although there was strong wind the skyway bridge was still open – later it was closed. By the time I got to Beamer the wind was fierce and there was no early up-flight. Winds in Grimsby exceeded 100 miles per hour that day, and, tragically, one person died when hit by a flying door. The garbage cans at Beamer were being blown around and the safest place seemed to be in the car with the car pointed to the east to view from inside. No raptors appeared until after 1000, but there was one loud crack as I sat in the car. When I went up the tower, I realized that the big hemlock behind the washrooms had split about ten feet above the ground and most of

the tree was on the ground. I then realized that pines 3 and 4 were no more, and that they were broken higher up the trunk.

The net count for the day was 36 Broad-wings, but the only successful strategy for the birds seemed to be to hug the tree-tops. More than 36 birds were counted going west and a few minutes later birds would be traveling backwards and faster eastwards unable to battle the wind. The only birds that seemed to be able to cope were swallows – Barn Swallows, Northern Rough-wings and Purple Martins. Around 1430 two young people came in and told me that there was a tree down across the entrance, so that I could be there for the night. Fortunately, a series of phone calls got the conservation staff just as they were leaving for the day,



Remains of hemlock *Photo: Sandy Darling*

because there was no power in Grimsby. Two men with chainsaws were able to dispose of the tree and I left, only to find that access to Quarry Road had been cut off, because the electric cable at the end of Quarry Road was down and no vehicles were allowed to enter.

Before next season we shall need to redraft the diagram of the key markers, but I expect to hear people saying "It's over the old hem-pine" just as they say "It's over the old owl-tree!"

2010 SPRING MIGRATION SUMMARY FOR BEAMER MEMORIAL CA

John Sevens

Hawk-watchers at Beamer Memorial Conservation Area (Beamer) had reason to be ecstatic in 2011 as a record number of 20,368 raptors were counted, exceeding the previous high of 19,275 set in 1985. Yet, I suspect many felt little ecstasy as day after day of cool, wet weather persisted through April and May. In many respects this was a very abnormal season with low numbers of most species being recorded and the total count dominated by record counts of Turkey Vultures and Broad-winged Hawks, the two most commonly seen species.

We passed a milestone just after noon on April 27th when the 500,000th raptor was counted since we began in 1975. It went unnoticed as the birds were coming through so furiously at the time that the actual individual was not identified but it would be nice to think that it was one of the Golden Eagles that were seen early in the hour.

The Weather

If we hadn't had a record number of birds, the main story for 2011 would have been the weather. 39 of the 76 days between March 1 and May 15 had one or more of snow, rain, fog, hail, even sleet during the counting hours and April 28th, while precipitation-free, was so windy that trees were falling throughout the woods including three of our directional markers. Several of the counters had to wait out many hours of inclement weather just to get in a few licks of raptor movement. There were eight days when it rained or snowed all day and no count was conducted that are included in the 13 days with no raptors recorded. One day was inadvertently not covered in May.

The temperature remained cool pretty well through to the end of the count period. We had the occasional warm day and these tended to produce good flights making for a very concentrated movement. The exception was late March when a string of steady flights of Turkey Vultures occurred. The first Broad-winged Hawks (212) appeared more or less on time on April 12th but the following nine days produced only 66 more before an excellent flight occurred on April 22nd.

Unlike the last two years, we had our share of snow in March including an all day storm on March 23rd and then a five hour snowfall on the late date of April 18th. While the average temperature for the month of 0.2°C was right on normal, the maximum was only 16°C. Temperatures in April on average were slightly above normal and also in May although during the first half of the month when we were counting, they were slightly below. However, the most startling data indicate that total precipitation for the March-May period was 454 mm compared to the normal amount of 215 mm, i.e. more than double the norm.

The Flight

The seasonal weather in early March meant there was the typical slow start to the season. On March 1st, the first bird of the year was a Peregrine Falcon, moving southeast, and the second bird was a dark morph Rough-legged Hawk. This was quite a rewarding start for the gang installing the windbreak and signboard. With five zeros in the first two weeks though, a count of 111 on March 14 exceeded the year's total to that date and the next day's 311 did that again. Thereafter the March flight was very good, in fact the highest total, 6,389, in the 37 years of recorded data (Table 5). The best date was the warmest day of the month, March 18 (Table 1), when almost 900 Turkey Vultures pushed the total to 1,091.

Early in April there were two reasonable TV flight days but by the half way point in the season on April 7th, we'd had only one Osprey, no Golden Eagles or Northern Goshawks, and the Broad-winged Hawks had yet to make an appearance. Despite continuing coolness and periodic rain, the next five days produced a good number of Ospreys, Northern Harriers and Sharpies, the first Goshawk and on the 12th, the first Broad-winged Hawks (212). However, only 66 Broad-wings were seen during the following nine days of cool, wet and windy weather coming into Good Friday and the annual Open House on the 22nd. Fortunately the forecasted rain held off until after 3 pm and the Broad-wings flooded through at low altitude along with 12 other species producing a count of 2,025 birds for the assembled masses. Having attended all but one of our Open Houses, this was the greatest total in my memory but I've not checked the records.

The best, though, was yet to come. There followed five days with varying periods of rain, winds and fog that included another great flight of 1,947 birds on April 24th but concluded with a total washout on April 26th. On April 27th, a warm front lay along the southern Lake Ontario shoreline that had cool foggy conditions to the north and clearing, much warmer air to the south. A strengthening easterly wind brought a great flight of birds over Beamer that consisted of 14 of our 15 regular species (no Goshawk) and was highlighted by 4,464 Broad-wings, almost all at reasonable elevations. The final count of 5,291 birds (Table 2) represents the second greatest daily count in the history of our watch, beaten only by April 21, 1985. Only the approach of a cold front and the associated rain that shut down the flight in the middle of the afternoon prevented a new record daily total but we had established a new seasonal record by passing the 19,275 birds recorded in 1985. The April total of 13,667 birds was the third highest on record.

That was pretty much it for the season. Counts continued for three more weeks but no other significant flight days were recorded. On the last day of April we cracked 20,000 birds in a season for the first time. The weather in the first half of May was miserable and no day produced more than 60 raptors (Table 3) leading to a count of only 318 for the month, the second lowest total since 1976, before complete coverage was begun. The number of hours covered in May was the lowest since complete seasonal coverage began in 1981 contributing to the annual total of hours being tied with 2005 as the second lowest ever.

Species Highlights

Turkey Vultures continued to increase in number, passing the record set last year and finishing at 7,125 (Table 4). It is becoming increasingly difficult to monitor the migrants in the latter part of the season with the number of local birds residing in Niagara, particularly those that cruise back and forth along the escarpment.

As indicated earlier, the Broad-winged Hawk total of 8,613 broke our previous high count of 8,239 that was set in 1985. I suspect that this happened because of the inclement weather experienced during April. Broad-winged Hawks can get very high in the warmer weather of late April and May such that they are pretty well out of sight to us unless we happen to have a glide path overhead. This year, we had many Broad-wings at relatively low elevations, particularly on the big days of April 22, April 24 and April 27.

The only other species that exceeded their five-year or long-term averages were Merlins and Peregrine Falcons. The Merlin total may be unrealistic as there were a number of sightings of a roosting Merlin in the vicinity of the watch site this year suggesting that a bird or birds was resident for a while and may have been counted more than once. The Peregrine count was second highest to last year's total of 12.

The news is pretty grim on the remaining 11 species regularly seen at Beamer. All were seen in numbers below their recent 5-year average and all except Bald Eagles were seen at numbers below their long-term average. A record low count of Red-tailed Hawks representing just 64% of the long-term average was set

this year. The Sharp-shinned Hawk total of 1,700 was the second lowest on record (1,551 in 2007) and continues the trend that has seen the recent five-year average fall to barely more than one half of the long-term average. The count of Cooper's Hawks at 101 was at an all-time low and less than half what it was five years ago. The American Kestrel count was one below the previous low count set in 2005 and represented just 44% of the long-term average. The Northern Goshawk count of just 2 was also a record low but probably not that significant in this a non-irruptive year. The Northern Harrier total of 104 was the fifth lowest for the site.

Somewhat more encouraging findings can be reported for Red-shouldered Hawks, whose number increased from last year though remaining well below their long-term average, and Rough-legged Hawks, whose total rebounded to 59 from last year's low count of 29.

In all four species were recorded in record low numbers as compared to the two species setting new record high counts. It is to be hoped that the birds of the 11 species with low seasonal numbers were able to navigate northward avoiding the poor weather conditions at Beamer and do not indicate a marked decline in their populations.

Again this year a Black Vulture was seen at Beamer and a second bird of this species was seen in Grimsby earlier in the year. This marks the third year in the last four when we've had at least one of these after only seeing one on three previous occasions during the 37 years of the watch. Black Vultures do not migrate like Turkey Vultures but appear to be undergoing something of a range expansion, moving into more northern territory than their range of the last 150 years.

Acknowledgements

Thanks go to the following volunteers for taking responsibility as designated counters: Bouwe Bergsma, John Black, Barry Cherriere, Bob Curry, Sandy Darling, Keith Dieroff, Chris Escott, Tim Foran, Sandra Horvath, Marcie Jacklin, Gord McNulty, George Naylor, Bill Smith, John Stevens, Mike Street, Tom Thomas, Phil Waggett and Rob Waldhuber. Thanks also to the following people who assisted the designated counters: Cody Law, Colin Horstead, Mike Kirchin, Linda Cherriere, Dave Sked, John Niewiadomski, Dave Weare, Toni Carson, Brian Hawthorn, Doris Southwell, Eric Single, George Holland, Tim King plus many others who appear less frequently but contribute nonetheless.

I would also like to acknowledge the couple who maintain the weather station atop the escarpment near Mountain Road. Their data are very helpful in preparing this report and the on-line availability of the climatological conditions make compiling the HMANA reports so much easier.

Finally, a few comments about selected individuals:

- to *Colin Horstead* who missed most of the season because of surgery, continued recovery, we're looking forward to your return next year;
- to the dean of hawk watching at Beamer, *George Meyers*, whom I don't believe made it out to the site at all this year, we missed you George;
- to *Cody Law*, the 14-year old whose sharp young eyes are becoming more discerning each time he appears, we appreciate your dedication, we need more of your ilk; and
- to *Rob Waldhuber*, who suffered through two of the more miserable days as designated counter, you're owed a better day next time.

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TABLE 1 - MARCH 2011

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	March Species Totals
Black Vulture																													1			1
Turkey Vulture	2		7			1	4	7					13	75	172	7	134	897	250	136	24	76		156	117	436	573	588	616	400	13	4,704
Osprey																																0
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite																																0
Mississippi Kite																																0
Bald Eagle			2			1		4	1				1		7			6	3	1					1	3						30
Northern Harrier							1								1		3	6	2		1	1								1		16
Sharp-shinned Hawk				1											5	1	7	6	7	18		4					1	2	1	10		63
Cooper's Hawk	1							1	1					1	7		3	5	7	8		4				1	3	2	3	4		51
Northern Goshawk																																0
Red-shouldered Hawk														3	14	6	13	59	150	132	2	10					1	2	4	74		470
Broad-winged Hawk																																0
Swainson's Hawk																																0
Red-tailed Hawk	3		7			6	8	6	1				6	28	104	20	47	100	254	152	2	62		3	3	19	22	10	9	107		979
Ferruginous Hawk																																0
Rough-legged Hawk	1						1		1					1	1	1	3	6	9	5		2								4		35
Golden Eagle																																0
American Kestrel																	1	4		1							1	1	1			9
Merlin																		1										1				2
Peregrine Falcon	1																	1											1	1		4
Gyrfalcon																																0
Prairie Falcon																																0
Unid. Accipiter																														1		1
Unid. Buteo							1							2						17					1							21
Unid. Falcon																																0
Unid. Eagle																																0
Unid. Raptor														1															1			2
Total Raptors	8	0	16	1	0	8	15	18	4	0	0	0	20	111	311	35	211	1091	684	470	29	159	0	159	122	459	601	606	637	601	13	6,389
Hours Counted	*8.00*	*8.00*	*8.00*	*5.00*	*0.00*	*8.53*	*7.42*	*8.00*	*4.50*	*0.00*	*0.00*	*3.00*	*7.50*	*8.25*	*8.50*	*8.00*	*8.00*	*9.00*	*8.50*	*8.33*	*7.75*	*8.00*	*0.00*	*8.00*	*8.00*	*8.50*	*10.25*	*9.00*	*9.50*	*8.00*	*6.00*	*209.53*
Precipitation				R	R	S			S/R	R	R/S	S				R/F					F		S		S						R/F	

TABLE 2 - APRIL 2011

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	April Species Totals
Black Vulture																															0
Turkey Vulture	143	444	330	50	92	3	49	76	236	108	231	89		49	24		11	2	7	12	11	45	50	61	14		56		47	17	2,257
Osprey		1						7	6	2	4	3		1	3		1		1	2	1	1	1	2	1		3				40
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite																															0
Mississippi Kite																															0
Bald Eagle		1	1						3			1			2							6					10		1		25
Northern Harrier	2	2	5	3			6	7	7	4	1	3		1	1		4	1	3	6	2	10	1	1	1		19			2	92
Sharp-shinned Hawk		15	50	19	4	2	23	16	101	130	50	55		16	5		16		7	7	5	171	31	103	58		664		4	28	1,580
Cooper's Hawk		1		2	1		3	3	4	1		3		2	1			1	1	1	1	5	2	3			10		1	2	48
Northern Goshawk											1																				1
Red-shouldered Hawk	2	3	46	7			10	2	21		2	6		1								2		1			3			2	108
Broad-winged Hawk												212		12	4		16		32		2	1749	22	1748	164		4464	36	10	127	8,598
Swainson's Hawk																															0
Red-tailed Hawk	39	31	114	5	2		51	32	247	52	6	54		20	19		5		5	1	9	29	11	26	2		40			28	828
Ferruginous Hawk																															0
Rough-legged Hawk			1				2	2	4					2								2					7				20
Golden Eagle																		2					1		1		3				7
American Kestrel		1	2		1		1	1		2	2	1			4						1	1		1	1		9			1	29
Merlin										2	1			2				1				1	1	1			2				11
Peregrine Falcon										1				1								2	1				1				6
Gyrfalcon																															0
Prairie Falcon																															0
Unid. Accipiter				1																											1
Unid. Buteo			5				1					1			1		1														9
Unid. Falcon										1												1									2
Unid. Eagle																															0
Unid. Raptor			1								1						2														4
Total Raptors	187	499	555	87	100	5	146	146	629	303	299	428	0	107	64	0	56	7	56	29	32	2025	121	1947	242	0	5291	36	63	207	13,667
Hours Counted	*8.50*	*8.50*	*8.00*	*5.17*	*6.50*	*3.00*	*8.25*	*8.00*	*9.00*	*9.50*	*9.33*	*8.00*	*5.00*	*8.50*	*8.00*	*0.00*	*7.00*	*9.50*	*7.50*	*7.00*	*7.75*	*7.00*	*8.00*	*9.00*	*5.17*	*0.00*	*7.00*	*6.50*	*7.50*	*8.50*	*210.67*
Precipitation	F			R	R	R	F	F		R	R		F/R			R	S/R	S		F		R	R/F	R	R	R	R	Wind	R		

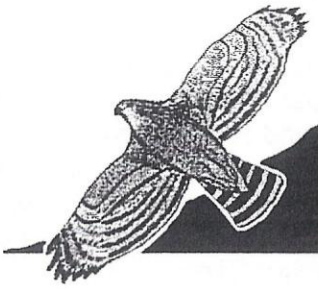
TABLE 3 - MAY 2011

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	May Species Totals
Black Vulture																0
Turkey Vulture		5		18	7			38	34	19	36	7				164
Osprey									1							1
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite																0
Mississippi Kite																0
Bald Eagle					1			1	2	1						5
Northern Harrier						1				1						2
Sharp-shinned Hawk	6	16		1	7	13		1	4	3	2		4			57
Cooper's Hawk						1		2								3
Northern Goshawk						1										1
Red-shouldered Hawk									1							1
Broad-winged Hawk					4	2		4	4	1						15
Swainson's Hawk																0
Red-tailed Hawk		2		3	7	5		6	12	6	6	1	2			50
Ferruginous Hawk																0
Rough-legged Hawk		1						2								3
Golden Eagle		1														1
American Kestrel				1		1		3	1							6
Merlin				1	1						2					4
Peregrine Falcon										1						1
Gyrfalcon																0
Prairie Falcon																0
Unid. Accipiter									1							1
Unid. Buteo																0
Unid. Falcon																0
Unid. Eagle																0
Unid. Raptor					3											3
Total Raptors	**6**	**25**	**0**	**24**	**30**	**24**	**0**	**57**	**60**	**32**	**46**	**8**	**6**	**0**	**0**	**318**
Hours Counted	*4.00*	*7.17*	*0.00*	*8.00*	*6.50*	*5.00*	*0.00*	*8.00*	*9.58*	*7.50*	*8.00*	*6.25*	*5.00*	*0.00*	*0.00*	*75*
Precipitation	R	R	R			R/F							R	R	R/F	

TABLE 4 - ANNUAL SUMMARIES SINCE 1992

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2006-2010 5-yr Avg	1980-2010 Average
Black Vulture	1								1				1				1		2	1	0.6	0.20
Turkey Vulture	1,990	1,853	3,189	2,154	2,963	3,092	3,277	3,384	2,971	3,532	4,065	5,026	4,623	5,158	5,934	5,385	6,107	6,091	6,732	7,125	6,049.8	3,020.13
Osprey	64	44	69	47	56	28	42	42	46	71	48	59	51	47	64	50	52	39	53	41	51.6	45.43
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite			1						0												0.0	0.03
Mississippi Kite						1			0			1									0.0	0.07
Bald Eagle	22	15	39	24	33	20	32	30	25	30	54	66	62	71	85	54	65	76	64	60	68.8	33.03
Northern Harrier	209	127	176	177	171	122	85	91	125	108	115	98	223	128	96	115	173	121	109	104	122.8	144.93
Sharp-shinned Hawk	3,418	3,474	4,851	2,136	3,291	3,048	2,822	2,002	2,467	2,541	3,173	2,350	2,310	1,756	1,753	1,551	2,652	1,721	2,339	1,700	2,003.2	3,339.63
Cooper's Hawk	199	209	263	256	295	221	179	241	181	169	244	220	252	183	202	207	123	136	125	101	158.6	205.93
Northern Goshawk	34	28	72	15	25	16	14	6	3	14	9	6	11	12	6	8	5	6	8	2	6.6	22.07
Red-shouldered Hawk	1,187	1,030	1,419	705	706	796	553	675	508	458	566	455	524	641	679	641	658	730	513	581	644.2	778.80
Broad-winged Hawk	2,761	1,963	2,335	1,779	1,549	1,849	3,886	1,833	2,368	5,229	3,668	3,327	2,532	5,537	2,026	2,413	2,971	5,497	2,922	8,613	3,165.8	3,598.23
Swainson's Hawk		2	2		1	2	3				1						1				0.2	0.50
Red-tailed Hawk	3,861	2,684	2,890	2,861	3,589	2,571	2,159	2,218	2,617	2,351	2,031	2,258	2,513	2,693	3,099	2,209	2,457	2,852	2,156	1,857	2,554.6	2,886.80
Ferruginous Hawk	1						1		0		1										0.0	0.10
Rough-legged Hawk	128	36	62	87	97	44	33	69	50	74	22	40	204	120	100	75	59	92	29	59	71.0	78.60
Golden Eagle	12	6	10	4	12	6	6	10	13	6	8	8	8	8	13	7	15	12	8	8	11.0	8.33
American Kestrel	92	93	122	70	62	84	77	69	95	77	99	102	87	45	63	77	120	69	55	44	76.8	101.00
Merlin	12	9	23	14	22	14	15	10	22	6	19	11	21	15	13	18	10	13	22	17	15.2	11.77
Peregrine Falcon	6	2	5	1	2	2	4	1	7	3	6	7	5	5	9	2	7	8	12	10	7.6	4.07
Gyrfalcon									0						1						0.2	0.03
Prairie Falcon				1					0												0.0	0.03
Unid. Raptors	681	534	442	480	249	190	227	345	165	282	737	327	234	183	178	134	96	114	26	45	109.6	515.40
Total Raptors	14,678	12,109	15,970	10,811	13,123	12,106	13,415	11,026	11,664	14,951	14,866	14,361	13,661	16,602	14,321	12,946	15,572	17,577	15,175	20,368	15,118.2	14,795.13
Hours Counted	541.50	538.50	530.95	555.70	454.50	508.40	499.00	502.80	527.40	545.00	556.28	532.00	495.50	495.20	534.50	507.10	552.58	520.25	518.42	495.20	526.57	560.55
Birds per Hour	27.1	22.5	30.1	19.5	28.9	23.8	26.9	21.9	22.1	27.4	26.7	27.0	27.6	33.5	26.8	25.5	28.2	33.8	29.3	41.1	28.71	26.39

TABLE 5 - NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH MONTHLY SUMMARIES												
Year	February			March			April			May		
	# Birds	Hours	#/Hr	# Birds	Hours	#/Hr	# Birds	Hours	#/Hr	# Birds	Hours	#/Hr
1981	22	4.5	4.9	2,957	181.9	16.3	11,185	202.5	55.2	1,758	173.7	10.1
1982	40	8	5.0	2,699	179	15.1	7,259	223.7	32.4	1,970	172.4	11.4
1983	49	10.3	4.8	2,301	164.8	14.0	8,991	210	42.8	2,369	179.9	13.2
1984	258	10.4	24.8	1,674	151	11.1	15,012	232.8	64.5	1,358	170.4	8.0
1985	0	0	0.0	4,059	202	20.1	14,818	242.2	61.2	398	164.3	2.4
1986	19	8	2.4	5,361	210.3	25.5	7,894	207.4	38.1	783	150.5	5.2
1987	81	23	3.5	3,943	213.4	18.5	4,719	233	20.3	1,765	212.1	8.3
1988	6	2	3.0	5,670	216.9	26.1	6,344	205.4	30.9	2,114	183.9	11.5
1989	0	0	0.0	2,951	179.25	16.5	6,699	241.8	27.7	2,558	78.25	32.7
1990	0	0	0.0	5,065	220	23.0	12,801	234.5	54.6	1,377	120	11.5
1991	0	0	0.0	4,308	215.8	20.0	9,291	223.2	41.6	1,352	109.5	12.3
1992	0	0	0.0	3,480	193.5	18.0	9,710	236	41.1	1,488	112	13.3
1993	0	0	0.0	2,014	176	11.4	8,836	227	38.9	1,257	135.5	9.3
1994	0	0	0.0	5,194	201.8	25.7	10,149	233.4	43.5	634	95.8	6.6
1995	0	0	0.0	4,231	214.6	19.7	5,801	230.75	25.1	776	110.3	7.0
1996	0	0	0.0	3,378	182	18.6	8,650	187.1	46.2	1,075	85.4	12.6
1997	0	0	0.0	4,304	181.85	23.7	6,712	221.25	30.3	1,089	105.25	10.3
1998	80	8	10.0	4,432	167	26.5	6,847	223	30.7	2,128	101.0	21.1
1999	0	0	0.0	4,190	200	21.0	6,538	206	31.7	267	96.0	2.8
2000	256	5	51.2	4,290	216	19.9	6,062	195	31.1	1,036	112.0	9.3
2001	49	25	1.9	2,576	181	14.2	11,620	243	47.8	588	96	6.1
2002	23	28	0.8	5,030	223	22.6	8,885	213	41.7	939	93	10.1
2003	4	4	1.0	5,632	214	26.3	7,769	209	37.2	955	105.5	9.1
2004	18	14.17	1.3	3,962	181.83	21.8	8,554	212.9	40.2	1,127	86.58	13.0
2005	33	5.5	6.0	3,129	197.5	15.8	11,829	193.08	61.3	1,610	95.58	16.8
2006	5	5.33	0.9	5,362	222.35	24.1	8,502	211.67	40.2	452	95.17	4.7
2007	6	3	2.0	5,241	202.33	25.9	6,584	201.58	32.7	1,115	100.17	11.1
2008	2	3	0.7	4,401	222.58	19.8	10,624	229.58	46.3	547	96.42	5.7
2009	0	0	0	5,548	225.92	24.6	11,646	204.92	56.8	383	89.42	4.3
2010	3	4.25	0.7	3,925	206.92	19.0	10,736	229.92	46.7	511	77.33	6.6
2011	0	0	0.0	6,389	209.53	30.5	13,667	210.67	64.9	318	75	4.2
AVERAGE 2006-2010				4895.4	216.0	22.7	9618.4	215.5	44.6	601.6	91.7	6.6
AVERAGE 1981-2010				4043.6	198.2	20.4	9,035.6	218.8	41.3	1192.6	120.1	9.9



Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Newsletter

February 2012 **Newsletter # 44**

2012 NPH OPEN HOUSE FRIDAY, APRIL 6

The 2012 Open House will be on Good Friday, April 6 at Beamer. This is a date that should provide a good variety of raptors, and we hope that fine weather will draw large crowds. The usual agenda of activities will take place. Mike Street will talk about hawks, and there will be a children's program.

As usual Tom Thomas will have lined up a number of exhibits, and we expect to have some raptors on display. The NPCA, as our partners in this event, will be selling food and beverages. Come out and bring your friends!

ANNUAL MEETING AND BANQUET SATURDAY, APRIL 28

The Annual Meeting/ Banquet on Saturday, April 28 will again be held at St Andrew's Church Hall, 7 St Andrew's Avenue, Grimsby. Socializing and the bucket raffle begin at 5:00 p.m., and the pre-supper wine and cheese at 5:15. Dinner will start around 6:15. Donations are still needed for the bucket raffle – please contact a member of the executive if you can make a donation.

Tickets are $30 for members and $40 for non-members. Please contact a member of the NPH executive (see page 4) to obtain tickets.

Our speaker at the 2012 Annual General Meeting and Banquet will be Sandy Darling, one of our counters and editor of the newsletter. Sandy started coming to Beamer in the 1990s before leaving Canada to work in Egypt for almost 5 years (2000-04). During this period Sandy and his wife, Jeni, were able to travel to a number of countries in Africa, Asia and Europe and to return for another visit to Australia.

Egypt has excellent raptor migrations in both spring and fall, and so Sandy and Jeni were able to go to Ain Sukhna on the Red Sea coast to watch raptors moving along the mountain ridge parallel to the sea. A typical day would be 8,000 birds of up to 15 species. After retiring back in Canada Sandy started counting at Beamer for most Thursdays in March and April, and he is now on editing his fourth newsletter.

Sandy has continued to travel and has now visited 50 countries, and has birded in many of them. In his talk ***Raptors around the World*** Sandy plans to talk about where one can go to see raptors and the species one might find. His presentation will cover both diurnal raptors and owls, and will draw comparisons among birds of the same genus, which may be widely distributed throughout the world.

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REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE

We are looking forward to another spring migration season after last year's record-breaking count, and hope that we shall enjoy some great flights with unusual birds. As always we shall appreciate help on March 1 in getting everything set up; please let Mike Street know (mikestreet1@gmail.com) if you can help. One other way in which you can help is by counting – remember the best way to improve your skills is by practice and having to focus so that you can make the right call on identification.

Over the years we have enjoyed the support and cooperation of the Niagara Peninsular Conservation Authority (NPCA) from giving us access to the park, maintaining the site and participating in the Open House. You can always help the NPCA by making a donation or becoming a member. This year we are especially pleased to announce that benches will be installed at Beamer to recognize two individuals who played leadership roles in the establishment of hawk-watching at Beamer. Dave Copeland was the person who identified the site as an excellent place to watch migrations, and Bruce Duncan was the founding president of the Niagara Peninsular Hawkwatch. Suitable plaques will be on the benches.

We welcome Cody Law to the Executive as our Count Coordinator, and Cody will also maintain our website. It is wonderful to have someone younger on the executive, and the average age of your executive has dropped significantly. Cody has great enthusiasm and we hope that you will make his job easy by telling him when you will count. You can contact him (cody.law2@gmail.com) by e-mail. We also want to take this opportunity to thank Linda Cherriere for her hard work during the time she served as membership secretary.

On a personal note, we note that Gord McNulty is recovering well from serious heart surgery last fall. He is taking phone calls and attending Hamilton Naturalists' Club meetings, but owing to another difficulty is not yet driving and will not be able to help with the count at Beamer CA this spring.

We urge you to come out to the Open House on Friday, April 6, when Tom Thomas will have lined up an exciting set of activities, although he can't guarantee the birds. Similarly we hope that you will come to the Annual Meeting and Banquet on Saturday, April 28, when Sandy Darling will speak about ***Raptors around the World***.

We look forward to seeing you from March 1 to May 15. Let the birds come!

YOUNG ORNITHOLOGISTS' WORKSHOP

The 2012 Doug Tarry Young Ornithologists' Workshop will be held at Long Point Bird Observatory near Port Rowan, Ontario from Saturday August 4 to Sunday August 12. Participants will receive hands-on field ornithology training, including bird banding, conducting a census, field identification, birding trips, preparing museum specimens, guest lectures and more! Six of Canada's most promising ornithologists between ages of 13 to 17 will be selected to attend and will receive the Doug Tarry Bird Study Award to cover all on-site expenses. Applications are due April 30. For more information and an application form, contact the Landbird Programs Coordinator of Bird Studies Canada at lpbo@birdscanada.org.

SEE THE RAPTOR MIGRATION IN TURKEY

For the last four years Tim Foran, a regular counter for the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch, has used part of spring vacations in Turkey to watch some of the huge raptor and stork migration that passes over the Bosphorus near Istanbul owing to a funnel effect created by the Europe - Asia land bridge. More than 150,000 birds have been counted in the spring, often with hundreds in the air simultaneously. Among 34 Old World species seen are: Lesser Spotted Eagle, Short-toed Eagle, Eurasian Buzzard, Western Honey Buzzard, Black Kite and Levant Sparrowhawk, some occasionally chased by local Hobbies. There are, as well, several species that North American hawk-watchers would recognize such as Golden Eagle, Northern Goshawk, Osprey, Rough Legged Hawk, Merlin and, of course, Peregrine Falcon. Thousands of White Storks can pass low overhead at one time, and many other non-raptors can be seen.

The Hawkwatch is located in a rustic area on the Bosphorus, across from a 9th century castle, and offers many opportunities to photograph some of

the exotic raptors at close range. The Turkish birders on site are generous hosts.

Tim is going to Turkey again in April 2012 and has offered to help interested hawk-watchers organize a trip. Accommodation would be in a modern apartment hotel in the Galata Tower area of Istanbul, very close to the historic part of the city. The apartments, self-contained with laundry on site, would each suit one or two people. Cost would be in the range of $US70.00 per night, possibly cheaper if many people book rooms.

A 40 minute trip on public transport (one subway ride from close to the hotel and then two buses) is used to get to the hawk-watch. Sightseeing in Istanbul is amazing and easy, again using public transit, or by foot from the apartments. Expenses for meals and other activities are about half price, and restaurants serve food of a very high quality. Tim knows Istanbul very well and will be available to help you with local knowledge and tips on how to get about. There are direct flights from Toronto, or one can travel through Europe.

Tim expects to spend most days from April 9 to 17 at the hawkwatch site. Visitors can of course do their own thing during that time, and anyone wanting to then see some of the rest of Turkey, a fabulous destination in its own right, can make arrangements to continue on.

If you are interested in seeing the spring migration of raptors at the Bosphorus, contact Tim at timothyforan@gmail.com.

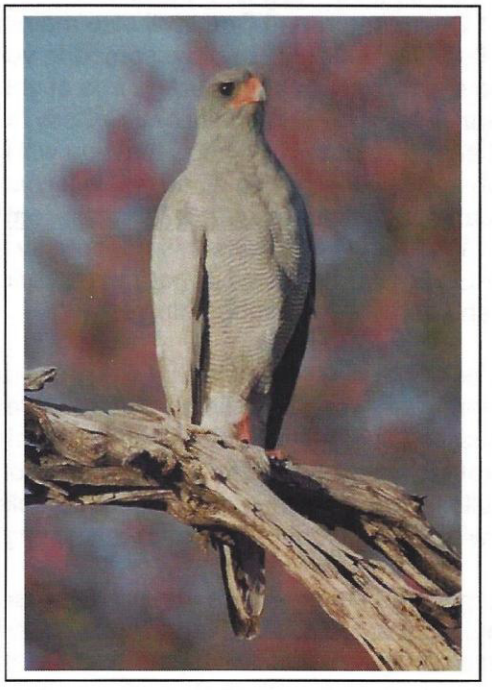
THE RAPTOR POPULATION INDEX PROJECT: PRESENT AND FUTURE

The fall edition of Hawk Migration Studies (Volume 37, No 1) included an article by Ernesto Ruelas Inzunza entitled *The Raptor Population Index Project (RPI): Its Present and Future*. The article covers what RPI is, recent developments, the project's future and future opportunities, and it serves to announce the release of its analytical tools for making online raptor population trends scheduled for this fall.

RPI is a collaborative endeavor among HMANA, Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, Bird Studies Canada and HawkWatch International. The central aim of RPI is to produce regular update assessments of the population trends and the conservation status of migrating raptors. Data are used from many sites, including Beamer, and RPI has produced the first continent-scale analysis of population trends and a series of conservation status reports, which were summarized in June 2008 in the 466-page book *State of North Americas' Birds of Prey*.

In future RPI will deliver subsequent trend results and conservation assessments online and maintain an annual update of these data. Given the enormity of the task, results will be computer-generated, and the RPI partners invited Bird Studies Canada (BSC) to join their efforts in 2009, because of BSC's experience managing similar projects. BSC has explored new methods of analysis to overcome some of the previous problems, and has developed a tool to show the magnitude and direction of trends.

RPI has released new trend results from 53 datasets (48 localities), graphs by site, and the information necessary to interpret their data. They hope that these results will stimulate owners of long-term datasets to make them available and also encourage the adoption of standardized data collection protocols. The goal is to update the data annually, to review trend data, and to release this information in September each year.



Pale Chanting Goshawk *© Sandy Darling*

WHY I BELONG TO HMANA

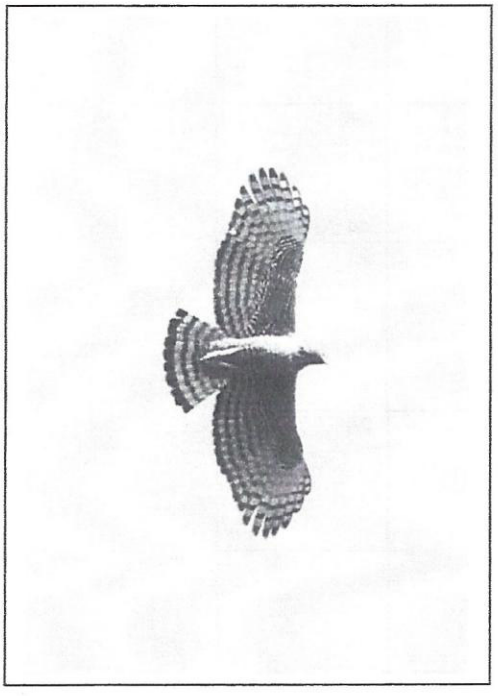
Gil Randell (Recently Retired Chair, Board of Directors, Hawk Migration Association of North America)

Membership in the Hawk Migration Association of North America (HMANA) makes me part of a scientific and educational program in which all raptor enthusiasts and conservationists in North America should be proud to participate. Over the last few years HMANA has coordinated a partnership between Bird Studies Canada, Hawk Mountain Sanctuary and Hawk Watch International that develops and communicates statistically rigorous population trends for migratory North American raptor species using counts from citizen scientists across the continent. (See above.)

HMANA's HawkCount website now provides on-line trend reports by species for sites with ten or more years of hourly data. This accomplishment realizes HMANA's long-standing goal of using the thousands of hours and days of data collection by dedicated hawk watchers, including volunteers with the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch, to understand better and conserve migratory raptor populations. To continue this important conservation effort and support HMANA's network of watch sites, HMANA needs a robust membership. Being a member of HMANA allows me to contribute to the ongoing success of this initiative.

Perhaps a bit closer to home for me is the way HMANA enhances the work I do with the Ripley Hawk Watch on the south shore of Lake Erie. The Ripley Hawk Watch is a small all-volunteer watch that uses the educational materials available through HMANA to educate visitors and develop skilled observers that can become active and effective citizen scientists. We also keep a loose-leaf notebook of our daily reports to HMANA's HawkCount.org for visitors and observers to view at our hawk watch. I love the way these reports downloaded from HawkCount enhance the image of the Ripley Hawk Watch as a group of citizen scientists engaged in important scientific and conservation work for the important but fragile resource we enjoy so much.

I encourage anyone interested in raptors to be a part of the HMANA experience.



Mountain Hawk-Eagle *© Sandy Darling*

N.P.H. EXCUTIVE

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Newsletter	**Sandy Darling**	**(905) 689 7481**
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LATE NEWS: We have arranged with the Grimsby weather station to obtain data on temperature, wind speed and wind direction for each hour during the counting season. This will simplify the work of counters and give more standardized readings.

NIAGARA PENINSULAR HAWKWATCH CALENDAR FOR BEAMER MEMORIAL CONSERVATION AREA

NOTES:

1. Species initials and Right (>) or Left (<) arrow:
   This combination indicates the start (>) or end (<) of the normal migration period at Beamer for that species. The same in bold type indicates the start of end of a noticeable period for that species. The box in which this combination is located indicates the day and month the period is likely to start or end.
2. A number followed by species initial, followed by a slash (/) and a two-digit number:
   In this combination the largest number of that species ever seen in one day is given first, and the year it occurred second. The box where the combination is located indicates the day and month of the event. Example: 655 RS/94 in March 23 indicates that the highest number of Red-shouldered Hawks recorded in one day occurred on March 23, 1994.

TV – Turkey Vulture
BV – Black Vulture
OS – Osprey
SK – Swallow-tail Kite
MK – Mississippi Kite
BE – Bald Eagle
GE - Golden Eagle
NH – Northern Harrier
SS – Sharp-shinned Hawk
CH – Cooper's Hawk
NG – Northern Goshawk
RS – Red-shouldered Hawk
RT – Red-tailed Hawk
SW – Swainson's Hawk
RL – Rough-legged Hawk
FH – Ferruginous Hawk
AK – American Kestrel
ML – Merlin
PF – Peregrine Falcon
PR – Prairie Falcon
GY – Gyrfalcon
BW – Broad-winged Hawk

- The following information, based on 35+ years of data, shows significant events up to January 2012.
- The largest number of raptors in a season was 20,368 in 2011.
- BE>, NH>, SS>, CH>, RT>, RL>, AK> begin February 20.

MARCH

1 **RT>** **NG>** TV>	2 GE>	3 RS>	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11 **RL>**	12 **AK>**	13 **CH>** **RS>**	14 **44 AK/90**
15 **TV>**	16 **744 RT/96**	17 **1 GY/06**	18 **BE>** **1 BV/10**	19	20 ML> **PF>**	21
22	23 **NH>** **655 RS/94**	24 **11 NG/84** **19 BE/03**	25	26 **SS>**	27	28
29 **1 BV/11** **46 RL/04**	30	31 **OS>** **1 BV/00***				

Largest # in month: 6,389 in March 2011; largest # in one day: 2,080 March 26, 1988

APRIL

1 **1 BV/04**	2 **8 GE/09** **2,021 TV/09**	3	4 **1 BV/92**	5 **1 BV/04** **50 CH/93**	6	7 **1 BV/08**
8 **OS><RS**	9	10 BW>	11	12 **16 OS/92**	13 **1 FH/92**	14
15 **BW>** SW> **1 SK/94**	16 **<BE**	17	18 **35 NH/96** **1,556 SS/76**	19 **1 PF/95****	20 **1 GY/77**	21 **6,007 BW/85**
22	23 **1 FH/98***	24 **<OS** **1 FH/02***	25 **<TV** **6 ML/96**	26	27 **3 PF/10**	28
29 **2 SW/98***	30 **<RL** **<CH**					

Largest # in month: 15,012 April 1984; largest # in one day: 7,007 April 21, 1985

MAY

1	2 **2 SW/97***	3	4 **<RT**	5 <SW	6 <PF	7
8	9	10	11 **1 MK/97***	12 **<NH** **<AK**	13 **<CH** <BE	14 **<SS** **1 MK/03***
15 **<BW** <RL <ML	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31 <TV<NH <SS<OS <NG<RS <AK<GE	*BW & RT continue after May 31*			

Largest # in month: 2,685 May 1980: largest # in one day 1,492 May 4, 1989

* Sighting not reviewed/ accepted by Ontario Bird records Committee; ** First accepted Prairie Falcon record in Ontario

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch

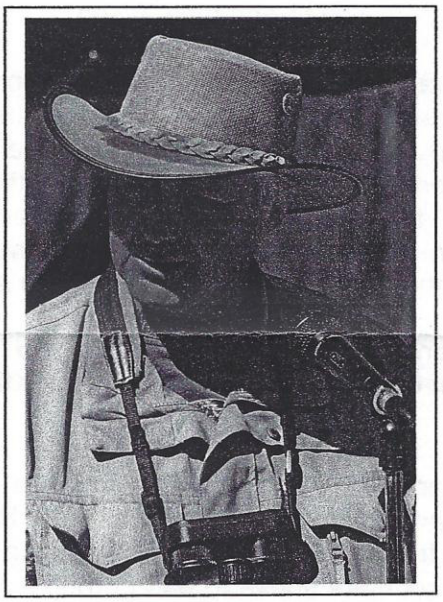
Newsletter

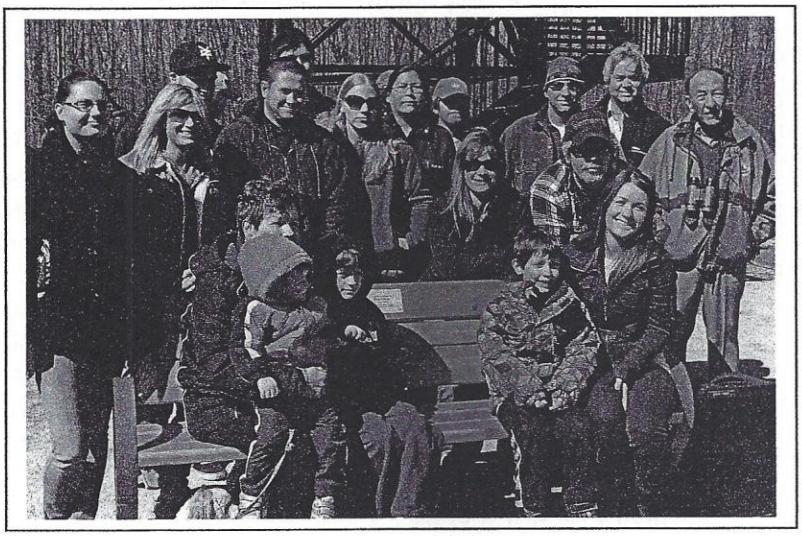
August 2012 **Newsletter # 45**

NEW BENCHES INSTALLED IN HONOR OF BRUCE DUNCAN AND DAVE COPELAND

See Open House on page 2.







Memorial benches – Open House
Friday, April 6, 2012

Janet Snaith & the Duncan family

The Copeland family

Barry Cherriere, master of ceremonies & speaker

Photos: Cody Law

EDITOR'S COLUMN

Sandy Darling

We are in the dog days of summer as I write and the first signs of the fall migration are around us. For me the Hawkwatch is one of the signs of spring and it gives the chance to watch some of the first birds return from their winter haunts. This year included the winter that almost never was and so there were not bone-chilling days on the tower in early March. In fact some of the nicest weather was in mid-March. As usual, this newsletter carries the yearly statistics; total numbers were below average, but we had some surprises. We had multiple sightings of Black Vultures, as they expand their range, and a Mississippi Kite on the last day was a great way to end the season.

As usual, the Open Day on Friday April 6 was a great success and we owe our thanks to Tom Thomas, all those who helped him and those who exhibited. A highlight of the day was the unveiling of the two new benches in memory of Bruce Duncan and Dave Copeland. The Annual Meeting and Banquet had about forty people in attendance, and it would not be appropriate for the writer to comment on the speech. This too involves a number of volunteers, who deserve our thanks.

During the season we had school visits from Covenant Christian School (Smithville), Dunnville Christian School, and Niagara Area Homeschool Group that were organized by Carla Carlson. One of our counters spoke to each group and they also had a nature walk in the woods.



School visit Photo: Sandra and Frank Horvath

In our spring newsletter we included an invitation from Tim Foran to join him in Turkey for the spectacular migration over the Bosporus in Turkey. We are pleased that Tim has written a follow-up article for this edition of the newsletter. Having sailed up the Bosporus and watched many of the same birds migrate through Egypt, I can imagine the scene that Tim describes so well. He continues to be willing to help others share the pleasure.

Like every similar organization we are dependent on the efforts of volunteers, and the members of the executive appreciate all the help that is given. Cody Law, our new count coordinator, received lots of cooperation, so that we quickly had counters for March and April. We do, however, need more people for May – there were two big days and it is the time for rarities. We look forward to volunteers – you can either start at the top as President or you can help with events like the open house and the banquet.

OPEN HOUSE – FRIDAY APRIL 6

The Open House attracted good crowds and the weather was fairly typical for early April. The number of birds was low (169), but the six Bald Eagles and six Ospreys were crowd-pleasers. James Cowan of Canadian Raptor Conservancy, brought a Bald Eagle, American Kestrel, a Turkey Vulture, and a couple of young Great-horned Owls. We received great cooperation from the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, who prepared the site, brought in tables and provided the much-welcome lunch wagon. We also thank those who mounted displays. Tom Thomas, as usual, had everything under control, although he frets every year about the fact that he can't control the weather. Well done, Tom!

One of the highlights of the day was the unveiling of two benches just east of the tower in memory of Bruce Duncan, first president of the Niagara Peninsular Hawkwatch, and Dave Copeland, who identified the site as a good place to watch migrations. Barry Cherriere, one of our long-standing members, spoke of his memories of both Bruce and Dave, and help he received from them, before inviting the two families to unveil the benches. Dave Copeland's family and Janet and Bruce's family were there for the unveiling. Janet also brought a cake for the attendees.

ANNUAL MEETING/ BANQUET – SATURDAY, APRIL 28

The annual meeting and banquet was again held at St Andrew's Church Hall in Grimsby with about forty in attendance. Thanks are due to Mike Street and his helpers for making all the arrangements. John Merriman again selected and served the special wines.

Sandy Darling, our speaker, talked about *Raptors around the World.* He started by listing the countries where he has seen most raptor species in his travels. Perhaps not surprisingly the top five (Namibia/ Botswana, Northern India, Ethiopia, Kenya and Gambia) are all hot countries in Africa or southern Asia. He then talked about birds that are familiar to us in Canada and related species around the world, and some of the similarities among them. Sandy used photos from his collection, and three from Tom Thomas and Barry Cherrriere. We welcome suggestions for who should speak at future banquets.

HAWKWATCHING IN INSTANBUL

Tim Foran

Professional companies charge thousands of dollars to conduct travelers to the Hawkwatch site at Istanbul. I suspect that they can exact such large fees as this Hawkwatch is largely unknown to foreigners. Although the first recorded observations of the spring migration were in 1555 AD, not many people in Istanbul are aware of this magnificent yearly spectacle either.

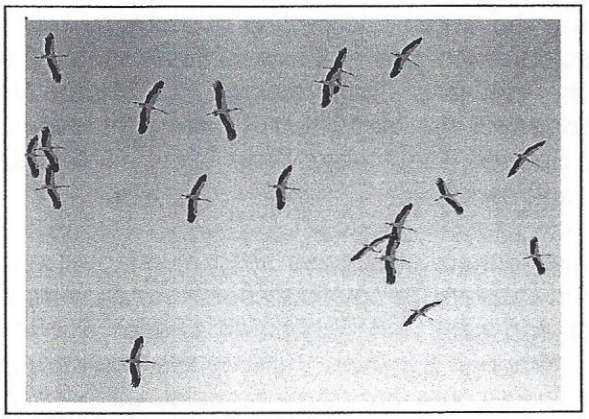
Istanbul, Turkey's largest city, is situated between the Sea of Marmara and the Black Sea, which are connected by the Bosporus. The official population is thirteen and a half million, but few who live there accept that figure and many place the true number closer to twenty million. Istanbul has a well deserved reputation for its historic and cultural treasures. Geography and nature are two of Turkey's gifts to the traveler, and among the most valuable gems in nature is the raptor migration through northern Istanbul.

The spring Hawkwatch at Istanbul, like our Hawkwatch in Grimsby, takes place roughly from March 1 to May 15. The migration route curves out of wintering territories in Africa, dispatching the birds up through Egypt, Israel, Jordan, and Syria before they swing through southern Turkey and into Istanbul. Here the birds split, some going to Asia and some to Europe. Birders who go to the Istanbul Hawkwatch tend to be there for the sheer aesthetic of seeing the birds. Counting is sporadic and not yet well organized.

If we were to measure the beauty of Hawkwatch sites, Beamer Park in Grimsby would get excellent marks for its Carolinian forest, fresh air, and the Niagara escarpment. Istanbul's Bosporus location is a lovely place to spend a few hours, even without an admitted addiction to raptor watching. We took with us an initially hesitant, non-birding couple, Tom and Doris, who agreed enthusiastically. We stopped for a splendid lunch of local fish, salads and fresh bread in a fishing village founded by the Romans, directly below the Hawkwatch site. We then took the back roads through Turkish farm country up to it. The location is high above the Bosporus on the European side, perched on a gently sloping bank. You can almost touch Asia, just a few thousand meters over the water, and there is an 11th century castle overlooking the shoreline directly across.

The Bosporus, a conduit between the Black and Mediterranean Seas, is full of exotic shipping traffic as well as Turkish Naval vessels. We have seen 40 paratroopers parachuting simultaneously into the river in a training exercise.

Bottle-nosed Dolphins, northbound to the Black Sea, paused to frolic and feed just below us, exciting interest and cheers. This, the large number of raptors and White Storks (*photo below: Sandy Darling)*, and stunning geography ensured that our non-birding companions were charmed by the excursion.



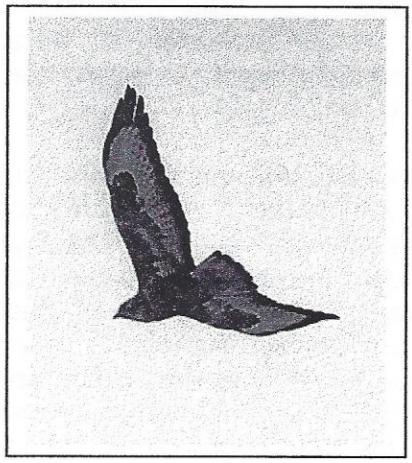
We have a joke around Beamer when counting birds, "UH: Unidentified Harrier". The gag is that we count only one species of Harrier, so how could you have a "UH"? Four different species of Harrier can be expected at Istanbul: Pallid, Montague's, and Marsh Harriers and our own *circus cyaneus*, the Northern Harrier, known in Europe as the Hen Harrier. Most are much larger than our version of the species.

The Beamer Hawkwatch tracks roughly 15 species of diurnal raptors. The Istanbul Hawkwatch records over 35 species of raptors and hundreds of thousands of White Storks. Beamer reported a record count of 20,368 for 2011. Although the counting process is less exact in Istanbul, there is good reason to believe that over 500,000 raptors pass over the Bosporus during the spring migration. As it is customary most years that the adults return south with their offspring, there could be many more in the autumn migration.

At Beamer, during times of few birds, who hasn't heard Tom Thomas' rallying cry of "Here they come!"? Turkish birders often say, "They are on the road!" And so, the Turkish birders also hope for a good flight. Unless the weather is most inclement, there are seldom long intervals without birds on the Bosporus.

The dress and manner of the Turkish birder would be immediately familiar to Canadian practitioners - large floppy hats and khaki vests are the uniform of the day. The vaguely coconut aroma of sun block, packed sandwiches, folding chairs and binoculars would seem perfectly natural at Beamer. The Turkish birders are most kind to visitors, and one may also encounter various foreign nationals. I recall a group of Hungarian birders who set down roots while staying for over two weeks watching raptors. Dieter Muller-Wicherds is a birder from northern Germany who comes annually, residing very near the watch and putting in as many hours as possible each day. This is Dieter's idea of a vacation. He was kind enough to share his knowledge with me, and I think I just might know a Lesser Spotted Eagle when I see one in one of its trillion morphs.

The most numerous species seen at Istanbul are: Common Buzzard (a cousin to our Red-tail, similar in flight and call) and Great and Lesser Spotted Eagle. Although Egyptian Vultures are common in central Turkey, they are cause for celebration when sighted at the Bosporus. The European Sparrowhawk is common throughout Turkey, and the Levant Sparrow Hawk is also numerous. Among the rare and exotic species are Black Kite, White-tailed Eagle, Griffon Vulture, Pallid Harrier, Long-legged Buzzard and Steppe Eagle.



"Steppe" Buzzard, buteo buteo vulpinus
Photo: Sandy Darling

Familiar to Beamer raptor watchers, though in small numbers, are seven species: Golden Eagle, Northern Goshawk, Rough-legged Hawk, Hen Harrier (our Northern Harrier), Osprey, Merlin and Peregrine Falcon.

Eight species of eagles are seen at Istanbul: Lesser Spotted (most numerous), followed by Great Spotted, and then White-tailed, Short-toed, Steppe, Imperial, Golden and Booted Eagles. One may also encounter nine species of falcons: Lesser Kestrel, (European) Kestrel, Red-footed Falcon, Merlin, Hobby, Eleonora's Falcon, Saker Falcon, Lanner Falcon and Peregrine Falcon.

Excellent bird numbers, a large variety of species, hundreds of thousands of White Storks, and gracious hosts, in a setting as charming as any I have seen, have drawn me to return to the Hawkwatch for six visits. The city of Istanbul, with its cultural and architectural wealth adds great value to the venture, making one's trip a busy but ultimately pleasing foray from home. And what stories you will have to tell.

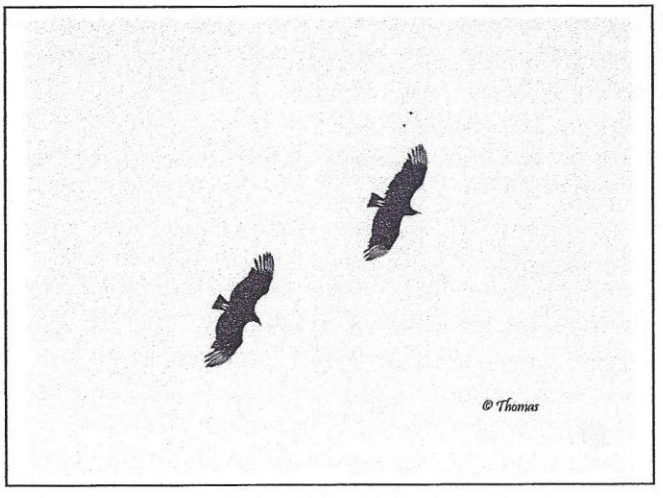
I plan to return to Istanbul in the autumn of 2013. If you are interested in going to the Hawkwatch, please contact me timothyforan@gmail.com.

2012 MIGRATION SUMMARY

John Stevens

At its most recent meeting the Ontario Bird Records Committee decided that they would not review any post-2011 reports of Black Vulture sightings in southern Ontario. This decision was taken on April 1st, no fooling, by which time two had been seen at Beamer, passing the watch together on March 22nd. By the end of the season, four more had been sighted although only three appear on the counts as one of the two birds seen on April 12th headed back east. The count of five birds for the season, in comparison with the total from the previous 36 years of seven birds, clearly indicates the acumen of the committee's decision that Black Vultures have arrived. They become the sixteenth species that we see at Beamer on an annual basis, this being the third year in succession and fourth year in the last five that at least one was counted.

Black Vultures are a rather sedentary species and most of the birds that we see passing may reflect a range expansion rather than a seasonal movement. If they begin residing in Niagara, we may start to see them moving back and forth as we do with the resident Turkey Vultures. It has been exciting to document the appearance of a new species. Let us hope that they are better behaved than the Turkey Vultures and don't start flying around in circles and confusing the counters.



Black Vultures (March 22) Photo: Tom Thomas

Certainly Black Vulture was the species of the year but the prize bird of the year was a Mississippi Kite seen in the final hour on the last day of the count season by Mike Street. It appeared with an immature Red-tailed Hawk, circled allowing for clear identification and passed through as the third bird of its species that we've ever had. All three have appeared in the very narrow time period of May 11-15.

Following last year's record count, hopes were high that another record could be set since so many species had poor counts in 2011. It was not to be as the season total of 14,432 was the lowest since 2007 and below the short- (5-year) and long-term averages. The number of hours of coverage at 488.5 was the second lowest since full coverage began in 1980, ahead of only 1996 when an inordinate amount of precipitation resulted in only 454.5 hours. This year the problem was not the result of inclement weather but a lack of people willing to count in May when eight days had no counter. That may also account for some of the lower count total since the flight in May when we had coverage was very good this year as was the weather.

The Season

The first half of 2012 has been the warmest year on record in the Niagara area and this was most apparent in March when the average temperature was almost seven degrees above normal. The temperature at Beamer reached 25°C on March 22nd, a level that was not exceeded until April 16th and only topped on four days all season. By contrast, precipitation was slightly below normal in March but well below in April and the first half of May. Rain, snow and fog seriously impeded counting on two days in March and five days in April but none in May. The result was that we had the second most productive March on record, 5,849 birds, trailing only the record total in 2011.

For the second year in succession, a major wind storm occurred, this time on March 3rd. This brought down several trees including another one blocking the entrance road. Winds were almost as strong on March 8th and again on April 16th. Unfortunately for the Beamer count, the southwesterly wind on the latter date took almost all the Broad-winged Hawks to the east giving the Braddock Bay site near Rochester a massive count of 34,243 while we had only 44.

The first 20 days of April were also warm but the last ten days were cool and wet. Thus the prime period for Broad-winged and Sharp-shinned Hawks had decidedly poor counts with the exception of the day of the annual meeting when 1,583 birds were counted, easily the most productive day of the year. Overall April's total of 7,298 birds was the lowest since 2000 and well below the long term average of 9,185 for the month.

Likely the low counts in the latter part of April were responsible for good flights during the early part of May. The monthly total of 1,280 was the third highest in the last 20 years despite having over half of the days without coverage. It is a shame that nobody counted between May 4-6 when the weather was good and birds appeared to be moving.

The prize for best variety went to George Naylor on April 17th when 13 species were recorded, followed closely by April 12th that had 12 species. While not another species, a dark morph Red-tailed Hawk spiced up the action on April 9th. Apparently at least four similar birds wintered in southern Ontario this year, which Jean Iron (Dark Morph Red-tailed Hawks: *calurus* or *abieticola*? TOC Newsletter Feb. 2012) reckons are not displaced western birds but part of the boreal forest population that migrates through Beamer. It would be wonderful if these become a regular migrant like the dark morph Rough-legged Hawks are.

Species Accounts

In contrast to the rise in the Black Vulture count, the number of Turkey Vultures passing was the lowest in the last five years and saw the greatest percentage drop since 1995. Nevertheless they were once again our most commonly observed species.

A good news story was the increased count of Osprey in 2012. The 64 birds recorded equaled the fourth highest count for the species. It is probably the Osprey whose count benefits the most from our tower since so many of them are seen cruising along just above the edge of the escarpment, often unseen from the ground.

The Golden Eagle count of 12, although small was also above both the 5-year and long-term averages for this site. At the Hawk Cliff fall site on Lake Erie, the annual number of Golden Eagles has now surpassed the number of Bald Eagles, a combination of a rising number of the former and a falling number of the latter. Because we see so few Goldens, it is unlikely that will happen at Beamer anytime soon. Our count of 57 Bald Eagles in 2012 also declined, marking the third consecutive year this has occurred. Two new Bald Eagle nesting sites were established in Niagara in 2012 so in the future we may have to decide whether a Bald Eagle is a "local" or a migrant. It would seem that the lower migration counts of this species do not reflect anything untoward about its population.

There is rather bad news about the Northern Harrier this year as the count of 83 was the lowest since 1980 when we first began full seasonal coverage. It represents just 58% of the long-term average and is the fourth consecutive year of decline for this species. The lack of counters in May might have hurt as Harriers represent a greater proportion of our May migrants than they do earlier in the season.

The accipiter counts all increased in 2012 relative to last year, which is good but record or near-record low counts had been tallied in 2011. The Sharp-shinned Hawk total was below its 5-year average and only 56% of its long-term average. Our best day was in May, just before three days without a counter so this total may be much lower than it could have been. Both Cooper's Hawk and Northern Goshawk counts were above their 5-year averages but well under the long-term averages. It has now been 18 seasons since we had a real irruption year number of Goshawks and this fall or next should see a bigger flight heading south. Beamer missed out on the bigger flights that occurred about ten years ago for this species. Could this be yet another manifestation of a warming climate wherein this species doesn't have to go as far south during irruption years as in the past?

All the Buteo counts were below both 5-year and long-term averages. The Red-shouldered Hawk total was steady relative to last year but the Broad-winged Hawk total of 3,473 was less than half of the record count in 2011. As previously discussed, the warm winds on April 16th that produced a big migration at other locales could account for our low total. The 35 Rough-legged Hawks counted is the fourth lowest total on record and is just 45% of their long-term average. It should be remembered that this species is quite irregular as a migrant and was

almost absent from Niagara last winter so seeing any on migration was a bonus for the locals.

The Red-tailed Hawk count was the second lowest on record and only 70% of the long-term average. I could suggest that the warm winter season can explain this lower number of migrants but the previous winter was much colder and it produced the record low total. I believe it may be reflecting a decrease in the population for whatever reason because our counts have been trending downward for years as the Raptor Population Index (RPI) analysis revealed. It seems that the rate of the decline may be increasing.

The American Kestrel count of 55 was tied for the third lowest in our history, up slightly from last year's record low count of 44 but only 55% of the long-term average. This is the one raptor species that the RPI analysis has flagged as experiencing a significant decline in population. It was encouraging to see much greater counts than normal for this species at Hawk Cliff and Holiday Beach last fall but it seems they did not come back our way this year and I notice that other spring counts in the region were actually down this year. It would appear that the decline is continuing. The 18 Merlins counted was comparable to what we've had in recent years as was the total of 5 Peregrines.

I continue to be amazed by how few unidentified birds are recorded at our site; this year only 44. Knowing how difficult it can be to identify some birds, either because they are very far away or gliding past quickly, I wonder if birds are not being recorded if they're not identified. Our two biggest flights this year included not a single unidentified of any kind in spite of flight heights of 3 or greater.

Finally, thanks for the help provided by all the "official" counters who this year consisted of Bouwe Bergsma, John Black, Bob Curry, Sandy Darling, Chris Escott, Tim Foran, George Holland, Sandra Horvath, Marcie Jacklin, Cody Law, Bruce MacKenzie, Brian Mishell, George Naylor, Dave Sked, John Stevens, Mike Street, Tom Thomas and Phil Waggett. Thanks also to those people who assisted with spotting, identification, counting, and generally providing company and conversation, particularly during those hours when seeing even one hawk can be challenging.

N.P.H. EXCUTIVE

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Secretary	**Glenn Barnett (905) 628 2093** glennbarnett3@cogeco.ca
Treasurer	**Mike Street (905) 648 3737** mikestreet1@gmail.com
Count Coord	**Cody Law (905) 945 9484** cody.law2@gmail.com
Open House	**Tom Thomas (905) 689 5920** tthomas@cogeco.ca
Newsletter	**Sandy Darling (905) 689 7481** darlinga@cogeco.ca

TABLE 4 - MAY 2012

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	May Species Totals
Black Vulture																0
Turkey Vulture	1	2	20				4			2				8	7	44
Osprey		2	4												1	7
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite																0
Mississippi Kite															1	1
Bald Eagle		1	2													3
Northern Harrier		4	2							1					1	8
Sharp-shinned Hawk	34	158	256				4			2				6	2	462
Cooper's Hawk	1	2	5				2							2		12
Northern Goshawk		2														2
Red-shouldered Hawk			1													1
Broad-winged Hawk	7	274	417							1				3		702
Swainson's Hawk																0
Red-tailed Hawk	1	5	18							3				1	2	30
Ferruginous Hawk																0
Rough-legged Hawk																0
Golden Eagle														1		1
American Kestrel		1								1						2
Merlin		2	1													3
Peregrine Falcon	1															1
Gyrfalcon																0
Prairie Falcon																0
Unid. Accipiter																0
Unid. Buteo																0
Unid. Falcon			1													1
Unid. Eagle																0
Unid. Raptor																0
Total Raptors	**45**	**453**	**727**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**10**	**0**	**0**	**10**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**21**	**14**	**1280**
Hours Counted	*7.00*	*7.50*	*8.00*				*6.50*			*7.25*				*9.00*	*8.00*	*53.25*
Precipitation							R		R							

TABLE 1 - FEBRUARY 2012

	25	26	27	28	29	February Species Totals
Black Vulture						0
Turkey Vulture						0
Osprey						0
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite						0
Mississippi Kite						0
Bald Eagle						0
Northern Harrier						0
Sharp-shinned Hawk						0
Cooper's Hawk						0
Northern Goshawk						0
Red-shouldered Hawk						0
Broad-winged Hawk						0
Swainson's Hawk						0
Red-tailed Hawk		2	2			4
Ferruginous Hawk						0
Rough-legged Hawk		1				1
Golden Eagle						0
American Kestrel						0
Merlin						0
Peregrine Falcon						0
Gyrfalcon						0
Prairie Falcon						0
Unid. Accipiter						0
Unid. Buteo						0
Unid. Falcon						0
Unid. Eagle						0
Unid. Raptor						0
Total Raptors	**0**	**3**	**2**	**0**	**0**	**5**
Hours Counted		*3.00*	*2.50*			*5.50*
Precipitation						

TABLE 2 - MARCH 2012

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	March Species Totals
Black Vulture																						2										2
Turkey Vulture	1	2		1	1	6	16		5	10	38	12	109	151	20	505	7	96	93	48	744	423	228		65	82	246	176	78	229	8	3,400
Osprey																											1	1	2			4
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite																																0
Mississippi Kite																																0
Bald Eagle		1								6			1	11	1	3		5	2		1				1	1	2					35
Northern Harrier							1			1	3	3			1	2			4	1	2		1		1					2		22
Sharp-shinned Hawk						1	2		1	1	2	1	13	15	8	30	1	64	34	31	49	42	4		2	1	18	6	1	6		333
Cooper's Hawk	2					1			5	1	1	5	3	3		6		5	2	1	4	15	1			2	2	1	1			61
Northern Goshawk																			1								1					2
Red-shouldered Hawk						2			4	19	11	3	113	163	69	60		41	11	14	39	2	2	1	2	1	6			4		567
Broad-winged Hawk																																0
Swainson's Hawk																																0
Red-tailed Hawk		12	1	1	5	10	12		4	97	17	10	70	409	40	154	1	100	27	18	62	97	29	3	10	14	68	16	5	48	8	1,348
Ferruginous Hawk																																0
Rough-legged Hawk		2											1	2				7	1	2	1	4							2		1	23
Golden Eagle										2								1								1						4
American Kestrel		1	1			1							3		1			3				2			3				1			16
Merlin											1	1		1	1							1	2					1				8
Peregrine Falcon																		1						1								2
Gyrfalcon																																0
Prairie Falcon																																0
Unid. Accipiter												1								1												2
Unid. Buteo												1				4			6		2											13
Unid. Falcon																																0
Unid. Eagle																																0
Unid. Raptor														3	1				3													7
Total Raptors	3	18	2	2	6	21	31	0	19	137	73	37	313	758	142	764	9	323	184	116	904	588	267	5	84	102	344	201	90	289	17	5,849
Hours Counted	*6.50*	*7.75*	*2.00*	*3.00*	*7.25*	*8.00*	*8.00*	*4.00*	*7.75*	*8.00*	*8.00*	*6.50*	*8.00*	*8.00*	*7.00*	*8.50*	*8.00*	*10.00*	*9.00*	*8.00*	*8.00*	*7.50*	*8.00*	*2.00*	*8.00*	*8.25*	*8.00*	*8.00*	*7.50*	*6.00*	*7.50*	*222.00*
Precipitation			R/W					R	S			R					F			F				R						S		

TABLE 3 - APRIL 2012

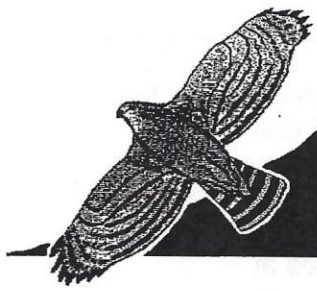
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	April Species Totals
Black Vulture		1										1														1					3
Turkey Vulture		846	332	252	158	98	176	58	95	68	27	67	65	11		50	89	10	35	18		12			18	4	19	11	15	8	2,542
Osprey		3	1	4		6	3		9	4		1				7	1	2	2	3					3		1	3			53
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite																															0
Mississippi Kite																															0
Bald Eagle						6				1	1	3					1	1	3						1			1		1	19
Northern Harrier		1	6	3		1	1	1	2	5	2	5	5			4	5	3	5	3								1			53
Sharp-shinned Hawk		7	21	21	1	14	19	21	9	24	7	63	63	106		145	78	160	114	59		2			22	8	6	52	6	25	1,053
Cooper's Hawk			7	6	1	4	1		3	2	3	5	5	1		7	2	12	4	6						1		1	1		72
Northern Goshawk																	1			1										1	3
Red-shouldered Hawk			1	1		1	1	2			1	6	4				1	6													24
Broad-winged Hawk												19	29	15		44	244	729	126	20		5			14	21	7	1,475	13	10	2,771
Swainson's Hawk																															0
Red-tailed Hawk		33	43	46	50	37	42	8	8	12	7	76	44	1		3	32	72	23	8		7			9		1	38	17	3	620
Ferruginous Hawk																															0
Rough-legged Hawk		2					2					4		1			1					1									11
Golden Eagle		2	1													1	3														7
American Kestrel		2	2			1	2	2	2	1		2	2	2		3	3	1	5	6								1			37
Merlin					2		1						2			1										1					7
Peregrine Falcon		1							1																						2
Gyrfalcon																															0
Prairie Falcon																															0
Unid. Accipiter						1				1										1											3
Unid. Buteo		2	1										1				3			5											12
Unid. Falcon																1															1
Unid. Eagle																															0
Unid. Raptor		2											1			2															5
Total Raptors	**0**	**902**	**415**	**333**	**212**	**169**	**248**	**92**	**129**	**118**	**48**	**252**	**221**	**137**	**0**	**268**	**464**	**996**	**317**	**130**	**0**	**27**	**0**	**0**	**67**	**36**	**34**	**1,583**	**52**	**48**	**7,298**
Hours Counted	*0.00*	*9.67*	*8.00*	*8.00*	*8.00*	*8.25*	*8.50*	*5.50*	*9.00*	*8.00*	*8.00*	*8.00*	*8.50*	*7.00*	*0.00*	*9.25*	*8.25*	*8.00*	*8.00*	*8.00*	*3.00*	*9.00*	*0.00*	*4.50*	*8.00*	*5.00*	*8.00*	*8.00*	*8.00*	*8.33*	*207.75*
Precipitation	R									R/S					F/R						R		R			R				R	

TABLE 5 - NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH MONTHLY SUMMARIES												
Year	February			March			April			May		
	# Birds	Hours	#/Hr	# Birds	Hours	#/Hr	# Birds	Hours	#/Hr	# Birds	Hours	#/Hr
1981	22	4.5	4.9	2,957	181.9	16.3	11,185	202.5	55.2	1,758	173.7	10.1
1982	40	8	5.0	2,699	179	15.1	7,259	223.7	32.4	1,970	172.4	11.4
1983	49	10.3	4.8	2,301	164.8	14.0	8,991	210	42.8	2,369	179.9	13.2
1984	258	10.4	24.8	1,674	151	11.1	15,012	232.8	64.5	1,358	170.4	8.0
1985	0	0	0.0	4,059	202	20.1	14,818	242.2	61.2	398	164.3	2.4
1986	19	8	2.4	5,361	210.3	25.5	7,894	207.4	38.1	783	150.5	5.2
1987	81	23	3.5	3,943	213.4	18.5	4,719	233	20.3	1,765	212.1	8.3
1988	6	2	3.0	5,670	216.9	26.1	6,344	205.4	30.9	2,114	183.9	11.5
1989	0	0	0.0	2,951	179.25	16.5	6,699	241.8	27.7	2,558	78.25	32.7
1990	0	0	0.0	5,065	220	23.0	12,801	234.5	54.6	1,377	120	11.5
1991	0	0	0.0	4,308	215.8	20.0	9,291	223.2	41.6	1,352	109.5	12.3
1992	0	0	0.0	3,480	193.5	18.0	9,710	236	41.1	1,488	112	13.3
1993	0	0	0.0	2,014	176	11.4	8,836	227	38.9	1,257	135.5	9.3
1994	0	0	0.0	5,194	201.8	25.7	10,149	233.4	43.5	634	95.8	6.6
1995	0	0	0.0	4,231	214.6	19.7	5,801	230.75	25.1	776	110.3	7.0
1996	0	0	0.0	3,378	182	18.6	8,650	187.1	46.2	1,075	85.4	12.6
1997	0	0	0.0	4,304	181.85	23.7	6,712	221.25	30.3	1,089	105.25	10.3
1998	80	8	10.0	4,432	167	26.5	6,847	223	30.7	2,128	101.0	21.1
1999	0	0	0.0	4,190	200	21.0	6,538	206	31.7	267	96.0	2.8
2000	256	5	51.2	4,302	216	19.9	6,068	195	31.1	1,039	112.0	9.3
2001	49	25	1.9	2,576	181	14.2	11,620	243	47.8	588	96	6.1
2002	23	28	0.8	5,030	223	22.6	8,885	213	41.7	939	93	10.1
2003	4	4	1.0	5,632	214	26.3	7,769	209	37.2	955	105.5	9.1
2004	18	14.17	1.3	3,962	181.83	21.8	8,554	212.9	40.2	1,127	86.58	13.0
2005	33	5.5	6.0	3,129	197.5	15.8	11,829	193.08	61.3	1,610	95.58	16.8
2006	5	5.33	0.9	5,362	222.35	24.1	8,502	211.67	40.2	452	95.17	4.7
2007	6	3	2.0	5,241	202.33	25.9	6,584	201.58	32.7	1,115	100.17	11.1
2008	2	3	0.7	4,401	222.58	19.8	10,624	229.58	46.3	547	96.42	5.7
2009	0	0	0	5,548	225.92	24.6	11,646	204.92	56.8	383	89.42	4.3
2010	3	4.25	0.7	3,925	206.92	19.0	10,736	229.92	46.7	511	77.33	6.6
2011	0	0	0.0	6,389	209.53	30.5	13,667	210.67	64.9	318	75	4.2
2012	5	5.5	0.9	5,849	222	26.3	7,298	207.75	35.1	1,280	53.25	24.0
AVERAGE 2007-2011				5,100.8	213.5	23.9	10,651.4	215.3	49.5	574.8	87.7	6.4
AVERAGE 1981-2011				4,119.6	198.5	20.8	9,185.2	218.6	42.0	1,164.5	118.7	9.8

TABLE 6 - ANNUAL SUMMARIES SINCE 1993

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2007-2011 5-yr Avg	1980-2011 Average
Black Vulture								1				1				1		2	1	**5**	**0.8**	**0.23**
Turkey Vulture	1,853	3,189	2,154	2,963	3,092	3,277	3,384	2,971	3,532	4,065	5,026	4,623	5,158	5,934	5,385	6,107	6,091	6,732	**7,125**	5,986	**6288.0**	**3,152.5**
Osprey	44	69	47	56	28	42	42	46	**71**	48	59	51	47	64	50	52	39	53	41	64	**47.0**	**45.3**
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite		1																			**0.0**	**0.03**
Mississippi Kite					1						1									1	**0.0**	**0.06**
Bald Eagle	15	39	24	33	20	32	30	25	30	54	66	62	71	**85**	54	65	76	64	60	57	**63.8**	**33.9**
Northern Harrier	127	176	177	171	122	85	91	125	108	115	98	**223**	128	96	115	173	121	109	104	83	**124.4**	**143.6**
Sharp-shinned Hawk	3,474	4,851	2,136	3,291	3,048	2,822	2,002	2,467	2,541	3,173	2,350	2,310	1,756	1,753	1,551	2,652	1,721	2,339	*1,700*	1,848	**1992.6**	**3,286.7**
Cooper's Hawk	209	263	256	295	221	179	241	181	169	244	220	252	183	202	207	123	136	125	*101*	145	**138.4**	**202.5**
Northern Goshawk	28	72	15	25	16	14	6	3	14	9	6	11	12	6	8	5	6	8	2	7	**5.8**	**21.4**
Red-shouldered Hawk	1,030	**1,419**	705	706	796	553	675	508	458	566	*455*	524	641	679	641	658	730	513	581	592	**624.6**	**772.4**
Broad-winged Hawk	1,963	2,335	1,779	*1,549*	1,849	3,886	1,833	2,368	5,229	3,668	3,327	2,532	5,537	2,026	2,413	2,971	5,497	2,922	**8,613**	3,473	**4483.2**	**3,760.0**
Swainson's Hawk	2	2		1	2	**3**		1		1						1					**0.2**	**0.52**
Red-tailed Hawk	2,684	2,890	2,861	3,589	2,571	2,159	2,218	2,617	2,351	2,031	2,258	2,513	2,693	3,099	2,209	2,457	2,852	2,156	*1,857*	2,002	**2306.2**	**2,853.6**
Ferruginous Hawk						1				1											**0.0**	**0.10**
Rough-legged Hawk	36	62	87	97	44	33	69	50	74	22	40	**204**	120	100	75	59	92	29	59	35	**62.8**	**78.0**
Golden Eagle	6	10	4	12	6	6	10	13	6	8	8	8	8	13	7	**15**	12	8	8	12	**10.0**	**8.3**
American Kestrel	93	122	70	62	84	77	69	95	77	99	102	87	45	63	77	120	69	55	*44*	55	**73.0**	**99.2**
Merlin	9	**23**	14	22	14	15	10	22	6	19	11	21	15	13	18	10	13	22	17	18	**16.0**	**11.9**
Peregrine Falcon	2	5	1	2	2	4	1	7	3	6	7	5	5	9	2	7	8	**12**	10	5	**7.8**	**4.3**
Gyrfalcon														1							**0.0**	**0.03**
Prairie Falcon			1																		**0.0**	**0.03**
Unid. Raptors	534	442	480	249	190	227	345	165	282	737	327	234	183	178	134	96	114	26	45	44	**83.0**	**500.2**
Total Raptors	12,109	15,970	10,811	13,123	12,106	13,415	11,026	11,665	14,951	14,866	14,361	13,661	16,602	14,321	12,946	15,572	17,577	15,175	**20,368**	14,432	**16327.6**	**14974.9**
Hours Counted	538.50	530.95	555.70	*454.50*	508.40	499.00	502.80	527.40	545.00	556.28	532.00	495.50	495.20	534.50	507.10	552.58	520.25	518.42	495.20	488.5	**518.7**	**558.4**
Birds per Hour	22.5	30.1	19.5	28.9	23.8	26.9	21.9	22.1	27.4	26.7	27.0	27.6	33.5	26.8	25.5	28.2	33.8	29.3	41.1	29.5	**31.6**	**26.8**

Underlined bold values are record high counts for a season since 1975.
Italicized values are record low counts for a season since 1980.



Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Newsletter

February 2013 **Newsletter #46**

WELCOME TO THE 2013 SEASON

Once we get into February I start to look forward to March and the start of the raptor migration. For me it is one of the first signs that warmer weather will come and with it an even broader migration, but for some hawk-watchers the time at Beamer is the highlight of the year's activity until they can see an even larger migration in the fall. The Spring activity at Beamer is also a time to catch up on friends who seem to have disappeared in the cold winter weather.

Whatever your motives are, we hope to see all of you at some time during the coming season, and hope that you will help in some way. We always need people on the morning of March 1 to prepare the site and especially the wind- breaks on the tower – come join us! Cody Law is already busy recruiting counters and we need to overcome the shortage of counters in May. Last year we had some active days, but we probably missed a lot of birds because of days not being covered. May can be the time for unusual birds – remember the Mississippi Kite that showed up on May 15 last year?

Our Annual Open House will be on Friday, March 29 and Tom Thomas is already working to make it an exciting day with live exhibits. There should be good numbers of Turkey Vultures and Red-tailed Hawks, and it is a time of year when there can be an interesting variety. Last year the first Osprey arrived on March 27 so we may be lucky to have one or more. As usual, the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) will be very active in helping us in making the day a success and we thank the staff there for all their cooperation.

The Annual Meeting and Banquet will be earlier this year – Saturday, April 13. In recent years we've had some conflicts with other events and have also found that some are already being lured to Point Pelee by the end of April. We have checked with other naturalists' groups and we think that April 13 will avoid conflicts. We hope to see you there and you can enjoy Stuart Mackenzie, an entertaining and informative speaker.

2013 NPH OPEN HOUSE FRIDAY, MARCH 29

The 2013 Open House will be on Good Friday, March 29 at Beamer. This is a date that should provide a good variety of raptors, and we hope that fine weather will draw large crowds. It will be interesting to see if we get an Osprey, but it may be a bit early. The usual agenda of activities will take place. Mike Street will talk about hawks, and there will be a children's program.

As usual Tom Thomas will have lined up a number of exhibits, and we expect to have raptors on display, because these are always a bit draw. The NPCA, as our partners in this event, will be selling food and beverages. Come out and bring your friends!

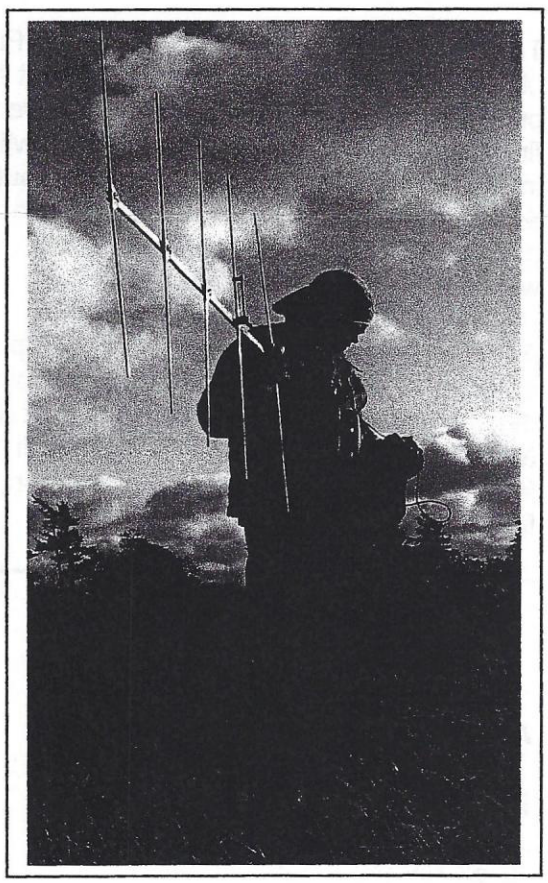
What's inside?

Annual meeting and banquet	**2**
Raptor migration in Egypt	**2**
Book review	**5**
Beamer's best	**6**
Albino Red-tailed Hawk	**6**
NPH executive	**6**
NPH migration calendar	**7**

ANNUAL MEETING AND BANQUET SATURDAY, APRIL 13

The Annual Meeting/ Banquet on Saturday, April 13 will again be held at St Andrew's Church Hall, 7 St Andrew's Avenue, Grimsby. Socializing and the bucket raffle begin at 5:00 p.m., and the pre-supper wine and cheese at 5:15. Dinner will start around 6:15. Donations are still needed for the bucket raffle – please contact a member of the executive if you can make a donation.

Tickets are $30 for members and $40 for non-members. Please contact a member of the NPH executive (see page 6) to obtain tickets.



Our speaker at the 2013 Annual General Meeting and Banquet will be Stuart (Stu) Mackenzie (pictured above in the field), who has been a birder since the age of two, getting much of his early experience at the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch, where he became one of the youngest ever official counters. After completing his undergraduate degree at Guelph and graduate studies at Western, he now coordinates the research, education and training program of the Long Point Bird Observatory (LPBO).

In his presentation Stu will tell us about the work that he and others, both LPBO staff and many volunteers, do while monitoring migrating birds at Long Point. In the fall of 2012 Stuart spoke at the Bird Studies Group meeting in Burlington about his record-breaking big days in both Alberta and Ontario. He spoke with humor and energy, and provided a lot of information in what seemed like a short speech. He is worth the price of admission, so the meal will be a bonus!

RAPTOR MIGRATION IN EGYPT

Sandy Darling

In our last newsletter we had an account of Spring migration in Turkey by Tim Foran. This article is the second in what we hope may be a series. Have you experienced migrations outside Ontario? If so, the editor welcomes submissions so that we might continue this series.

I lived and worked in Egypt from January 1, 2000 to August 31, 2004, and so enjoyed almost fives years of bird-watching there. I first became aware of migration when going to a staff party by the Suez Canal in April 2000. There was a "sphere" of birds moving through the sky – White Storks. About two weeks later I was part of a group that went down the west coast of the Red Sea for the first group sighting in Africa of Hume's Tawny Owl. On our first morning we stopped at 'Ain Sukhna

(Arabic for hot well) and there were all sorts of raptors flying over. I remember Levant Sparrowhawk and Black Stork from that first encounter.

In September 2000 a group went to the city of Suez and in only 40 minutes on the sea front we saw 400 raptors with good variety. Each year thereafter my wife, Jeni, and I spent at least two days in Spring at 'Ain Sukhna, where there is a narrow coastal strip with beach, the road and a small amount of flat ground before the mountains rise up. The raptors soar along the peak of the ridge and are easily visible from below. 'Ain Sukhna is about ninety minutes east of Cairo. An average day in the Spring would bring 7,000 birds spread among up to 15 species. The birds were coming up from East Africa and following the coastal ridge – many more were probably traveling inland from where we watched. Dr Tom Coles was there most weekends and carried out a one-man count for many years. We met at Fawzie's store and sat in the shade of an open gazebo with Tom's display boards of all the birds one might see. Fawzie was always happy to see us, and he even stored a dead bird in his freezer for a birder to take home at the end of the day.

The most common species was the **"Steppe Buzzard"**, a ruddy form of the Common Buzzard that ends up in Russia. In 1982 over 80,000 were counted between February 15 and May 15. Less common was the **Long-legged Buzzard** – from underneath the head, chest, and flight feathers are much lighter, and there is a prominent black carpal patch. In our four years at 'Ain Sukhna we never saw a **European Honey Buzzard**, but we saw hundreds on 28 April, 2000 on the west coast of the Sinaii Peninsula north of Sharm el Sheikh. As we drove birds flew over us at about 15 feet, and to our east we could see birds kettling (up to 50 in one kettle) to gain height as they approached the mountains. The Honey Buzzards fly across the Red Sea and then drop to ground to recover, so the birds over the car had just taken off from resting. It is a spectacle that we shall never forget.

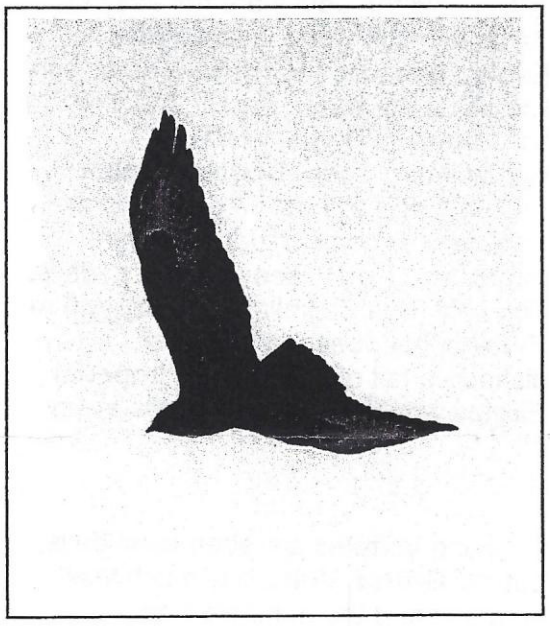
The eagles seen most days were the **Steppe Eagle** (almost 16,000 in 1982) and **Lesser Spotted Eagle** (10,000 in 1981), and the adults are not easy to separate. I liked the juvenile Steppe Eagles, because they have a broad light line along the wing. Rarely, there would be a **Spotted Eagle**, which is significantly larger. **Booted Eagles** (457 in 1982) are not so common, are smaller, and come in dark and light forms, but one will see them most days. The light form is similar to the **Egyptian Vulture**, but does not have the distinctive tail of the vulture. **Imperial Eagles** would show up perhaps every other day and were distinctive, because of the very light head.

Egyptian Vultures are seen most days, but the **Griffon Vulture** is much less common and the numbers have declined significantly in recent decades. Both birds are quite easy to identify, but the most distinctive, and fairly common, species is the **Short-toed Eagle**, which is like a very light, paper kite just hanging in the sky.

Four types of **harrier** were possible (**Marsh, Hen/ Northern, Pallid and Montagu's**) and they tended to fly below the ridge. Tom always said that I was the one to find them - probably because he was so busy counting the birds above the ridge. Numbers were few and I recollect only Pallid and Montagu's.

The most common accipiter was the **Levant's Sparrowhawk**, which is very

light underneath with black tips to the wings. **European Sparrowhawks** were around in winter, but they did not feature much in migrations. Falcons were not prominent in migration, but I did see **Lesser Kestrel**, and **Red-footed** and **Eleonora's Falcon** at 'Ain Sukhna. **Peregrine, Lanner and Sooty Falcons** were all resident in Egypt and are not too hard to see in the right place.



Steppe Buzzard *© Alexander Darling*

Resident kites are the **Black and Black-shouldered Kites**. Black Kites could be found in numbers close to slaughter houses, and the Black-shouldered (similar to White-tailed) can be found in the Nile Valley.

Some of the memorable sightings were of storks and pelicans. **Black Storks** rarely fly in groups of more than three. **White Storks** are like a sphere moving through the sky with birds higgledy-piggledy within the sphere. **White Pelicans** fly in nice neat lines. We saw White Pelicans only once at 'Ain Sukhna on our most memorable day. We had just bought binoculars for our driver who had good eyes and a developing interest in birds. On this day we started to encounter raptors well before 'Ain Sukhna, and just north of 'Ain Sukhna, there had been a fall-out of eagles on the ground by the road. At 'Ain Sukhna there were birds flying everywhere. We had a flock of 48 Black Storks and we had never seen more than 3 in a group before. After a busy morning we went about 2 kilometers down the road for lunch. As we looked at the mountain flocks of White Storks and White Pelicans streamed north for 15 minutes. I have one photo with over 500 pelicans in the shot.

As we went home later we encountered more storks and estimated that we saw at least 7,000 White Storks in the day. Often they cross the Gulf of Suez and go up the Sinai coast – there is a record of 100,000 one August and 73,000 at Aswan in 1982. Pelicans also normally cross to Sinai, but we must have hit a day with unusual wind conditions so they all stayed on the west side of the Red Sea. We must have had 20,000 or 30,000. The raptor count must also have been about 25,000 whereas 7,000 would be a normal day. We had to tell our driver that he would probably never see such a spectacle again.

There were pleasant aspects of our trips to the Red Sea. We saw a lot of other migrants on the way, and did not face the cold of Beamer in early March. Sometimes we could watch dolphins come close to shore, and we would also hear the fluting calls of the European Bee-eater – one of the most beautiful birds to be seen.

Reference: Steven M. Goodman & Peter L. Meininger *The Birds of Egypt* Oxford University Press 1989

BOOK REVIEW

Laura Erickson (illustrations: Betsy Bowen) *Hawk Ridge: Minnesota's Birds of Prey* (2012) University of Minnesota Press, 91 pp. (Full-page paintings of each species and line drawings of silhouettes of the birds are included in the text. US $24.95 (hard cover).)

This attractively-designed book uses a landscape format that is good for presenting the paintings of the birds, many of which are portrayed in flight. The text is presented in two columns and is easy on the eye for reading. The book is suitable for those who are novices or are developing an interest in raptors, and for those who wish to have a souvenir of time spent at Hawk Ridge.

Each fall close to 20,000 people go to Hawk Ridge outside Duluth to watch thousands of birds making their way around the end of Lake Superior. The introduction describes how the hawk-watching site was developed and the way in which weather affects migration. It then presents the challenges of how to count large flights, banding activity at Hawk Ridge, the timing of migration for different species and the difference between the spring and fall migrations.

Subsequent sections present information about the species within groupings of vultures, ospreys, eagles, harriers and kites, accipiters, buteos and falcons. Three to five pages are devoted to the common species, and fewer to the rarities. For each bird the text is supplemented with a line-drawing of the silhouette of the bird in flight and a full-page painting. The description ends with summary data about seasonal and peak counts for day and season, earliest and latest dates of sighting, and the peak period for migration.

The text is well written and presents interesting information that one would not find in a field guide. It is both current, as in the discussion about placement of Turkey Vultures in a family, and accurate. One can learn about diet, including why the Turkey Vulture is not poisoned by its food, how they obtain their food and voice. There is good information for new hawk-watchers on how to recognize birds in flight and their behavior. For example, in writing about accipiters the author describes the flight pattern, and the difference between the "t" shape of a Sharp-shin and the "flying cross" of a Cooper's. One can learn about incubation habits, migration patterns and other information that should whet the interest of potentially new hawk-watchers.

The paintings and line drawings, however, do not live up to the quality of the text. In correspondence the publisher's representative said, "The images lean more toward whimsy." They are colorful and attractive, but, unfortunately, inaccurate in a number of ways. Although this is not intended to be a book one takes in the field, it should show the main features so that one might have a chance of recognizing the bird. The painting of the Sharp-shinned Hawk, for example, has a fairly plain underside, and not the light orange or brown streaking that one might expect, and the tail has only a hint of bars. A number of the paintings suffer in this way, but some like the Rough-legged and Red-shouldered Hawks are attractively portrayed and are reasonable accurate.

Including line drawings of silhouettes is an excellent idea, and generally they are good, but there are opportunities for improvement. In the case of the Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks, the different shapes of the leading edge of the wings are shown, but the head sizes are essentially the same. The Cooper's has a significantly larger head in proportion to body length and is something to pay attention to. Similarly, there is little difference in the head sizes of the Bald and Golden Eagles in the line drawings, although the large head of a Bald Eagle is a prominent feature to look for in large, dark raptors.

Overall the book is attractive, has excellent text, and has colorful, artistic paintings. The deficiencies in the artwork, however, will be a concern to experienced birders and those who like the accuracy of field guides. Readers may want to consider this as a gift to those who are showing an interest in watching hawks.

BEAMER'S BEST

John Stevens

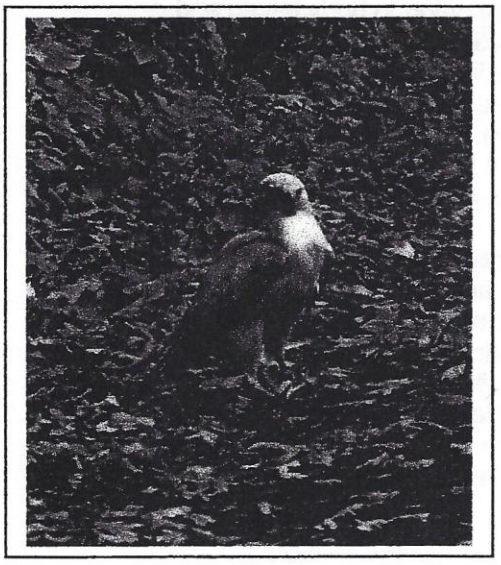
The following chart provides the record high counts for each species made at the Beamer Memorial Conservation Area watch site since counting started in 1975.

The oldest record is the one day total for Sharpies set in 1976.

Species	Best Day	Best Month	Best Year
Black Vulture	2 – 2012/03/22	3 – Apr 2012	5 – 2012
Turkey Vulture	2,021 – 2009/04/02	4,704 – Mar 2011	7,125 – 2011
Osprey	16 – 1992/04/12	67 – Apr 2001	71 – 2001
Bald Eagle	19 – 2003/03/24	68 – Mar 2006	85 – 2006
Northern Harrier	35 – 1996/04/18	147 – Apr 1991	223 – 2004
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1,556 – 1976/04/18	5,698 – Apr 1990	7,004 – 1990
Cooper's Hawk	50 – 1993/04/05	204 – Apr 1990	311 – 1990
Goshawk	11 – 1984/03/24	41 – Apr 1994	73 – 1983
Red-shouldered Hawk	655 – 1994/03/23	1,246 – Mar 1994	1,419 – 1994
Broad-winged Hawk	6,007 – 1985/04/21	8,598 – Apr 2011	8,613 – 2011
Swainson's Hawk	2 – 1997/05/02	3 – Apr 1998	3 – 1998
Red-tailed Hawk	744 – 1996/03/16	2,455 – Mar 1985	3,861 – 1992
Rough-legged Hawk	46 – 2004/03/29	110 – Apr 2004	204 – 2004
Golden Eagle	8 – 2009/04/02	9 – Apr 2006	15 – 2008
American Kestrel	44 – 1990/03/14	99 – Apr '90 & '91	207 – 1990
Merlin	6 – 1996/04/25	20 – Apr 1994	23 – 1994
Peregrine Falcon	2 – 2003/03/01	7 – Mar 2010	12 – 2010

Albino Red-tailed Hawk

Photograph Ester M.R. Hougham
Sulphur Springs, Pelham (2012-10-18)



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NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH CALENDAR FOR BEAMER MEMORIAL CONSERVATION AREA

NOTES:

1. Species initials and Right (>) or Left (<) arrow:
   This combination indicates the start (>) or end (<) of the normal migration period at Beamer for that species. The same in bold type indicates the start or end of a noticeable period for that species. The box in which this combination is located indicates the day and month the period is likely to start or end.
2. A number followed by species initial, followed by a slash (/) and a two-digit number:
   In this combination the largest number of that species ever seen in one day is given first, and the year it occurred second. The box where the combination is located indicates the day and month of the event. Example: 655 RS/94 in March 23 indicates that the highest number of Red-shouldered Hawks recorded in one day occurred on March 23, 1994.

TV – Turkey Vulture
BV – Black Vulture
OS – Osprey
SK – Swallow-tailed Kite
MK – Mississippi Kite
BE – Bald Eagle
GE - Golden Eagle
NH – Northern Harrier
SS – Sharp-shinned Hawk
CH – Cooper's Hawk
NG – Northern Goshawk
RS – Red-shouldered Hawk
RT – Red-tailed Hawk
SW – Swainson's Hawk
RL – Rough-legged Hawk
FH – Ferruginous Hawk
AK – American Kestrel
ML – Merlin
PF – Peregrine Falcon
PR – Prairie Falcon
GY – Gyrfalcon
BW – Broad-winged Hawk

The following information, based on 38 years of data, shows significant events up to January 2013.

The largest number of raptors in a season was 20,368 in 2011.

BE>, NH>, SS>, CH>, RT>, RL>, AK> begin about February 20.

MARCH

1 **RT>** **NG>** TV>	2 GE>	3 RS>	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11 **RL>**	12 **AK>**	13 **CH>** **RS>**	14 **44 AK/90**
15 **TV>** BV>	16 **744 RT/96**	17 **1 GY/06**	18 **BE>**	19	20 ML> **PF>**	21
22 **2 BV/12**	23 **NH>** **655 RS/94**	24 **11 NG/84** **19 BE/03**	25	26 **SS>**	27	28
29 **46 RL/04**	30	31 OS>				

Largest count for month: 6,389 in 2011; largest count in one day: 2,080 March 26, 1988

APRIL

1	2 **7 GE/09** **2,021 TV/09**	3	4	5 **50 CH/93**	6	7
8 **OS>** **<RS**	9	10 BW>	11	12 **16 OS/92**	13 **1 FH/92**	14
15 **BW>** SW> **1 SK/94**	16 **<BE**	17	18 **35 NH/96** **1,556 SS/76**	19 **1 PF/95****	20 **1 GY/77**	21 **6,007 BW/85**
22	23 **1 FH/98***	24 **<OS** **1 FH/02***	25 **<TV** **6 ML/96**	26	27 **3 PF/10**	28 <BV
29 **2 SW/98***	30 **<RL** **<CH**					

Largest count for month: 15,012 in 1984; largest count in one day: 7,007 April 21, 1985

MAY

1	2 **2 SW/97***	3	4 **<RT**	5 <SW	6 <PF	7
8	9	10	11 **1 MK/97***	12 **<NH** **<AK**	13 <CH <BE	14 **<SS** **1 MK/03***
15 **<BW** <RL <ML **1 MK/12**	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31 <TV<NH <SS<OS <NG<RS <AK<GE	*BW & RT continue after May 31*			

Largest count for month: 2,685 in 1980: largest count in one day 1,492 May 4, 1989

* Sighting not reviewed/ accepted by Ontario Bird Records Committee

** First accepted Prairie Falcon record in Ontario

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch

Newsletter

August 2013 **Newsletter #47**

LOOKING BACK AND LOOKING FORWARD

Sandy Darling

The August newsletter each year carries the statistics for the spring migration, and this year's report features a litany of low numbers, which for a number of species were at an all-time low. John Stevens' report, as usual, is thorough and I found the weather data to be quite different from my impressions gained from standing at the top of the tower. The extremely low count cannot be attributed to unusually low coverage – only four days were missed and the executive wishes to thank all those who put in long days and sometimes put up with poor weather. It will be interesting to see what the experience will be this fall at Hawk Cliff.

In the past two newsletters we have carried articles about two other hawk-watch sites – one on the Bosporus and one in Egypt. We are continuing the series in this edition with a description by David Brown of the excitement one can have at Hawk Cliff on Lake Erie. If you feel cheated by the low counts of this past spring, you may want to drive down the 401 to the shores of Lake Erie this fall.

Many of us for years have come to rely on the classic book *Hawks in Flight.* It is the book that I used when I first started going to Beamer, and I look back at it before each spring season. The good news is that there is a new, updated and expanded second edition. The new edition is truly excellent, and this newsletter carries a review by Mike Street. I have read most of the book and thoroughly endorse Mike's opinions. The book is a "must buy".

This year we moved the annual meeting and banquet earlier by two weeks, because by late April some birders are heading off to seek migrating passerines. Our speaker was Stu Mackenzie of the Long Point Bird Observatory, who learned some of his skills at Beamer. As usual Stu was both entertaining and informative. With the change in date we experienced an increase in attendance, and so we shall take this into account in setting next year's date. We plan to have the 2014 banquet at St Andrew's Church in Grimsby, but the date has not yet been set.

As usual Tom Thomas organized an enjoyable Open House that attracted good crowds. Each year Tom frets about what the weather will be and whether there will be any birds. Next year the Open House will be on **Friday April 18**, so we should not have cold weather. If all goes well we shall have light clouds and lots of Broad-winged Hawks.



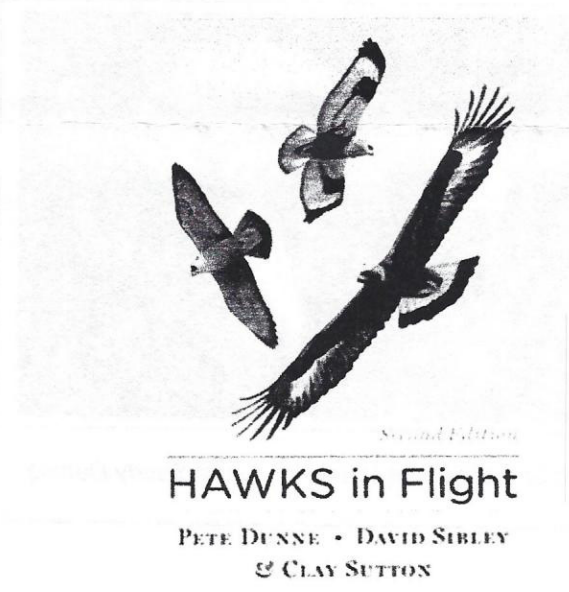
Bald Eagle at 2013 Open House *© Sandy Darling*

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We introduced one special event this past season as part of an effort to build for the future. The Hamilton area has a number of very talented and active young birdwatchers, and so we set up a special day for them to come to Beamer. Phil Waggett, the counter for the day and a teacher, was immediately enthusiastic and helped our visitors appreciate the finer points of hawk-watching. All of us who count welcome young eyes around us to spot some of those high and distant birds, and we need to continue to develop the next generation. We hope to continue this initiative in the year ahead.

Finally, on behalf of the Executive I wish to extend thanks to all, who in any way have helped over the past year. Like any volunteer organization we depend on people who are willing to donate primarily time and talent to make sure that the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch continues to be strong. We have one of the longest continuous data sets available in North America and we should strive to make sure that it goes longer into the future.



Pete Dunne, David Sibley, and Clay Sutton *Hawks in Flight: The Flight Identification of North American Raptors* (Second edition) Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Company, September 2012. ix, 335 pp.
ISBN-13: 9780395709597
Hardcover: C$26.95-29.95 in stores (less on-line but shipping extra).

Mike Street

Why it took 24 years for the First Edition of *Hawks in Flight* to be revised is not known. What is clear is that the second edition is a massive upgrade. In addition to modifications to the text reflecting changes and improvements in hawk identification knowledge in that period, this edition includes a huge selection of terrific colour photos of raptors of all ages and sizes in various plumages and flight attitudes. Another addition is species descriptions for North American raptors that are found only in relatively small regions and/or are not migratory. In a nutshell, for this observer at least, WOW! Every hawkwatcher, whether a veteran of 30 or 40 years or a newcomer to the hobby, should buy a copy of this book and use it.

The book has chapters on each of the major families or groups – buteos, accipiters, falcons, eagles and vultures, etc. The following description of the buteo family chapter applies equally to the others. The chapter starts off with a description of the migration patterns and basic identification of buteos, common features of the generic buteo, and then detailed descriptions of the identification features of the individual species in the family or group, from the Red-tailed Hawk through Broad-wings to the Ferruginous Hawk. Differences between sub-species are also covered. For each buteo species there are both black and white drawings and coloured photographs. Information needed to separate buteos from similar looking birds of other families (e.g. accipiters) is found in the individual species sections. The last part of the chapter, called "Putting It Together: Telling Buteos Apart", does just that, providing a concise set of details to be used to separate birds of the same family in the field.

The amount of detail in each chapter is extensive. While plumage characteristics are covered, the emphasis is on what can be seen from a distance, not on feather patterns that can be seen close up. (Anyone who has spent time at a hawkwatch knows how often lighting conditions make it impossible to see the plumage of a distant bird.) The main focus is on the shapes and movements of individual species as they travel though the air in the various flight attitudes – soaring, gliding and flying, of course, but also hovering and kiting if applicable. Many of the key identification points in the text are repeated in the captions of the illustrations and photos, not only to reiterate the point being made but also to literally illustrate it. A picture can be worth a thousand words! The line drawings and photos themselves were also created or chosen to illustrate shape and motion details. While there are no images of perched birds, most of the photos and

almost all of the line drawings show flying birds close up so details are easily seen. In fact, it is sometimes necessary to hold the book a bit away to grasp the distance or type of flight aspect of the drawing or photo being reviewed.

Make no mistake – this is not a book to be read; it is a book to be studied – but all the necessary information is there. Experienced hawkwatchers can benefit from reviewing the text to see how identification points have stayed the same, or shifted somewhat as hawkwatching has matured. Newcomers to hawkwatching will find it all a bit daunting, but will be rewarded if they make the effort. For them the best method is probably to focus on a single family, the buteos for instance, read the chapter and pertinent species sections several times during the period when that species is approaching its peak seasonal numbers, then get out to the hawkwatch to put the new knowledge to use. Hawkwatching is not rocket science, it is experience, and this is the best way to make use of *Hawks in Flight*.

A RIVER OF HAWKS AT THE HAWK CLIFF HAWKWATCH

David Brown

In the last two newsletters, we have featured articles about other hawkwatches, and we are pleased that David Brown responded to a request that he write about Hawk Cliff on the north shore of Lake Erie close to Port Stanley.

It's a typical September day; cool with gusty northwest winds and broken cloud obscuring the sun. As you drive down the road you spot a few vehicles pulled off on the shoulder. Coming closer you realize there's a group of individuals at the edge of a field, some standing and others sitting in lawn chairs. They're all looking eastward with faces upturned to the sky. And you ask yourself…What on earth are they up to? Don't they realize it's a tad chilly to be out sunning themselves?

Curious, you pull off onto the shoulder and hop out. Approaching the group you hear "I've got two TVs over the bush a couple of Ks at the cliff" and then a more excited voice exclaims "There's a huge kettle in the gap!" TVs and kettles…is this some new language involving household appliances? Seeing an individual in a chair recording numbers you politely inquire as to the purpose. You're told that they're recording the number of hawks moving through the area. "Ah" you say, pretending to understand. Looking skyward you don't see a single bird. Hmm…perhaps they've been sitting in the cold too long.

Then the question comes…"Ever seen a kettle of hawks before?" You turn to the questioner and see that he's standing next to what looks like a space age ray gun on a tripod. "It's a spotting scope" he says and invites you to have a look. Putting your eye to the eyepiece you realize there's something there and as you focus the target is suddenly clear; a swirling mass of hawks like a giant tornado slowly rising on the warm air of a thermal. But this is not just ten or twenty or even a hundred birds. There must be at least a thousand!

"About 2500 in that kettle alone, almost all Broad-wings." says scope guy, smiling. "Right now we're counting roughly 500 hawks a minute crossing the count area".

Sure enough, now that you know what you're looking for you can see them. It's like a river of hawks, stretching from a point in the clouds to the east to the haze in the west. Before the day is done the counters will have tallied nearly 120,000 raptors of some dozen different species! This is hawk watching at its best and it's the latest passion (or as my wife would say "addiction"!) for many birders across the continent.

Hawk Cliff is a well-known fall hawkwatch located just east of Port Stanley, Ontario. The main site is perched just back from steep sand cliffs that drop over 30 metres to Lake Erie below. The site is located in a unique location with the bulk of southward bound migrants being funneled between Lake Huron and Lake Ontario and Lake Erie. With the right winds (the best are from the NW or NE) these birds are pushed all the way down to the shore of Lake Erie and pass directly over the hawkwatch as they're forced to turn south-westward rather than try to cross the lake.

Hawkwatching at Hawk Cliff involves the observation of the group of birds known as raptors…and the best part is that you can sit yourself in a lawn chair facing east and the birds come to you! The typical raptors observed at Hawk Cliff include various hawk species (Red-tailed, Red-shouldered, Broad-winged, Rough-legged, Northern Goshawk, Cooper's, Sharp-shinned)

along with Northern Harriers, eagles (Bald and Golden), falcons (Peregrine, Merlin and American Kestrel) and Osprey. We also tally vultures (mostly Turkey Vultures...though a few Black Vultures appear to be making inroads in Ontario). Every year in the fall these birds start the long migration southward to warmer climes in the U.S....and even on to parts of Central and South America.

The Hawk Cliff hawkwatch is supported by a group of dedicated volunteer birders whose primary purpose is monitoring raptors migrating westward along the north shore of Lake Erie. The numbers they collect are submitted to an on-line database managed by HMAN - the Hawk Migration Association of North America which collects counts from well over 200 other hawkwatch sites across Canada and the U.S. This data are used to measure raptor population trends and such counts have been going on at Hawk Cliff for decades. The volunteers at Hawk Cliff also take time to educate the many visitors to the site, helping them spot and identify the various species passing by the count area.

So what exactly is the big attraction of hawkwatching? Well, I'm sure every birder out there has their own set of reasons but what follows here are some of mine.

Firstly, for those dedicated to the various hawkwatches across the continent, their countless hours of observation and recording of data are helping to make a difference in understanding the modern impacts on raptor populations. There are still several raptor species that appear to be on the decline and the sooner we learn what's happening to them the sooner we can develop plans to reverse the negative population trends.

Second is the social aspect. Birders in general are a very friendly bunch and hanging out at your favourite hawkwatch for the day with friends old and new can be a very enriching experience. While working the Hawk Cliff hawkwatch I've met people from all over Canada and the U.S. and even parts of Europe.

One of the more rewarding reasons is the opportunity to pass along knowledge to the youngsters who'll be our future birders, naturalists and environmentalists. It's something special to see a child's face light up as they get a close look at a hawk zipping right overhead (we actually had one young scout who nearly lost his hat to a Sharp-shinned Hawk!).

And lastly, but certainly not least is the sheer enjoyment I find in watching these incredible creatures. To see a majestic Bald Eagle with wings stretching nearly 8 feet from wingtip to wingtip as it cruises past along the cliff or the mastery and power of a Peregrine Falcon as it dances on the wind pushing up the cliff face is totally awe inspiring. It reminds me of just how little we as humans actually know about flying.

If you're interested in trying some hawkwatching at Hawk Cliff please visit our website for more information.
http://www.ezlink.ca/~thebrowns/HawkCliff/



Barn Owl at Open House *© Sandy Darling*

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2013 MIGRATION SUMMARY

John Stevens

The last couple of seasons at Beamer, we have been able to celebrate the apparent arrival of Black Vultures as our sixteenth regular species (2012) and a record count of migrants (2011). In 2013 by contrast, it is going to be difficult to find much to celebrate at all. The final tally showed 12,209 birds of fifteen species, the lowest total since the 11,665 birds in 2000 and 16% below the long term (32-year) average (see Table 1). However that really doesn't reflect how poor the count was this year.

For the first time, and hopefully the last, Turkey Vultures constituted more than half of the birds counted. Their numbers were consistent with what we've seen the last several years. As a result, with the low total count, the number of non-vulture migrants at 5,511 was just 48.5% of the long term average. This is by far the lowest count of non-vulture raptors in the history of this watch site. The previous record low was set in 2007 when 7,561 birds represented 66.5% of the long term average. Clearly, this was a dreadful migration at our watch.

Often it is possible to reconcile poor counts with adverse local weather conditions. Too much precipitation, adverse winds, unusually low temperatures, etc. can often be used to explain why counts were low. None of this is possible for 2013. Furthermore, if the weather were to blame, how come the Turkey Vulture count appeared to be unaffected?

Another possible explanation is inadequate coverage but as can be seen on Table 1, the number of hours was consistent with the last couple of years albeit slightly below the 5-year and long term averages. There were four days when we didn't have a counter but two of these were at the beginning of March when not many birds are moving and the other two were late in the season, one on a cool day with some rain. Certainly a lack of coverage cannot account for the low total count.

Let's examine the year in more detail. Daily counts are provided on Tables 2-4 and the monthly totals are compared with previous seasons on Table 5.

The Season

Hawk watchers might be surprised to learn that the average mean temperature in March 2013 was more than a degree above normal. This despite the fact that on only two days did the temperature exceed 13ºC and even then just by about three degrees. The reason was that there were no very cold nights, -8.1º C was the lowest, and so the mean temperatures were normal. Precipitation, by contrast, was only 31% of normal. Two days had quite short count times and several days were slightly shortened, either to begin or by late onset of rain. Generally though the March weather was pretty fair and the monthly count was close to the long term average (Table 5).

April mean temperatures were normal on average but precipitation was well above normal (154%). It was almost all rain and much of it came between April 8 and April 12 including three straight days with over 20 mm each. All this precipitation resulted in somewhat lower hours of coverage than we usually have in our prime month (Table 5) as three days were wiped out completely and two others had severely curtailed observation periods. The number of birds counted was about 1,500 below the long term average for April but more than 3,000 below the recent 5-year average.

The first ten days in May were very pleasant and we had good coverage but the migration was almost non-existent. Then it turned quite cool for a few days with some rain and even snow on the 12th. Just as the season ended, it warmed markedly and the migration picked up a bit but the monthly count of 375 was well below the long term and recent 5-year averages of 1,168 and 608, respectively.

Only April 5th had a count of more than a thousand birds when a good flight of Turkey Vultures passed. April 15th had the best variety with 13 species and included a good count of 22 American Kestrels. The previous day there had been 12 Ospreys. Neither of these counts is a daily record for the species at Beamer but still nice to see.

Species Accounts

Black Vulture: While no BV show on the migration charts, they were seen at Beamer again this year. On April 23rd a group of four were seen heading west in the morning and then, presumably, the

same four went back east three and a half hours later. Although not everyone agrees, it is our policy to count only net birds passing the watch site as a means of avoiding continuous counting of resident birds. While these birds are not residing near Beamer, they were possibly from the group that reside in Lewiston NY, about 45 km to the east.

Turkey Vulture: The 6,698 TVs represent the third highest total for the species and an 11% increase over 2012, one of only three species to increase in 2013. This year they constituted 55% of the raptors counted and when one considers how much activity there is by the local birds, they have truly become our dominant species.

Osprey: While down almost 20% from 2012, the count of 52 was still slightly greater than both the recent 5-year and long term averages. A record early date for Osprey was set on March 13th when Sandra Horvath had one pass between snow squalls. This bird was a full week earlier than the previous record set on March 20, 2000 and only the second one to be seen before March 26. In the early years of the watch, Ospreys were not seen in March at all.

Bald Eagle: The Bald Eagle count was close to the recent 5-year average and almost double the long term average. I suspect that one or other of the local breeding pair may have been counted on more than one occasion so that the 2013 total may be slightly greater than it should be.

Northern Harrier: The 77 Northern Harriers recorded in 2013 represents the second lowest count for the species in the history of the watch. Only the 72 birds recorded in 1980, the first year of full season coverage, was lower. In the five years since the count of 173 in 2008, the counts have declined each year. While very worrying, the historical pattern for this species is a series of increases and decreases and in fact the record high count occurred as recently as 2004.

Sharp-shinned Hawk: The 1,335 sharpies seen this year is more than 200 below the previous low count for the species and is only 19% of the maximum count of 7,004 in 1994. In the early days of the watch site, this was our most commonly seen species and in fact the sum total of sharpies since 1975 still ranks it as our second most numerous (after Broad-winged Hawks). There may be many possible explanations for this kind of decline but I wonder if it doesn't reflect an overall decline in small bird populations in the woods. RPI analysis of the trend for the species has indicated a significant decline in their counts over the years and this year's count will only augment that finding.

Cooper's Hawk: For Cooper's Hawks one has to go back to 1979 when we did not have daily counters to find a year with so few as we had in 2013. The 86 birds recorded this year probably also include some counting of one of the resident birds, which on this observer's count days seemed to be particularly active. It is possible that there were two pairs within the vicinity of Beamer this year since on occasion there were three local birds in view. Certainly it was unlikely to have been counter bias calling possible Cooper's Hawks as sharpies that caused the low total of Coops since the sharpies total was also very low. The total of 86 birds represents only 44% of the long term average for this species.

Northern Goshawk: The five goshawks seen this year is characteristic of recent non-irruption years for this species at Beamer, being near the recent 5-year average and well below the long term average of 20 that is much greater because of large irruption year flights. We are due for an irruption year, however, and typically there is an increase in the number of migrants the year or two prior to the peak. This didn't happen in 2013 so we are still waiting.

Red-shouldered Hawk: Our signature species also set a record this year. The 437 birds counted was the lowest ever at Beamer, worse than the 455 in 2003. This is 71% of the recent 5-year average and only 60% of the long term average. Compared to many of the other species this year, this was a relatively good showing if a record low count can ever be considered good.

Broad-winged Hawk: Whereas two years ago we had a record high count this year we reached the nadir of a record low total. The 1,484 broad-wings seen was below the previous record of 1,549 set in 1996. Even on a day like April 28th during prime time for this species and with favourable southeasterly winds, only 155 BWs were seen and most of these were well to the south of the tower. By comparison, the watch site near Rochester, NY had their best BW count of the season, over 6,000 birds that day.

Red-tailed Hawk: Another record low seasonal count with only 1,750 birds, breaking the previous record of 1,857 set just two years ago. This is another species whose counts are likely slightly inflated as a result of the activity of the resident birds. Two pairs were regularly seen from the tower, one along the escarpment edge and the other, including a bird with a damaged leg that hangs slightly when it flies, to the south of the falls. This has likely been true historically as well but reducing the count totals by a hundred or so birds each year would only increase the 36% decline from the long term average registered by this year's total.

Rough-legged Hawk: The count of 38 birds seen this year was actually slightly more than last year. Counts for rough-legs are somewhat irregular because their migrations are more dependent on prey availability rather than seasonality than many other raptors. There have only been six years with counts below this year's total so it was still one of our poorer years for this species too.

Golden Eagle: It was an average year for Golden Eagles at Beamer although the eight birds seen were below the recent 5-year average of 11.

American Kestrel: Perhaps the one bright spot in an otherwise dismal year was the fact that the kestrel count was the greatest since 2008 and about equal to the long term average at Beamer. The total of 92 birds was above the recent 5-year average of 69, an encouraging sign for this species. Of all the raptors that we see regularly at Beamer, American Kestrel is the one that RPI studies suggest has suffered the greatest population decline. For us to have an average year is good news.

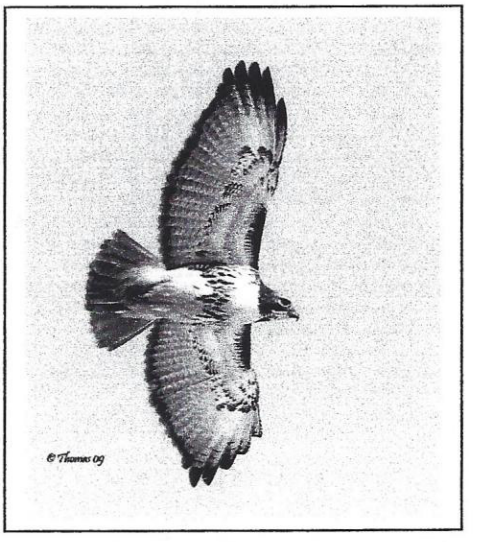
Merlin: This was another species seen in average numbers in 2013 although the total of 12 birds is below the recent 5-year average of 16 and the lowest total since 2008.

Peregrine: Completing a sweep of average years for the falcons, the five Peregrines in 2013 were actually slightly more than the long term average of 4, albeit below the recent 5-year average of 8. It is questionable how many of these sightings actually represent migrating birds. The species is nesting both east and west of Beamer and the birds we see of this species are often moving in directions other than the east to west migratory direction for most birds.

No rare species were recorded this year.

Summarizing the species counts, we see that the larger birds (Turkey Vultures, Bald and Golden Eagles and Osprey) were at or above their short term and/or long term averages and the falcons, as mentioned, were near their long term averages. The Northern Harrier and all the buteos and accipiters set record low counts in 2013, except for the two species, Rough-legged Hawk and Northern Goshawk, with irregular migration behaviour. That's six species setting new lows in one year, the kind of record more typical of the second year of a watch than the 34th year.

As usual our thanks go to the counters and assistants who volunteer their time and suffer whatever weather and flights they have on their assigned days. "Official" counters in 2013 were: John Barker, Bouwe Bergsma, John Black, Ed Couture, Sandy Darling, Tim Foran, George Holland, Sandra Horvath, Marcie Jacklin, Gord Kozak, Matt Mills, Brian Mishell, John Stevens, Mike Street, Tom Thomas, Phil Waggett, and Rob Waldhuber.



Red-tailed Hawk *© Tom Thomas*

TABLE 1 - Annual Summaries 1994-2013

SPECIES	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2008-2012 5-yr Avg	1980-2012 Average
Black Vulture							1				1				1		2	1	**5**		**1.80**	**0.36**
Turkey Vulture	3189	2154	2963	3092	3277	3384	2971	3532	4065	5026	4623	5158	5934	5385	6107	6091	6732	**7,125**	5,986	6,698	**6408.20**	**3142.88**
Osprey	69	47	56	28	42	42	46	**71**	48	59	51	47	64	50	52	39	53	41	64	52	**49.80**	**44.48**
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite	1																				**0.00**	**0.03**
Mississippi Kite				1						1									1		**0.20**	**0.09**
Bald Eagle	39	24	33	20	32	30	25	30	54	66	62	71	**85**	54	65	76	64	60	57	62	**64.40**	**33.58**
Northern Harrier	176	177	171	122	85	91	125	108	115	98	**223**	128	96	115	173	121	109	104	83	*77*	**118.00**	**137.42**
Sharp-shinned Hawk	4851	2136	3291	3048	2822	2002	2467	2541	3173	2350	2310	1756	1753	1551	2652	1721	2339	1,700	1,848	*1,335*	**2052.00**	**3143.55**
Cooper's Hawk	263	256	295	221	179	241	181	169	244	220	252	183	202	207	123	136	125	101	145	*86*	**126.00**	**194.67**
Northern Goshawk	72	15	25	16	14	6	3	14	9	6	11	12	6	8	5	6	8	2	7	5	**5.60**	**20.33**
Red-shouldered Hawk	**1419**	705	706	796	553	675	508	458	566	455	524	641	679	641	658	730	513	581	592	*437*	**614.80**	**743.55**
Broad-winged Hawk	2335	1779		1849	3886	1833	2368	5229	3668	3327	2532	5537	2026	2413	2971	5497	2922	**8,613**	3,473	*1,484*	**4695.20**	**3590.42**
Swainson's Hawk	2		1	2	**3**		1		1						1						**0.20**	**0.48**
Red-tailed Hawk	2890	2861	3589	2571	2159	2218	2617	2351	2031	2258	2513	2693	3099	2209	2457	2852	2156	1,857	2,002	*1,750*	**2264.80**	**2741.30**
Ferruginous Hawk					1				1												**0.00**	**0.09**
Rough-legged Hawk	62	87	97	44	33	69	50	74	22	40	**204**	120	100	75	59	92	29	59	35	38	**54.80**	**74.30**
Golden Eagle	10	4	12	6	6	10	13	6	8	8	8	8	13	7	**15**	12	8	8	12	8	**11.00**	**8.18**
American Kestrel	122	70	62	84	77	69	95	77	99	102	87	45	63	77	120	69	55	44	55	92	**68.60**	**94.82**
Merlin	**23**	14	22	14	15	10	22	6	19	11	21	15	13	18	10	13	22	17	18	12	**16.00**	**11.76**
Peregrine Falcon	5	1	2	2	4	1	7	3	6	7	5	5	9	2	7	8	**12**	10	5	5	**8.40**	**4.15**
Gyrfalcon													1								**0.00**	**0.03**
Prairie Falcon		1																			**0.00**	**0.03**
Unid. Raptors	442	480	249	190	227	345	165	282	737	327	234	183	178	134	96	114	26	45	44	68	**65.00**	**471.24**
Total Raptors	15970	10811	11574	12106	13415	11026	11665	14951	14866	14361	13661	16602	14321	12946	15572	17577	15175	20,368	14,432	12,209	**16624.80**	**14457.76**
Hours Counted	531.0	555.7	454.5	508.4	499.0	502.8	527.4	545.0	556.3	532.0	495.5	495.2	534.5	507.1	552.6	520.3	518.4	495.2	488.5	492.2	**514.99**	**539.40**
Birds per Hour	30.1	19.5	25.5	23.8	26.9	21.9	22.1	27.4	26.7	27.0	27.6	33.5	26.8	25.5	28.2	33.8	29.3	41.1	29.5	24.8	**32.3**	**26.94**

Underlined bold values are record high season counts since 1975
Shaded, italicized values are record low seasonal counts since 1980

TABLE 2 - MARCH 2013

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	March Species Totals
Black Vulture																																0
Turkey Vulture				1				6	7	29	1	35	28	33	13	38	23	23	6	11	11	19	112	236	70	573	230	248	718	552	28	3,051
Osprey													1																			1
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite																																0
Mississippi Kite																																0
Bald Eagle	1			1				3	1					2		2										1	10		6	4		31
Northern Harrier																				1	1	1	1						2	1		7
Sharp-shinned Hawk										1	1			1							1			6	1	1	8	3	3	5	13	44
Cooper's Hawk									2					1	2		5				1	3	1	5	4	2		3	3	2		34
Northern Goshawk																									1					1		2
Red-shouldered Hawk				1							1	3	2	2		1		1	1				1	12	6	13	14	12	26	118	10	224
Broad-winged Hawk																																0
Swainson's Hawk																																0
Red-tailed Hawk	5			5	14	1		8	24	7	7	17	10	30	2	18	27	25	7	7	3	1	17	90	33	50	61	39	83	158	6	755
Ferruginous Hawk																																0
Rough-legged Hawk					1					2								1				1	1				2			5		13
Golden Eagle																		1											1	1		3
American Kestrel	1										2			1												1	2		2			9
Merlin																		1														1
Peregrine Falcon																								1					1			2
Gyrfalcon																																0
Prairie Falcon																																0
Unid. Accipiter				1																												1
Unid. Buteo				1																										12		13
Unid. Falcon																																0
Unid. Eagle																																0
Unid. Raptor																									1		1					2
Total Raptors	7	0	0	10	15	1	0	17	34	39	12	55	41	70	17	59	55	52	14	19	17	25	133	350	116	641	328	305	845	859	57	4,193
Hours Counted	7.00	0.00	0.00	7.00	7.00	8.00	4.00	7.00	6.00	8.00	7.00	7.50	7.50	8.00	8.00	7.50	8.50	7.10	6.50	7.25	6.50	8.50	7.50	9.00	8.50	8.25	6.00	7.75	9.00	9.00	4.00	212.85
Precipitation		*	*				S				R		S					S	S		S						R, SI				R	

* indicates no counter

TABLE 3 - APRIL 2013

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	April Species Totals
Black Vulture																															0
Turkey Vulture	148	82	262	176	872	622	54	222	110				42	220	192	8	130	69	6	22	11	67	49	2	27	20	44	5	10		3,472
Osprey				1	2	1	2		3				3	12	3		3	3			2		3		6	2	2	1			49
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite																															0
Mississippi Kite																															0
Bald Eagle				7	2	1			2					1	1		1				3		1		2	2	3	3			29
Northern Harrier				5	2	4		5	14				2	8	5		4	4	1	1	3	2	2	1	1	1	2	1			68
Sharp-shinned Hawk	3			43	12	22	7	106	147				18	81	222	40	114	88	4	6	29	14	48	10	59	14	39	48	19		1,193
Cooper's Hawk	1	1	3	2	1			2	1					2	4		8	3			1			3	5	2		1	1		41
Northern Goshawk						1							1								1										3
Red-shouldered Hawk	1		5	68	32	44		18	14				1	2	4		19	4			1										213
Broad-winged Hawk													1	2	4		335	35	2	5	190	15	420	2	69	67	142	155	8		1,452
Swainson's Hawk																															0
Red-tailed Hawk	3	3	23	62	92	144	4	100	135				3	60	33		153	25		3	30	5	24		16	18	10	4	1		951
Ferruginous Hawk																															0
Rough-legged Hawk				2	1	10		1	2				1	4	1		1								1						24
Golden Eagle						2		3																							5
American Kestrel		1		3	3	2	2	4	10				2	2	22		7	15					2		1		2		1		79
Merlin				1		1			2					1	2		1						1								9
Peregrine Falcon															1										1						2
Gyrfalcon																															0
Prairie Falcon																															0
Unid. Accipiter		1		1																											2
Unid. Buteo				22	1									1	4						3		2				4				37
Unid. Falcon																															0
Unid. Eagle																															0
Unid. Raptor														5	2						1		3					1			12
Total Raptors	**156**	**88**	**293**	**393**	**1,020**	**854**	**69**	**461**	**440**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**74**	**401**	**500**	**48**	**776**	**246**	**13**	**37**	**275**	**103**	**555**	**18**	**188**	**126**	**248**	**219**	**40**	**0**	**7,641**
Hours Counted	*8.00*	*8.00*	*8.00*	*8.00*	*7.50*	*8.00*	*6.50*	*7.25*	*7.00*	*1.25*	*0.00*	*0.00*	*7.00*	*9.00*	*8.75*	*2.00*	*8.00*	*7.00*	*5.00*	*5.00*	*7.00*	*9.33*	*8.00*	*2.25*	*8.00*	*6.00*	*7.00*	*9.00*	*7.75*	*0.00*	*185.58*
Precipitation								R	R	R	R	R	R			R			R, S					R					R	*	

* indicates no counter

TABLE 4 - MAY 2013

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	May Species Totals
Black Vulture																0
Turkey Vulture	11	37		18	44	28	1		21				6	9		175
Osprey						1							1			2
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite																0
Mississippi Kite																0
Bald Eagle						1								1		2
Northern Harrier														1	1	2
Sharp-shinned Hawk	13	3	1		3	1							7	43	27	98
Cooper's Hawk		3				2	1	1					1	3		11
Northern Goshawk																0
Red-shouldered Hawk																0
Broad-winged Hawk	13	8	3	3		3									2	32
Swainson's Hawk																0
Red-tailed Hawk	6	19		3	3	1			3				1	7	1	44
Ferruginous Hawk																0
Rough-legged Hawk		1														1
Golden Eagle																0
American Kestrel		2							1					1		4
Merlin		2														2
Peregrine Falcon								1								1
Gyrfalcon																0
Prairie Falcon																0
Unid. Accipiter																0
Unid. Buteo																0
Unid. Falcon																0
Unid. Eagle																0
Unid. Raptor						1										1
Total Raptors	**43**	**75**	**4**	**24**	**50**	**38**	**2**	**2**	**25**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**16**	**65**	**31**	**375**
Hours Counted	*8.00*	*8.00*	*5.00*	*7.25*	*7.00*	*9.00*	*5.50*	*7.50*	*7.50*	*0.25*	*0.00*	*2.00*	*8.25*	*8.00*	*7.50*	*90.75*
Precipitation								R	R	R	*	R, S	R			

* indicates no counter

TABLE 5 - MONTHLY SUMMARIES 1981-2013

Year	February			March			April			May			Year Total		
	# Birds	Hours	#/Hr	# Birds	Hours	#/Hr	# Birds	Hours	#/Hr	# Birds	Hours	#/Hr	# Birds	Hours	#/Hr
1981	22	4.5	4.9	2,957	181.9	16.3	11,185	202.5	55.2	1,758	173.7	10.1	15,922	562.6	28.3
1982	40	8	5.0	2,699	179	15.1	7,259	223.7	32.4	1,970	172.4	11.4	11,968	583.1	20.5
1983	49	10.3	4.8	2,301	164.8	14.0	8,991	210	42.8	2,369	179.9	13.2	13,710	565	24.3
1984	258	10.4	24.8	1,674	151	11.1	15,012	232.8	64.5	1,358	170.4	8.0	18,302	564.6	32.4
1985	0	0	0.0	4,059	202	20.1	14,818	242.2	61.2	398	164.3	2.4	19,275	608.5	31.7
1986	19	8	2.4	5,361	210.3	25.5	7,894	207.4	38.1	783	150.5	5.2	14,057	576.2	24.4
1987	81	23	3.5	3,943	213.4	18.5	4,719	233	20.3	1,765	212.1	8.3	10,508	681.5	15.4
1988	6	2	3.0	5,670	216.9	26.1	6,344	205.4	30.9	2,114	183.9	11.5	14,134	608.2	23.2
1989	0	0	0.0	2,951	179.25	16.5	6,699	241.8	27.7	2,558	78.25	32.7	12,208	499.3	24.5
1990	0	0	0.0	5,065	220	23.0	12,801	234.5	54.6	1,377	120	11.5	19,243	574.5	33.5
1991	0	0	0.0	4,308	215.8	20.0	9,291	223.2	41.6	1,352	109.5	12.3	14,951	548.5	27.3
1992	0	0	0.0	3,480	193.5	18.0	9,710	236	41.1	1,488	112	13.3	14,678	541.5	27.1
1993	0	0	0.0	2,014	176	11.4	8,836	227	38.9	1,257	135.5	9.3	12,107	538.5	22.5
1994	0	0	0.0	5,194	201.8	25.7	10,149	233.4	43.5	634	95.8	6.6	15,977	531.0	30.1
1995	0	0	0.0	4,231	214.6	19.7	5,801	230.75	25.1	776	110.3	7.0	10,808	555.7	19.5
1996	0	0	0.0	3,378	182	18.6	8,650	187.1	46.2	1,075	85.4	12.6	13,103	454.5	28.8
1997	0	0	0.0	4,304	181.85	23.7	6,712	221.25	30.3	1,089	105.25	10.3	12,105	508.4	23.8
1998	80	8	10.0	4,432	167	26.5	6,847	223	30.7	2,128	101.0	21.1	13,487	499.0	27.0
1999	0	0	0.0	4,190	200	21.0	6,538	206	31.7	267	96.0	2.8	10,995	502.0	21.9
2000	256	5	51.2	4,302	216	19.9	6,068	195	31.1	1,039	112.0	9.3	11,665	528.0	22.1
2001	49	25	1.9	2,576	181	14.2	11,620	243	47.8	588	96	6.1	14,833	545.0	27.2
2002	23	28	0.8	5,030	223	22.6	8,885	213	41.7	939	93	10.1	14,877	556.3	26.7
2003	4	4	1.0	5,632	214	26.3	7,769	209	37.2	955	105.5	9.1	14,360	532.0	27.0
2004	18	14.17	1.3	3,962	181.83	21.8	8,554	212.9	40.2	1,127	86.58	13.0	13,661	495.5	27.6
2005	33	5.5	6.0	3,129	197.5	15.8	11,829	193.08	61.3	1,610	95.58	16.8	16,601	495.17	33.5
2006	5	5.33	0.9	5,362	222.35	24.1	8,502	211.67	40.2	452	95.17	4.7	14,321	534.52	26.8
2007	6	3	2.0	5,241	202.33	25.9	6,584	201.58	32.7	1,115	100.17	11.1	12,946	507.08	25.5
2008	2	3	0.7	4,401	222.58	19.8	10,624	229.58	46.3	547	96.42	5.7	15,574	551.58	28.2
2009	0	0	0	5,548	225.92	24.6	11,646	204.92	56.8	383	89.42	4.3	17,577	520.25	33.8
2010	3	4.25	0.7	3,925	206.92	19.0	10,736	229.92	46.7	511	77.33	6.6	15,175	518.42	29.3
2011	0	0	0.0	6,389	209.53	30.5	13,667	210.67	64.9	318	75	4.2	20,374	495.2	41.1
2012	5	5.5	0.9	5,849	222	26.3	7,298	207.75	35.1	1280	53.25	24.0	14,432	488.5	29.5
2013	0	3	0.0	4,193	212.85	19.7	7,641	185.58	41.2	375	90.75	4.1	12,209	492.18	24.8
AVERAGE 2008-2012				5222.4	217.4	24.0	10794.2	216.6	49.8	607.8	78.3	7.8	16626.4	514.8	32.3
AVERAGE 1981-2012				4173.7	199.3	20.9	9126.2	218.2	41.8	1168.1	116.6	10.0	14497.9	539.7	26.9
TOTAL 1981-2013	959	179.95		137750	6588.91		299679	7168.65		37755	3822.32		476143	17762.11	

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Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Newsletter

February 2014 **Newsletter # 48**

LOOKING FORWARD TO SPRING

The great ice storm of December and the cold weather since then have made it a period with few birds around. As the days lengthen towards the end of January it is time to look forward to the first sign of spring – the migration of raptors. In a few weeks we can head for Beamer to see the first migrants. It may still be cold at the beginning of March, but those first Red-tails and Bald Eagles tell us that many other birds will be on their way. Let us just hope that the cold has driven more birds south, so that there are more to return.

As always we shall appreciate help on March 1 in getting everything set up; please let Mike Street know if you can help (mikestreet1@gmail.com). One other way in which you can help is by counting – remember the best way to improve your skills is by practice and having to focus so that you can make the right call on identification. Cody Law, an enthusiastic member, has had to resign from the position of count coordinator, because of commitments to school work. We thank Cody for his work over the past two years, and we ask you to consider whether this is something you can take on – training will be provided!

Over the years we have enjoyed the support and cooperation of the Niagara Peninsular Conservation Authority (NPCA) from giving us access to the park, maintaining the site and participating in the Open House. You can always help the NPCA by making a donation or becoming a member. Our role in this fruitful partnership was recognized at the Authority's Achievement Awards Ceremony on November 27. The Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch was recognized in the category of conservation area stewardship for our "contribution to conservation initiatives in the Niagara Watershed".

We urge you to come out to the **Open House** on Friday, April18, when Tom Thomas will have lined up an exciting set of activities. The timing is right for a good flight of birds at a time when the weather could be good, so mark the date! Similarly we hope that you will come to the **Annual Meeting and Banquet** on Saturday, April 12. Last year we moved to an earlier date and attendance seemed to benefit, so we hope for a repeat of that experience. We are delighted that Jody Allair is coming to speak about Researching Raptors at Risk in Southern Ontario – he is eminently qualified as you will see below.

We look forward to seeing you throughout the hawk-watching season from March 1 to May 15. Let the birds come!

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ANNUAL MEETING AND BANQUET SATURDAY APRIL 12

The Annual Meeting and Banquet will again be held at St Andrew's Church Hall, 7 St Andrew's Avenue, Grimsby on Saturday, April 12. Socializing and the bucket raffle begin at 5:00 p.m., and the pre-supper wine and cheese at 5:15. Dinner will start around 6:15. As always, we welcome donations for the bucket raffle – please contact a member of the executive if you can make a donation.

Tickets are $30 for members and $40 for non-members. Please contact a member of the NPH executive (see page 6) to obtain tickets.

Our speaker this year is **Jody Allair**, whose topic will be **Researching Raptors at Risk in Southern Ontario.** He will discuss the work that Bird Studies Canada (BSC) has undertaken to better assess populations of "at-risk" raptor species in Southern Ontario. Research that will be highlighted include: Satellite Telemetry Studies on Bald Eagles, Short-eared Owls and Osprey, and Population Monitoring of Barn Owls.

As a Biologist and Science Educator for BSC since 2006, Jody conducts various educational activities in addition to his research and fieldwork. He coordinates BSC's Bird Science and Monitoring Program, the Southern Ontario Bald Eagle Monitoring Program, the Ontario Nocturnal Owl Survey, and various species at risk research projects.

Jody is an avid birder, who has been birding and banding since his teens, when he started volunteering at Long Point Bird Observatory (LPBO), where he subsequently spent two years after graduation as Landbird Program Coordinator. He also spent a season at Thunder Cape Bird Observatory, and then from 2004 to 2006 was at the Royal Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology as a Science Educator. He enjoys exploring the outdoors and traveling, and is able to do so as he leads birding tours with Eagle-eye Tours to Hawaii, Trinidad and Tobago, and New Zealand.

We hope to see you for an interesting and enjoyable evening, when you can chat with all you hawk-watching friends!

2014 NPH OPEN HOUSE FRIDAY, APRIL 18

The 2014 Open House will be on Good Friday, April 18 at Beamer. This is a date that should provide a good variety of raptors, and we hope that the day and fine weather will draw lots of Broad-wings and large crowds. The usual agenda of activities will take place. In Mike Street's absence, Sandy Darling will talk about hawks and Tom Thomas will spot them. Once again there will be a children's program.

As usual Tom will have lined up a number of exhibits, and we expect to have raptors on display, because these are always a bit draw. The NPCA, as our partners in this event, will be selling food and beverages. Come out and bring your friends!

CELEBRATE 40 YEARS WITH HMANA AT BRADDOCK BAY- APRIL 25 TO 27

The Hawk Migration Association of North America (HMANA) is to **Celebrate 40 Years of Connecting Hawks to People** with a conference, workshops and hawk-watching from April 25 to 27 at Braddock Bay. This is the closest to the Niagara region that HMANA has ever held a conference, so this provides a great opportunity for our members to participate. Braddock Bay is south of Lake Ontario, just northwest of Rochester, and is within easy driving distance for many of us. It is a major hawk-watching site in the spring. The conference is timed to coincide with Bird of Prey Days, their public education program at the watch site, and comes during the adult Broad-winged Hawk migration period.

The conference sessions will be held in the Rochester Airport Marriot, which is only ten minutes from the hawk-watching site. A major speaker on the 26th is Keith Bildstein from Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, and the evening will feature Richard Crossley, whose new guide to hawk-watching is reviewed in this newsletter. In addition to the conference sessions there are social events and workshops, including one on raptor photography.

Full details of the conference presentations and workshop sessions are available on the HMANA

website. http://www.hmana.org/event/hmanas-40th-anniversary-conference/

The Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch uses the HMANA website to enter our daily counts and track our seasons' records. It is an invaluable service and it is a useful source to find out about counts at other sites. In recognition of HMANA's work we make an annual donation. This is an opportunity for you as an individual to support HMANA by attending the annual conference and learn from the workshops and other sessions. The hawk-watching could be pretty good too!

A NEW RAPTOR GUIDE

Richard Crossley, Jerry Liguori and Brian Sullivan, *The Crossley ID Guide – Raptors* (Princeton University Press 2013, pp286, ISBN 978-0-691-15740-5)

Reviewed by Sandy Darling

Richard Crossley is an internationally recognized birder and photographer who has devised a series of guides that use a completely different form of presentation based on large numbers of photographs. Jerry Liguori has written two books on identification of raptors and Brian Sullivan is the coauthor of a forthcoming Princeton guide to North American birds.

The book covers 34 species including species like Aplomado Falcon and Gray Hawk, which barely make it into the United States. It begins with a preface by Richard Crossley, who presents the rationale for the new form of presentation based on how people learn and a section on how to use the guide. The three-page introduction deals with identification, migration, molt and concludes with a series of sub-sections on groupings of raptors (e.g. vultures, eagles, etc.) This is followed by two pages with photos to show bird topography. Pages 12 to 173 are devoted to photos set on pages that are either single-page or double-page spreads (13 by 8 inches for the latter). It is the presentation of these photos that represents one of the two main innovations of the Crossley guides. Species accounts extend from page 175 to 260, and this is followed by answers to and explanations of 30 quizzes that are based on some of the photos. The book concludes with a glossary, acknowledgements and an index to bird species.

The species accounts start with a scenario of a typical encounter of a raptor, followed by sections titled overview, flight style, size and shape, plumage, geographic variations, molt, similar species, status and distribution, and migration. There are also very clear distribution maps showing breeding and wintering grounds (where they are in North America). More attention is given to molt and how this may be used to help in aging birds than is given in many guides. Similarly there are extensive presentations on plumage where plumage varies by age and by geographic distribution. All the species accounts are well-written, comprehensive and clear. One might quibble about details such as not noting slight color differences in the plumage of the two vultures (both are described as black), but one is hard-pressed to find fault.

As noted above the main innovation of this guide is in the photos. In the two-page spread on Turkey Vultures, for example, the background scene is rugged country with mountains in the background and part of the scene is in shade. The authors have then used multiple photos of birds that are near or distant, in shade or in light, and in different flight postures. All species are represented in similar ways within a typical scene of where they might be encountered. After the presentation on Black Vultures, there is then a two-page spread with both vultures that are numbered for the reader to identify. At the back of the book the answers are given with an explanation of the features used to differentiate. The quizzes are the second innovation in the guide, because they force one to apply the knowledge one has learned from the species presentations. The photos in the species accounts show birds of different ages and differences by geographic region. The collected photos gives one the chance to compare like species such as buteos and accipters.

The quiz photos present both simple and hard challenges, but give a wide range of situations. Some of the most interesting photo quizzes are those at the end of the section: hovering birds, birds at specific sites, topside views, birds going away, black and white views as on a dark day, birds in early morning sun, and birds back-lit by sun. Even the most experienced hawk-watcher can

learn something by going through the quizzes. Most of the photos are of extremely high quality, and those that are not are designed to simulate the difficult viewing conditions or distant birds one often encounters.

One has to search to find reason for criticism, and the faults are minor. On the inside cover birds are presented in silhouette, but abbreviations rather than names have been used; the preface starts with a statement that the book "is for beginning birders and ..." The first information presented (in code) will probably be meaningless for the beginning birder. There are occasional typographical errors, and there is no answer provided for bird #11 of the quiz on page 43. The authors have written from an American perspective with references to only one Canadian site, and they state that the Bald Eagle is "perhaps the most readily identified and well-known raptor in the world". I am not sure that those in Europe, Africa, Australia or Asia would necessarily agree with such a statement.

Even though the preface states that the book is for beginning birders and those who enjoy the outdoors, experienced hawk-watchers can learn from this guide – especially if they work systematically through the photos and quizzes. The two major innovations of using thousands of photos and placing them on a typical scene and supplementing these with quizzes make this a distinctive book. The book can be ordered through Amazon or Chapters and, perhaps, other Canadian stores.



BALD EAGLE AND OSPREY (previous page)

Grant Gallant was photographing an Osprey flying overhead and fishing at Grindstone Marsh by the Royal Botanical Gardens on June 30 2013. At one point the Osprey suddenly took flight from a tree branch with the remains of its latest catch, and within a few seconds an immature bald Eagle came soaring over the tree tops and was right on its tail and the chase was on. The entire viewing lasted for about 10 seconds before the Eagle gave up and returned to where it came from and the Osprey disappeared into the distance with its meal. Grant said, "It was an amazing feeling to photograph and witness this action happening right in front of me and a memory I will never forget."

EAGLE CONTROVERSY AT BEAMER POINT

Dave Copeland

[The article which follows was the first documented report of an immature Golden Eagle seen at Beamer Conservation Area in Grimsby. Originally published in and reprinted with consent of "The Wood Duck", newsletter of the Hamilton Naturalists' Club, Vol. 31, No. 4, December 1977. The article illustrates how much raptor identification knowledge and skills have improved since the 1970s.]

Hawk watchers at Beamer Point on April 10th, 1977 were kept on their toes as hundreds of hawks poured over the Grimsby lookout. John Cumming, compiler for the day, had lots of company as observers from Toronto, Hamilton and Buffalo were on hand.

The observers had little to disagree about as 9 species of hawks and vultures appeared overhead. The total count for the day exceeded five hundred birds, a modest, nevertheless interesting flight.

About half way through the day, one sharp-eyed observer sighted a large dark soaring bird to which he exclaimed "What's this, a bald eagle?" The next ten minutes or so during which the bird was in sight were somewhat chaotic. Identification of the bird ranged from dark-phased rough-legged hawk to bald and golden eagle!

A quick survey I made on the spot did not resolve the controversy. The results were something like a Gallup poll. Of forty-odd observers, twenty-odd did not locate or see the bird! One veteran observer toyed between bald and/or rough-legged. However, of the observers that did sight the bird, the overwhelming opinion was immature golden eagle.

My own impression of the bird was of an immature golden eagle. What made the identification difficult was the distance of the bird. As observation continued the bird steadily soared out and away from us toward the north-west. The bird was never observed to flap during the time it was in sight; it simply soared out of vision.

Size: When I first got my glasses on the bird I noticed a smaller hawk interacting with it. This other bird was clearly an immature red-tailed hawk, very bronze and buffy on the upper surface. Our dark bird was noticeably larger, but continued to be viewed on edge while the red-tail was seen diving at various angles. Therefore I rationalized that the size difference was not as dramatic as had the large bird reacted to the pestering of the smaller bird. Immatures had made up a large portion of the red-tails seen during the day.

Shape: Our "eagle" was very strikingly buteo-shaped with very broad wings held more or less horizontally. As the bird soared I continually focused my attention on the head. Again and again the bird circled. The head was visible but in my opinion nowhere near the length and bulk of that of a bald eagle. The head appeared uniformly dark matching the color of the upper back.

Coloration: The most striking and obvious feature of this bird to most observers was the white tail with terminal blackish band.

Behaviour: All the time the bird was in sight it soared continuously in deliberate circles. Even when dived upon by the red-tail, a noticeable reaction was not observed. In other years I have witnessed interaction between eagles and red-tails, but have not witnessed interaction between migrating red-tails and rough-legs. It is doubtful whether a rough-legged would allow repeated attack without diving in defence or flapping away in escape.

However, I once observed an immature bald eagle repeatedly attacked by an adult red-tail. The eagle

seemingly paid little attention until about the fourth 'run' of the buteo upon the eagle's back. At the last moment the eagle rolled over on its back extending its talons upwards narrowly missing the surprised red-tail.

Rough-legged hawks do much flapping in migration unlike our observed bird. Rough-legs have long narrower wings and a longer tail than other buteos. The roughie is easily the most streamlined buteo sometimes being confused with harriers.

Golden eagles are known to soar more frequently than bald eagles.

The Record: Of the hawk identification books and pamphlets I have reviewed, nowhere is there a diagram showing an immature bald eagle with a white tail and terminal dark band. Of the half dozen or so immature bald eagles I have seen at close range, all displayed a mottled patterned tail of alternating dark and light patches. Also in younger birds there is much white on the dorsal surface of the bird.

Summary: There seems no doubt that our bird was not a rough-legged hawk. Behaviour and size in my opinion would rule out this species. During the remainder of the day I observed four rough-legs, none of which came close to resembling our bird in bulk or shape (all light phase). All four did much flapping under the same wind conditions.

The combination of continuous soaring, tail pattern, small head and long tail; the opinion of the majority of observers who have had previous experience with the bird, suggests this bird was a Golden Eagle.

In sending in his summary, John Cumming outlined many of the points above (including his sighting of an immature golden at the same location during the previous year) as reason for his opinion that the bird was indeed an immature golden.

The one observer who refused the identification remarked "No way, It's too dark on the back; I've seen lots of golden eagles, they're brown birds."

In light of the above remarks and as an aid to future identification I submit the following plumage description (Murphy) 1 reprinted from Report No. 7, *Habitat Management Series for Unique or Endangered Species*, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Department of the Interior, published December 1973.

A newly fledged golden eagle has a very distinctive plumage. It is considerably darker than the adult and is blackish-brown in appearance. The crown and hackles are darker and duller. The basal half of the breast feathers and the basal one-third of the feathers on the back are white. There is a broad terminal band of brownish-black on the tail feathers which covers about one-fourth of the central rectrices and graduates up to approximately one-half of the outer tail feathers.

The text goes on to describe the white patch at the carpal joint (base of primaries) and the fact that newly fledged eaglets are as big or bigger than adults.) The emphasis above is my own.

Reference: Murphy, Joseph R. 1973a. *Status of a nesting golden eagle population central Utah.* In prep.

N.P.H EXECUTIVE

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NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH CALENDAR FOR BEAMER MEMORIAL CONSERVATION AREA

NOTES:

1. Species initials and Right (>) or Left (<) arrow:
   This combination indicates the start (>) or end (<) of the normal migration period at Beamer for that species. The same in bold type indicates the start or end of a noticeable period for that species. The box in which this combination is located indicates the day and month the period is likely to start or end.
2. A number followed by species initial, followed by a slash (/) and a two-digit number:
   In this combination the largest number of that species ever seen in one day is given first, and the year it occurred second. The box where the combination is located indicates the day and month of the event. Example: 655 RS/94 in March 23 indicates that the highest number of Red-shouldered Hawks recorded in one day occurred on March 23, 1994.

TV – Turkey Vulture
BV – Black Vulture
OS – Osprey
SK – Swallow-tailed Kite
MK – Mississippi Kite
BE – Bald Eagle
GE - Golden Eagle
NH – Northern Harrier
SS – Sharp-shinned Hawk
CH – Cooper's Hawk
NG – Northern Goshawk
RS – Red-shouldered Hawk
RT – Red-tailed Hawk
SW – Swainson's Hawk
RL – Rough-legged Hawk
FH – Ferruginous Hawk
AK – American Kestrel
ML – Merlin
PF – Peregrine Falcon
PR – Prairie Falcon
GY – Gyrfalcon
BW – Broad-winged Hawk

The following information, based on 38 years of data, shows significant events up to January 2013.

The largest number of raptors in a season was 20,368 in 2011.

BE>, NH>, SS>, CH>, RT>, RL>, AK> begin about February 20.

MARCH

1 **RT>** **NG>** TV>	2 GE>	3 RS>	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11 **RL>**	12 **AK>**	13 **CH>** **RS>**	14 **44 AK/90**
15 **TV>** BV>	16 **744 RT/96**	17 **1 GY/06**	18 **BE>**	19	20 ML> **PF>**	21
22 **2 BV**/12	23 **NH>** **655 RS/94**	24 **11 NG/84** **19 BE/03**	25	26 **SS>**	27	28
29 **46 RL/04**	30	31 OS>				

Largest count for month: 6,389 in 2011; largest count in one day: 2,080 March 26, 1988

APRIL

1	2 **7 GE/09** **2,021 TV/09**	3	4	5 **50 CH/93**	6	7
8 **OS>** **<RS**	9	10 BW>	11	12 **16 OS/92**	13 **1 FH/92**	14
15 **BW>** SW> **1 SK/94**	16 **<BE**	17	18 **35 NH/96** **1,556 SS/76**	19 **1 PR/95****	20 **1 GY/77**	21 **6,007 BW/85**
22	23 **1 FH/98***	24 **<OS** **1 FH/02***	25 **<TV** **6 ML/96**	26	27 **3 PF/10**	28 <BV
29 **2 SW/98***	30 **<RL** **<CH**					

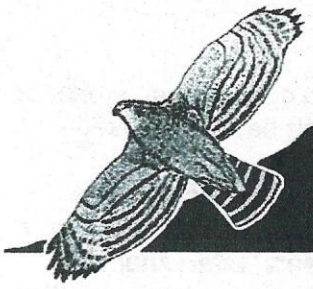
Largest count for month: 15,012 in 1984; largest count in one day: 7,007 April 21, 1985

MAY

1	2 **2 SW/97***	3	4 **<RT**	5 <SW	6 <PF	7
8	9	10	11 **1 MK/97***	12 **<NH** **<AK**	13 <CH <BE	14 **<SS** **1 MK/03***
15 **<BW** <RL <ML **1 MK**/12	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31 <TV<NH <SS<OS <NG<RS <AK<GE	*BW & RT continue after May 31*			

Largest count for month: 2,685 in 1980: largest count in one day 1,492 May 4, 1989

* Sighting not reviewed/ accepted by Ontario Bird Records Committee
** First accepted Prairie Falcon record in Ontario



Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch

Newsletter

August 2014 Newsletter # 49

KEEP THE CANDLE BURNING!

In the last newsletter I referred to the great ice storm of December and the cold. Well, the cold continued and, as a person who counts each week, I think that I can say that it was the last week in April before I shed a fleece-lined jacket. We could have done with a candle or maybe even a brazier at the top if the tower. It was a second slow season in succession and John Stevens reports on this in his usual analysis that accompanies the season's statistics in this newsletter.

As always we are grateful for the help that we receive from so many – those who prepare and take down the site (including the all-important wind-shields on the tower), counters, those who help at the Open House, exhibitors, those who help at the banquet, our members and those who encourage others to become members. All of you help to keep the candle burning. However, we would like to have two new members on the committee, especially a person who will coordinate the counters. This is a critical position if we are to ensure full coverage during the period from March 1 to May 15. The Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch has one of the longest-running set of data on raptor migration, and we need to plan for the next forty years.

As usual, Tom Thomas had everything prepared for an excellent Open Day with varied exhibits and raptors on hand for visitors to see at close quarters. The highlight of the raptor presentation was the young Horned Owl that wandered over the ground and onto a family's blanket. Those small talons were sharp even at that age and so it was a challenge to detach it from the blanket. A minor disappointment was that the Swainson's Hawk flew over just after the raptor presentation finished, so most observers were unaware of its passage.

Once again the Niagara Peninsular Conservation Authority (NPCA) gave us access to the park, maintained the site and helped us with the Open House. We thank our partner and its staff.

We were pleased with the attendance at the annual banquet and annual meeting. Jody Allair was an entertaining and informative speaker, and you can read about what he said below.

By the time you read this it will soon be time for raptors to make their way back south. You can watch the migration from Hawk Cliff near Port Stanley. It is with sadness that we note the passing of Colin Horstead, who so often used to occupy the northwest corner of the tower and made major contribution to Hawk Cliff by doing most of the counting in some years before developing cancer slowed him down.

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2014 N.P.H. OPEN HOUSE

Friday April 18, Good Friday, was a cool day with cloud cover for most of the day with the exception of two hours when the sun came out. The weather did not deter visitors from coming out on a day that did not produce many migrating raptors (104), although there was reasonable diversity of species (9). There was a good variety of displays and the food served by the Conservation Area was enjoyed by many. In Mike Street's absence in Australia, Sandy Darling gave the two talks, but most of the time was spent talking about raptors than showing raptors flying over the field. The highlight of the day occurred just after the second talk had ended and equipment was being put away. An unusual, high-flying raptor was finally identified as a Swainson's Hawk, but it had gone before it could be pointed out to the crowd. The other notable species were an Osprey and two Northern Harriers.

As usual the raptors brought by James Cowan of the Canadian Raptor Conservancy pleased the crowd, and the young Horned Owl stole the show. James made his pitch for the Red-tailed Hawk to be named as Canada's bird – it is imposing, not adopted by any province or other country, and is found in every province. The Bald Eagle at close quarters is always a striking bird for those who are not used to seeing one. The final presentation was of a pair of American Kestrels so that viewers could see the differences between the two sexes.

Once again Tom Thomas put together a good show and to his relief the weather did not include rain. We should also recognize and thank those who work quietly behind the scenes (John, Gord, Glenn and his delightful granddaughter, Alina, who also sold raffle tickets at the banquet).

REMEMBERING COLIN HORSTEAD

For many years Colin Horstead occupied the north-east corner of the tower at Beamer when raptors were flying and he made many friends. Over the past three years, as cancer progressed, he was able to come less often and his last visit was on April 22 with his daughter driving. He died on June 14 and a number of our members attended his memorial service shortly thereafter where Tim Foran spoke of Colin's love of raptors. When birding was slow he loved to converse and joke, but when the birds were in the air he was focused.

His biggest contribution to hawk-watching was probably at Hawk Cliff to which he commuted from Don Mills for a number of years, often sharing driving with Tom Thomas. In later years he settled into the Kettle Creek Inn for eight or nine weeks at a time in the fall, going back home when the weather was bad or the outlook for a good flight was low. In those two or three years it seemed that Colin's name was on virtually every daily report from Hawk Cliff. This was a major contribution to hawk-watching and data collection. I first met him when I started to count in 2008 and found that there was much to be learnt from his experience and knowledge. He reviewed the statistics, read books and examined photos, sometimes sending me some to test my skills. My last memory was of sharing a day on the tower in April 2013 when the weather was warm and his pain was less. He was where he enjoyed to be, doing what he loved to do, and wrote warmly of how much that day meant to him. That is the continuing memory I shall carry.

Sandy Darling

ANNUAL MEETING AND BANQUET

The Annual Meeting and Banquet was again held at St Andrew's Church Hall in Grimsby and we had a good attendance to hear Jody Allair speak. Jody has been a Biologist and Science Educator for Bird Studies Canada (BSC) since 2006, conducting various educational activities in addition to his research and fieldwork, and coordinating BSC's Bird Science and Monitoring Program, the Southern Ontario Bald Eagle Monitoring Program, the Ontario Nocturnal Owl Survey, and various species at risk research projects.

Jody started by describing the six programs that BSC operates, namely:

1. Research & monitoring programs.
2. Species-at-risk monitoring.
3. Citizen science (e.g. CBC, feeder watch).
4. Long Point Bird Observatory.
5. Important Bird Areas of Canada (coordination).
6. Breeding bird atlases.









Pictures from top right, counter-clockwise:

- Open House: American Kestrels Alexander Darling ©
- Open House: Young Horned Owl Alexander Darling ©
- Open House exhibit showing wingspan of raptors
- Mischievous Striated Carcara Kevin Maskell © (See John Steven's article on the 2014 HMANA Conference below.)

The main part of his talk focused on raptor research programs and the findings, such as those using the population index from migration counts. The study "The State of Canada's Birds 2012" showed that over 40 years there was an overall drop of 12% in bird populations, but some have been hit much harder. Aerial insectivores and grassland birds have declined by a lot, whereas waterfowl and raptors are increasing except for kestrels. The numbers of Great Horned Owl are down. BSC has its first good assessment of populations of Eastern Screech-Owls for which they are using Wood Duck boxes. The Ontario Nocturnal Owl Survey, which has operated since 2006, is one of longest running, and as a result provides good base-line data. It is also a good example of using citizen science. The number of Barn Owls is low with the last record in Haldimand being in 2007.

The situation for Short-eared Owls is a bit of a mystery and is data deficient. They breed in the Arctic and depend on fallow ground that is overrun with weedy habitat. They are long-winged, which equips them for long-distance migration and satellite tracking has been used to track migration. A Long Point bird went to Northern Quebec, and spent 5 months there before taking 21 days to come back to close to original point.

The Saw-whet Owl monitoring program is giving base-line data. They tend to move in large numbers and there is high recovery rate for banded birds (1 in 10). In the case of Bald Eagles they are monitoring nesting and using satellite telemetry. Jody outlined the Bald Eagle recovery program, but they do not get high returns. Mercury is still a concern, because fish absorb it from water.

Jody concluded by describing Project Nest Watch and by urging listeners to participate in using e-bird. His enthusiasm was infectious and we could have listened for longer.

HAWK MIGRATION ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA CONVENTION 2014

John Stevens

It had been about twenty years since I last attended a hawk-watching conference so when the 2014 HMANA conference was scheduled for Rochester, New York, I decided to attend. Rochester is the home of Braddock Bay Raptor Research (BBRR) and its hawk-watch site on the shore of Lake Ontario just west of the city. The conference was co-sponsored by BBRR and HMANA and held at a Marriot Hotel, about ten minutes from the watch platform.

I skipped the Board of Directors meeting on the Friday and left home early on Saturday arriving in time to register and make the first invited talk, which was delivered by Keith Bildstein. He is the Director of Conservation Science at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary. His research is not confined to Hawk Mountain's species. I was surprised, based on our experiences with Turkey Vultures, to learn that worldwide vultures are at great risk with many species experiencing severe population declines. His talk covered two species the first of which was Turkey Vultures. They have been tracking birds that breed west of the Rockies with transmitters. The birds have remarkable consistency, returning to almost identical breeding areas and migrating along very similar routes each year although not usually going and coming by the same path. One bird that wintered in southern Mexico was followed for either three or four years. One year on the way south it went down the Baja peninsula rather than on its usual mainland route. It spent about a month near the tip before heading back north to the mainland and then going down to its usual wintering area.

The second species he discussed was the Striated Caracara (see photo on page 3), which has the southernmost territory of any Caracara and pretty well any raptor. It is native to parts of Tierra del Fuego and the Falkland Islands. He has been studying birds on one of the smaller Falkland Islands, roughly 20 km by 5-7 km. Interestingly, the birds migrate about 10 km between summer and winter, spending the summers in a more remote area in the north where various sea birds breed and they can feed on eggs and the young. In the winter they head to another area near a sheep ranch where the farmer discards animal wastes from his butchering operations.

This species, also known as Johnny Rook, is very tame and inquisitive, perhaps the easiest species to band and monitor. The videos of their behaviour were hilarious. This talk was both informative and

entertaining, which got the conference off to a great start.

Jerry Niemi, a professor at the University of Minnesota in Duluth and HMANA director led a discussion on data policies. Interest in the data is growing, particularly as it becomes more accessible. While there is a HMANA-wide policy, it would be possible to make site-specific requirements. It is also possible to have the data put directly into e-bird.

The next talk that I heard was an Update on the Raptor Population Index work by David Brandes. Species showing increasing population trends in the latest iteration are Black Vulture, Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle and Peregrine. Declines are being seen for American Kestrel, Northern Goshawk, Cooper's Hawk in the west, and Golden Eagle in the west. In the shorter term, the last ten years has seen a general widespread decline of many species at most of the major eastern watches. The extent of the decline is variable between sites and species. Interestingly, this is counter to the Bird Studies Canada's recent pronouncement that proclaimed raptors as one group that was doing well.

In the afternoon, Nick Bolgiano discussed distribution of Red-tailed Hawks, American Kestrels and Rough-legged Hawks from data obtained from migration monitoring, Christmas bird counts, and breeding bird surveys. The Red-tails appear to be changing their migration habits being seen less at watches but more so on surveys while there is a distinct northward shift in their Christmas distribution. The distribution of Rough-legged Hawks is also shifting northward but they are being squeezed out between the northern forests and the northward movement of the Red-tails with the result that their population is in decline. The news is almost all poor for kestrels with declines in all monitoring programs except for breeding survey routes in the mid-western United States.

The Franklin Mountain watch, near Oneonta, NY, is in a Golden Eagle concentration area. In the winter they set up motion activated cameras at some baited sites that attract the eagles. They have Golden and Bald Eagles and Common Ravens along with a variety of mammalian visitors. Goldens are dominant and the other birds do not challenge them and always yield. Interestingly, the ravens repeatedly pull the tails of the Bald Eagles. Richard Crossley is an earnest proponent of birding and gave a somewhat rambling but very entertaining talk after the excellent dinner at the banquet in the evening. He described how his interest was kindled in England and how much he enjoys living in Cape May, NJ. The production of his guides is an effort to attract a wider audience to birding that he believes will ultimately benefit nature through conservation. In particular he is targeting young people.

Sunday morning, Russell Conard presented the software he is developing at Ornicept that enables real time data collection in the field. This will enable hawk watchers to enter their sightings directly into Hawkcount as they are made. At present the cost for a tablet with cellular connection to enable this, costs on the order of US $1,500. Next, Bill Evans described his experience as a consultant for opponents of various wind power projects around lakes Erie and Ontario. Many of the studies conducted to date by the proponents are severely flawed. He was involved in one project in New York State that was cancelled because of opposition. He is acting on the project in the Napanee area, which is proceeding despite the scientific evidence against it. He was quite critical of Ontario's policies and protocols.
The last talk in the morning that I attended was Laurie Goodrich describing an outreach program conducted with the rural public, particularly farm landowners in Pennsylvania. It targeted Barn Owl, Short-eared Owl, American Kestrel and Northern Harrier; all species that use farmland. People were asked to report their sightings of these species, to build and install nest boxes in suitable habitat, and encouraged to make land management changes that would benefit these species.

As the weather had cleared and it was a gorgeous day, most of us headed to Braddock Bay between sessions. The counter had moved from the platform to a more inland location but after scanning for ten minutes and only seeing the occasional bird, the flight line must have shifted as the sky was soon full of hawks. I was there for about an hour and saw a couple of thousand Broad-wings, close to 20 eagles (at times there were up to six visible at once), plus Harriers, Sharpies, Ospreys, TVs, and Red-tails. Many

people never bothered returning to the hotel for the afternoon session that consisted of people describing what is done at their watch sites. There was a big contrast between the programs conducted by our site with an annual budget of about $2,000 and sites like Duluth and Braddock Bay where the budgets are well over US $100,000 and they have paid staff. Many sites seem to have a sponsoring organization such as an Audubon club or a foundation.

Overall I was impressed by the organization of the conference, the quality of the talks that I attended, and the enthusiasm of the participants. What was disappointing was the poor attendance. Jeff Dodge was given the Joe Taylor Award that was presented at the banquet. In a discussion with him later, he told me that he could never understand why the Beamer site was among trees rather than in an open area. Of course at his home site of Braddock Bay you can see the horizon in almost all directions.

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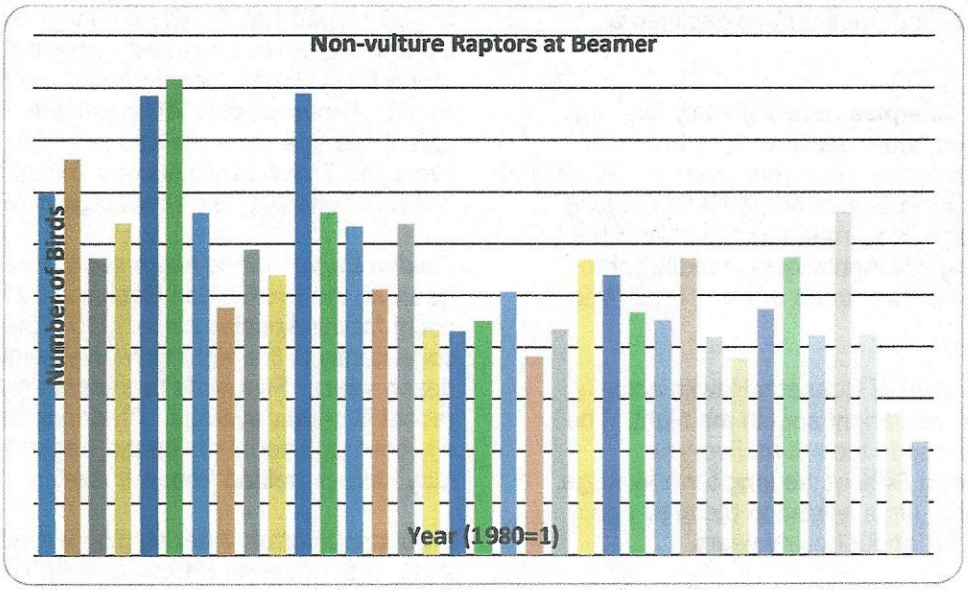
2014 MIGRATION SUMMARY

Will it ever end? The decline in the number of migrating hawks seen at Beamer continued in 2014. For the year, the total count was 11,671, a decrease of only 4.4 % from last year but with Turkey Vultures setting a new seasonal high count of 7,330, it means the non-vulture count was 4,341. This easily beat the previous record low count of 5,511 set last year despite the fact that the total does include two Black Vultures. The last time that we had this few birds overall was 2000 (11,665) but at that time we only had 2,971 Turkey Vultures so there were 8,694 non-vultures or almost exactly twice as many as in 2014. At the time 2000 was considered a poor year at Beamer!

In the chart below, I have plotted the number of non-vultures for the period 1980-2014. The high counts are usually associated with a large count of Broad-winged Hawks, whose year to year numbers seem to be most sensitive to weather conditions. There has been a general declining trend over the years but in the last two years the decline has become more severe.

It wasn't for lack of effort this year as counters logged 515.7 hours, about 10 above the recent five-year average. Inclement weather was not a problem as only four days were completely wiped out by snow, rain, or both. There just weren't many birds. This was evident early in the season as it was March 14 before the total passed 100 and March 26 before it passed 1,000.

Record low season totals were established for Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Northern Goshawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk and American Kestrel. The Northern Goshawk record will never be broken as not one of them was spotted. In addition to the record high count of Turkey Vultures, a high-flying Swainson's Hawk was identified on the day of the Open House, our first of this western species since 2008.



The Season

After a colder winter than we have experienced in recent years, the flight just couldn't seem to get started. There were no warm days in March. At the beginning of the month, daytime highs were consistently below normal and while seasonally normal temperatures developed near the end of the month, overall the daily average temperature was 3.1°C below normal. This certainly contributed to the lowest count for the month since 2001. Snowfall was well above normal but aside from March 12, most fell outside normal counting time and didn't interfere greatly.

April temperatures were fairly normal with no really warm days. The coldest day was April 16 following the only snowfall of the month that prevented a count on the previous day. Rainfall was almost double a normal amount and three days were rain-outs. These no doubt contributed to the monthly count of 8,427 being 7% below the long-term average and 17% below the recent five-year average.

Watchers kept hoping that the flight was just delayed and May would bring more birds but that didn't happen. The count was only 586, which was slightly above the recent five-year average but barely half the long-term average. Temperatures were slightly above normal overall but rainfall was decidedly above normal although little of the count time was affected. A bigger effect was the lack of a counter on three days.

Species Accounts

Black Vulture: Single Black Vultures was seen on two days. Two birds are about the recent five-year average for the species that only started coming regularly about five years ago.

Turkey Vulture: This year's count of 7,330 Turkey Vultures was 3% above the previous record count of 7,125 set in 2011. There was a late push of these vultures in May, pushing the count to the new high.

Osprey: The Osprey count rose slightly from last year and at 57 exceeded both the recent five-year and the long term averages. Aside from single birds in March and May, all came through in April, usually one or two a day. April 13 easily had the best flight with nine birds.

Bald Eagle: At 43, the count of Bald Eagles was the lowest since 2001. There was little sign of any local birds from the nest to the east. With the colder winter and extent of ice on the Great Lakes, it was anticipated that we would have an increase in the number of this species heading back north this year. The 30% decline in their count from 2013 was very discouraging.

Northern Harrier: The 63 Northern Harriers represents the lowest count for this species since we started with full season coverage. This represents only 46% of the long term average for this species. It was the sixth

consecutive year that their numbers have declined at Beamer.

Sharp-shinned Hawk: Sharpies were definitely missing in action this year. Their count declined 37% from last year to less than half the recent five-year average. More strikingly, at 835 birds it represents only 27% of the long term average. Years ago, they made up the bulk of the count in May and during late April would steadily come through in small groups of two, three or four. Sadly this is no longer the case.

Cooper's Hawk: The count of Cooper's Hawks actually rose from 2013, a relatively bright spot in the flight. The 122 reported slightly exceeds the recent five-year average of 119 but is only 64% of the long term average. At least one pair of these birds nested in the area again this year as they have for about twenty years.

Northern Goshawk: At the HMANA Conference this spring, I learned that Northern Goshawk populations are declining. As if to demonstrate that fact, not a single one was seen at Beamer this year. Their numbers had been quite low for almost twenty years but this year, have reached their nadir. I understand that the provincial Ministry of Natural Resources suspects the species may be expanding their breeding range southward. They do not appear to be expanding their migratory behaviour.

Red-shouldered Hawk: Another species setting a record low count total in 2014 was the Red-shouldered Hawk. Their numbers peaked in 1994 and plunged the following year. They never really recovered in the intervening years but have now set record lows in consecutive years. The flight in 2014 was later than normal, peaking about a week after it usually does.

Broad-winged Hawk: No good flight of Broad-winged Hawks occurred at Beamer in 2014. The first birds showed up around the usual date of April 15. The final count of 1,508 was about the same as last year but was only about a third of the recent five-year average and less than half of the long term average. It was the second lowest count ever at Beamer for the species.

Red-tailed Hawk: There was a huge decline of 35% in the Red-tailed Hawk count in 2014 from last year's record low total. Their count represented a little over half the recent five-year average but only 42% of their long term average. Of particular concern to this observer was the virtual absence of immature birds in late April and May. Even a poor hatch survival year in 2013 would not account for the back to back years of record low counts.

Rough-legged Hawk: Three Rough-legged Hawks on the first day of March raised hopes that after the cold winter it would be a banner year for this species. Not so, as with a count of only 28, they were at 55% of their recent five-year average and just 38% of the long term average. This was the second lowest count since we commenced full season coverage in 1980.

Golden Eagle: While never seen in large numbers at Beamer, the five Golden Eagles in 2014 was the lowest count for this species since 1995. The counts had been consistently in the eight to twelve range for the last dozen years. Five birds represent only 52% of the recent five-year average. Braddock Bay to the east had a record high count of Golden Eagles in 2014 so they may have benefited from our loss.

American Kestrel: After staging a modest recovery in 2013, the American Kestrel count plunged to an all-time low in 2014, even fewer than in any of the early years when count coverage was incomplete. Thirty birds represent 32% of the long term average and just 48% of the recent five-year average. This species is known to be declining in North America and this result does nothing to change that impression.

Merlin: The Merlin count held steady at 12, which is about the long term average for the species although the recent five-year average is over 16.

Peregrine: Another species that we are seeing in increasing numbers in recent years is Peregrine. There was apparently a nest not far west of Beamer and we may see one of those birds returning from a foraging excursion. Still eight sightings is only equivalent to the recent five-year average but it is almost double the long term average.

In summary, it was a particularly disappointing fortieth year for the watch unless, that is, you like vultures. Tom Thomas had the best day, April 6, with 1,377 birds and twelve species, both seasonal highs.

THANK-YOU!

Thank you to the counters and assistants who volunteer their time and talents whatever the weather and flights they have on their assigned days. "Official" counters in 2014 were: Glen Barnett, Bouwe Bergsma, Bob Curry, Sandy Darling, Chris Escott, Tim Foran, Sandra Horvath, Marcie Jacklin, Gord Kozak, Bruce Mackenzie, Matt Mills, Brian Mishell, John Stevens, Chris Street, Mike Street, Tom Thomas and Phil Waggett.

Table 1 ANNUAL SUMMARIES 1995-2014

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2009-2013 5-yr Avg	1980-2013 Average
Black Vulture						1				1				1		2	1	**5**		2	1.6	0.35
Turkey Vulture	2,154	2,963	3,092	3,277	3,384	2,971	3,532	4,065	5,026	4,623	5,158	5,934	5,385	6,107	6,091	6,732	7,125	5,986	6,698	**7,330**	6,526.4	3,247.44
Osprey	47	56	28	42	42	46	**71**	48	59	51	47	64	50	52	39	53	41	64	52	57	49.8	44.71
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite																					0.0	0.03
Mississippi Kite			1						1									1			0.2	0.09
Bald Eagle	24	33	20	32	30	25	30	54	66	62	71	**85**	54	65	76	64	60	57	62	43	63.8	34.41
Northern Harrier	177	171	122	85	91	125	108	115	98	**223**	128	96	115	173	121	109	104	83	77	*63*	98.8	135.65
Sharp-shinned Hawk	2,136	3,291	3,048	2,822	2,002	2,467	2,541	3,173	2,350	2,310	1,756	1,753	1,551	2,652	1,721	2,339	1,700	1,848	1,335	*835*	1,788.6	3,090.35
Cooper's Hawk	256	295	221	179	241	181	169	244	220	252	183	202	207	123	136	125	101	145	*86*	122	118.6	191.47
Northern Goshawk	15	25	16	14	6	3	14	9	6	11	12	6	8	5	6	8	2	7	5	*0*	5.6	19.88
Red-shouldered Hawk	705	706	796	553	675	508	458	566	455	524	641	679	641	658	730	513	581	592	437	*392*	570.6	734.53
Broad-winged Hawk	1,779	1,549	1,849	3,886	1,833	2,368	5,229	3,668	3,327	2,532	5,537	2,026	2,413	2,971	5,497	2,922	**8,613**	3,473	*1,484*	1,508	4,397.8	3,574.03
Swainson's Hawk		1	2	3		1		1						1						1	0.0	0.47
Red-tailed Hawk	2,861	3,589	2,571	2,159	2,218	2,617	2,351	2,031	2,258	2,513	2,693	3,099	2,209	2,457	2,852	2,156	1,857	2,002	1,750	*1,131*	2,123.4	2,712.15
Ferruginous Hawk				1				1													0.0	0.09
Rough-legged Hawk	87	97	44	33	69	50	74	22	40	**204**	120	100	75	59	92	29	59	35	38	28	50.6	73.24
Golden Eagle	4	12	6	6	10	13	6	8	8	8	8	13	7	**15**	12	8	8	12	8	5	9.6	8.18
American Kestrel	70	62	84	77	69	95	77	99	102	87	45	63	77	120	69	55	44	55	92	*30*	63.0	94.74
Merlin	14	22	14	15	10	22	6	19	11	21	15	13	18	10	13	22	17	18	12	12	16.4	11.76
Peregrine Falcon	1	2	2	4	1	7	3	6	7	5	5	9	2	7	8	**12**	10	5	5	8	8.0	4.18
Gyrfalcon												1									0.0	0.03
Prairie Falcon	1																				0.0	0.03
Unid. Raptors	480	249	190	227	345	165	282	737	327	234	183	178	134	96	114	26	45	44	68	104	59.4	459.38
Total Raptors	10,811	13,123	12,106	13,415	11,026	11,665	14,951	14,866	14,361	13,661	16,602	14,321	12,946	15,572	17,577	15,175	20,368	14,432	12,209	11,671	15,952.2	14,391.62
Hours Counted	556	455	508	499	503	527	545	556	532	496	495	535	507	553	520	518	495	489	492	516	502.9	538.01
Birds per Hour	19	29	24	27	22	22	27	27	27	28	34	27	26	28	34	29	41	30	25	23	31.7	26.87

Underlined bold values are record high season counts since 1975
Shaded, italicized values are record low seasonal counts since 1980

TABLE 2 - MARCH 2014

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	March Species Totals
Black Vulture																				1						1						2
Turkey Vulture										1	22		4	8	2	1	19	23	8	42	361	39	39	24	36	198	58	140	140	40	605	1,809
Osprey																													1			1
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite																																0
Mississippi Kite																																0
Bald Eagle		2												1	1	1	1	3	2		1		1			1						14
Northern Harrier											1							1			1				2		3	1	1		2	12
Sharp-shinned Hawk															1				6	1	3		1		8		9	2	3		7	41
Cooper's Hawk										2				2	1		1	3	3		3		1			1	1	3	1	1	6	29
Northern Goshawk																																0
Red-shouldered Hawk										1	3					1	10	5	5		34	2			27	7	49	13	12	2	53	224
Broad-winged Hawk																																0
Swainson's Hawk																																0
Red-tailed Hawk	1	1					3			2	27		1	12	6	21	29	42	5	4	68	8	15	1	19	14	33	12	32	24	54	434
Ferruginous Hawk																																0
Rough-legged Hawk	3									2	2			1	1		2										1		1		1	14
Golden Eagle																1					1	1		1								4
American Kestrel															1							1										2
Merlin																									2				2			4
Peregrine Falcon																							1							2	1	4
Gyrfalcon																																0
Prairie Falcon																																0
Unid. Accipiter															1													1			1	3
Unid. Buteo																							1					1			57	59
Unid. Falcon																																0
Unid. Eagle																																0
Unid. Raptor																												1			1	2
Total Raptors	4	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	5	55	0	5	24	14	25	62	77	29	48	472	51	59	26	93	222	154	174	193	69	788	2,658
Hours Counted	7.50	7.50	5.25	0.00	7.25	5.00	7.00	7.50	7.00	7.75	7.00	0.00	7.00	7.00	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.25	7.00	7.50	8.00	6.00	9.50	7.00	7.00	8.00	8.00	8.25	7.00	7.00	9.00	214.25
Precipitation			S	*	S							S																R				

* indicates no counter

TABLE 3 - APRIL 2014

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	April Species Totals
Black Vulture																															0
Turkey Vulture	284	794	156		29	1,168	293	405	900	323	258	20	80	104		38	17	37	25	2	43	78	10	28	14		43	27			5,176
Osprey		5				3	2	2	2	6	1	3	9	1		1	2	1	4	2	2	1	1	2	1	2	1	1			55
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite																															0
Mississippi Kite																															0
Bald Eagle	1	4				7	1		1			1	1			1			1					5				2			25
Northern Harrier	3	8				3	2	1	1	3	2	1	7	1				2	1	4	2				1	2		1			45
Sharp-shinned Hawk	23	53	6			36	49	9	4	92	28	29	75	51		17	38	24	15	37	80	2	2	4	4	21	14	21			734
Cooper's Hawk		10	1			1	3		9	1	6	1	5	3		4	1	3	2	1	4	2	1	4		4	5	3			74
Northern Goshawk																															0
Red-shouldered Hawk	37	58	35			15	1		2	1	2	7	1			1	2		3	1	1		1								168
Broad-winged Hawk													1	3		28	115	25	82	57	232	146	6	61	33	47	360	195			1,391
Swainson's Hawk																		1													1
Red-tailed Hawk	43	95	51		1	134	6	9	71	11	31	37	16			7	27	9	26	14	15	3	14	14	3	4	23	4			668
Ferruginous Hawk																															0
Rough-legged Hawk						4	1	1	1		1	1					1	2	1		1										14
Golden Eagle																					1										1
American Kestrel		2				3			1	4		4	4						1		5			1		1		1			27
Merlin	1					2	1			1																1					6
Peregrine Falcon						1																	2				1				4
Gyrfalcon																															0
Prairie Falcon																															0
Unid. Accipiter											2					1											2				5
Unid. Buteo		1									5										4	4	1				1				16
Unid. Falcon																															0
Unid. Eagle																															0
Unid. Raptor	2	3											1	1		1	1				6	1					1				17
Total Raptors	394	1,033	249	0	30	1,377	359	427	992	442	336	104	200	164	0	99	204	104	161	118	396	237	38	119	56	82	451	256	0	0	8,427
Hours Counted	*8.00*	*8.50*	*7.50*	*2.00*	*6.00*	*9.00*	*7.75*	*8.00*	*8.00*	*8.00*	*10.00*	*8.00*	*9.75*	*5.08*	*0.00*	*8.00*	*6.75*	*6.33*	*7.50*	*9.00*	*10.00*	*6.50*	*8.00*	*8.00*	*6.00*	*7.00*	*7.25*	*9.00*	*1.00*	*8.00*	*213.91*
Precipitation				F,R			R	R						R	S							R	R		R	R			R	R	

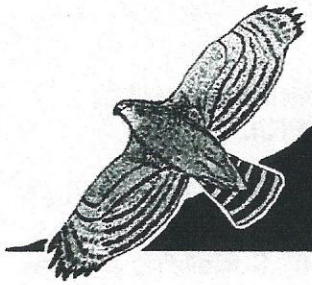
TABLE 4 - MAY 2014

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	May Species Totals
Black Vulture																0
Turkey Vulture	7		8	32		20	10		10	36	195	27				345
Osprey												1				1
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite																0
Mississippi Kite																0
Bald Eagle				1						1	2					4
Northern Harrier	1		1			1	1	1			1					6
Sharp-shinned Hawk	4		16	8	8	1	2	4	4	6	4	3				60
Cooper's Hawk			2	3	3			4	1	2	2	2				19
Northern Goshawk																0
Red-shouldered Hawk																0
Broad-winged Hawk	6		6	25	67	9	2		1		1					117
Swainson's Hawk																0
Red-tailed Hawk			1	5	5		4		1	1	10	2				29
Ferruginous Hawk																0
Rough-legged Hawk																0
Golden Eagle																0
American Kestrel			1													1
Merlin										1		1				2
Peregrine Falcon																0
Gyrfalcon																0
Prairie Falcon																0
Unid. Accipiter				2												2
Unid. Buteo																0
Unid. Falcon																0
Unid. Eagle																0
Unid. Raptor																0
Total Raptors	**18**	**0**	**35**	**76**	**83**	**31**	**19**	**9**	**17**	**47**	**215**	**36**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**586**
Hours Counted	*7.00*	*0.00*	*6.00*	*8.75*	*9.25*	*9.00*	*8.00*	*6.00*	*7.00*	*8.00*	*7.50*	*8.50*	*0.00*	*0.00*	*2.50*	*87.50*
Precipitation		*	R										*	*	F,R	

* indicates no counter

TABLE 5 - MONTHLY SUMMARIES 1981-2014

Year	February			March			April			May			Year Total		
	# Birds	Hours	#/Hr	# Birds	Hours	#/Hr	# Birds	Hours	#/Hr	# Birds	Hours	#/Hr	# Birds	Hours	#/Hr
1981	22	4.5	4.9	2,957	181.9	16.3	11,185	202.5	55.2	1,758	173.7	10.1	15,922	562.6	28.3
1982	40	8	5.0	2,699	179	15.1	7,259	223.7	32.4	1,970	172.4	11.4	11,968	583.1	20.5
1983	49	10.3	4.8	2,301	164.8	14.0	8,991	210	42.8	2,369	179.9	13.2	13,710	565	24.3
1984	258	10.4	24.8	1,674	151	11.1	15,012	232.8	64.5	1,358	170.4	8.0	18,302	564.6	32.4
1985	0	0	0.0	4,059	202	20.1	14,818	242.2	61.2	398	164.3	2.4	19,275	608.5	31.7
1986	19	8	2.4	5,361	210.3	25.5	7,894	207.4	38.1	783	150.5	5.2	14,057	576.2	24.4
1987	81	23	3.5	3,943	213.4	18.5	4,719	233	20.3	1,765	212.1	8.3	10,508	681.5	15.4
1988	6	2	3.0	5,670	216.9	26.1	6,344	205.4	30.9	2,114	183.9	11.5	14,134	608.2	23.2
1989	0	0	0.0	2,951	179.25	16.5	6,699	241.8	27.7	2,558	78.25	32.7	12,208	499.3	24.5
1990	0	0	0.0	5,065	220	23.0	12,801	234.5	54.6	1,377	120	11.5	19,243	574.5	33.5
1991	0	0	0.0	4,308	215.8	20.0	9,291	223.2	41.6	1,352	109.5	12.3	14,951	548.5	27.3
1992	0	0	0.0	3,480	193.5	18.0	9,710	236	41.1	1,488	112	13.3	14,678	541.5	27.1
1993	0	0	0.0	2,014	176	11.4	8,836	227	38.9	1,257	135.5	9.3	12,107	538.5	22.5
1994	0	0	0.0	5,194	201.8	25.7	10,149	233.4	43.5	634	95.8	6.6	15,977	531.0	30.1
1995	0	0	0.0	4,231	214.6	19.7	5,801	230.75	25.1	776	110.3	7.0	10,808	555.7	19.5
1996	0	0	0.0	3,378	182	18.6	8,650	187.1	46.2	1,075	85.4	12.6	13,103	454.5	28.8
1997	0	0	0.0	4,304	181.85	23.7	6,712	221.25	30.3	1,089	105.25	10.3	12,105	508.4	23.8
1998	80	8	10.0	4,432	167	26.5	6,847	223	30.7	2,128	101.0	21.1	13,487	499.0	27.0
1999	0	0	0.0	4,190	200	21.0	6,538	206	31.7	267	96.0	2.8	10,995	502.0	21.9
2000	256	5	51.2	4,302	216	19.9	6,068	195	31.1	1,039	112.0	9.3	11,665	528.0	22.1
2001	49	25	1.9	2,576	181	14.2	11,620	243	47.8	588	96	6.1	14,833	545.0	27.2
2002	23	28	0.8	5,030	223	22.6	8,885	213	41.7	939	93	10.1	14,877	556.3	26.7
2003	4	4	1.0	5,632	214	26.3	7,769	209	37.2	955	105.5	9.1	14,360	532.0	27.0
2004	18	14.17	1.3	3,962	181.83	21.8	8,554	212.9	40.2	1,127	86.58	13.0	13,661	495.5	27.6
2005	33	5.5	6.0	3,129	197.5	15.8	11,829	193.08	61.3	1,610	95.58	16.8	16,601	495.17	33.5
2006	5	5.33	0.9	5,362	222.35	24.1	8,502	211.67	40.2	452	95.17	4.7	14,321	534.52	26.8
2007	6	3	2.0	5,241	202.33	25.9	6,584	201.58	32.7	1,115	100.17	11.1	12,946	507.08	25.5
2008	2	3	0.7	4,401	222.58	19.8	10,624	229.58	46.3	547	96.42	5.7	15,574	551.58	28.2
2009	0	0	0	5,548	225.92	24.6	11,646	204.92	56.8	383	89.42	4.3	17,577	520.25	33.8
2010	3	4.25	0.7	3,925	206.92	19.0	10,736	229.92	46.7	511	77.33	6.6	15,175	518.42	29.3
2011	0	0	0.0	6,389	209.53	30.5	13,667	210.67	64.9	318	75	4.2	20,374	495.2	41.1
2012	5	5.5	0.9	5,849	222	26.3	7,298	207.75	35.1	1280	53.25	24.0	14,432	488.5	29.5
2013	0	3	0.0	4,193	212.85	19.7	7,641	185.58	41.2	375	90.75	4.1	12,209	492.18	24.8
2014	0	0	0.0	2,658	214.25	12.4	8,427	213.91	39.4	586	85	6.9	11,671	513.17	22.7
AVERAGE 2009-2013				5180.8	215.4	24.0	10197.6	207.8	49.1	573.4	77.2	7.4	15953.4	502.9	31.7
AVERAGE 1981-2013				4174.2	199.7	20.9	9081.2	217.2	41.8	1144.1	115.8	9.9	14428.6	538.2	26.8
TOTAL 1981-2014	959	179.95		140,408	6,803.2		308,106	7,382.6		38,341	3,907.3		487,814	18,275.3	



Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Newsletter

February 2015 **Newsletter # 50**

MIGRATION TIME AGAIN

The first bird I saw on January 1 when I opened the curtains was our local Sharp-shinned Hawk, and, being ever optimistic, I took this as a good omen of what lies ahead.

Some key dates:

March 1: please contact Mike Street to offer help to set up. You'll be glad of those wind barriers.
April 3: Open House – there should be good variety of species.
April 18: Annual meeting and banquet. We had good attendance last year and hope to see many of you again.
May 15: please contact Mike to offer to help to take things down.

More information about the Open House and Banquet appears later in the newsletter and we look forward to your support. Another standard feature of the newsletter is the migration calendar, which gives information on when all the species can be best seen.

In the past two newsletters we have included articles about the Hawk Migration Association of North America (HMANA), and we are following this up with an article by one of our members, Eric Single, who was part of the group involved in HMANA's founding. We have also had articles on hawk-watching elsewhere in recent issues, and so I've summarized an article about sixty raptor species seen in Northern Cameroon.

As usual, I'd like to acknowledge the support and cooperation of the Niagara Peninsular Conservation Authority (NPCA) from giving us access to the park, maintaining the site and participating in the Open House.

Finally, I'd like to urge all of you to pay attention to skin care to minimize the chances of skin cancer. Use sun-block with 60 strength and wear a hat with a broad brim. Peaked caps may protect the face, but ears are left exposed. Some skin cancers can be removed and are not deadly, but others are, so please protect yourself. *The Editor*

TIME FOR YOU TO COME TO THE AID OF N.P.H.

The Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch (N.P.H.) has one of the longest, continuous data sets on hawk migration in North America. The great people of the Hamilton Naturalists' Club and others who started the N.P.H. in 1975 left a wonderful trail for the next generation to follow. N.P.H. has collected data for 40 seasons at Beamer Conservation Area, and it is extremely important to make sure that it continues to do so well into the future, despite all current pressures.

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The N.P.H. data sets are extremely valuable resources for naturalists, decision makers in Ontario, and to the Hawk Migration Association of North America. The Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch is talked about in the same breath as Cape May (New Jersey), Hawk Mountain (Pennsylvania), Derby Hill (New York), and Holiday Beach (Ontario). We have all the elements to make hawk-watching possible and accessible: superb geography with the Niagara escarpment face and Lake Ontario in close proximity, viewing from public property, and the wealth of talented birders in the Golden Horseshoe to draw on.

Like many organizations that have been in existence for many years, however, we are finding it increasingly difficult to carry out all the activities that we should and could. The two most critical needs are renewing the core committee and having enough counters. The committee that coordinates activities has been shrinking in recent years and, quite frankly is aging. We are pleased that this winter Bruce Mackenzie has rejoined the committee and will be assisting in the future. We hope that Bruce's example will inspire others. On the counting front it has been harder to get commitments – perhaps this is because of the instant availability of information about interesting birds that people may want to see.

What N.P.H. has accomplished – and continues to accomplish – is remarkable. Most hawk-watches with comparable sets of data use paid staff in some way to carry out the roles our members do. Not having a major benefactor or external support, we cannot afford to hire staff, and so must rely on volunteers. To avoid the risk of N.P.H. closing down we need help in counting and on the committee to help with activities on site, arranging counters, and organizing events like the Open House and banquet. The committee meets three times a year and many of the activities are one-time events, so the workload is not immense.

By helping to count or serving as a committee member you can make new friends, develop a lifetime skill and hobby that can extend well into your retirement years, and provide balance to an otherwise busy life. Our counters are always ready to mentor beginners, young and old, and some of those who gained an interest in bird-watching at Beamer have gone on environmental careers.

ANNUAL MEETING AND BANQUET SATURDAY APRIL 18

The Annual Meeting and Banquet will again be held at St Andrew's Church Hall, 7 St Andrew's Avenue, Grimsby on Saturday, April 18. Socializing and the bucket raffle begin at 5:00 p.m., the pre-supper wine and cheese around 5:15, and dinner around 6:15. As always, we welcome donations for the bucket raffle – please contact a member of the executive (page 5) if you can make a donation.

Tickets are $30 for members and $40 for non-members. Please contact a member of the NPH executive to obtain tickets.

Our speaker this year is one of our members, **Dr. William Rapley**, whose topic will be **A Naturalist's Dream.** He will provide an overview of the conservation, education and research efforts of the Toronto Zoo and many partners to make a difference. Bill has been at the Toronto Zoo for 35 years, and he will also draw on his experience in working with endangered species projects, threatened habitats and most importantly, connecting people to nature.

Dr. Rapley attended school in Stoney Creek. His early interest in nature, and specifically in nesting birds and birds of prey, turned into a career in biology and veterinary medicine with wildlife. Bill has had a lifelong friendship with Phil Waggett, and they have taken photos of birds for their nesting studies over many decades. Red-tailed Hawks and local raptors were of great interest in his youth. As well, Bill was able to work on the successful translocation of Bald Eagles to Southern Ontario.

He has had a unique career combining veterinary medicine, biology, conservation and administration. He obtained a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine from the University of Guelph in 1971, served his internship in Zoo Medicine and Pathology at San Diego Zoo and San Diego Wild Animal Park, worked in the Wildlife Disease section of the Ontario Veterinary College, and achieved his Master of Science in Pharmacology (Environmental Toxicology) at the University of Western Ontario in 1988.

Dr. Rapley was the first veterinarian at the Toronto Zoo and is currently the Executive Director of

Conservation, Education & Wildlife. He oversees a division with 125 staff, numerous graduate and undergraduate students, seasonal staff, and 500 volunteers, which is responsible for conservation outreach programs, wildlife exhibits, collections, curatorial programs, and veterinary, nutrition, and scientific activities at the Zoo.

We hope to see you for an interesting and enjoyable evening, when you can chat with all you hawk-watching friends!

2014 NPH OPEN HOUSE FRIDAY, APRIL 3

The 2015 Open House will be on Good Friday, April 3 at Beamer. This is a date that should provide a good variety of raptors, although it will be too early for Broad-winged Hawks. We hope, as always, that the weather will be fine and that there will be large crowds. The usual array of activities will take place. The NPCA, as our partners in this event, will have a display and will be selling food and beverages. Mike Street will resume his talks on migrating raptors after his absence last year on a trip to Australia. Once again there will be a children's program. Last year we had a good set of displays and we are working on having exhibitors at this year's Open House. We shall have some raptors on display, because for many of our visitors this is the highlight of the day. Last year the young Great Horned Owl stole the show, but we never know which raptors will arrive. We hope to see you on Good Friday!

NEW SIGN BOX FOR 2015 SEASON

Mike Street

This spring, exactly 20 years after the late Steve Oneschuk built in his home workshop the steel box for our hawkwatch data sign that has served us very well, the box has been retired. Although not easily seen in the accompanying picture below, the new box is two inches higher and deeper, and four inches wider than the old, with welded seams and full length door hinges. The extra space is to help us avoid pinched fingers when installing the sign and provide a bit more room for markers and such. The seams and hinges will help keep out rain. Although the new box is a bit hardier than the old one to avoid vandalism, it too will be removed from the site when the season is over. The new box was funded by membership dues and proceeds from voluntary admissions at the annual Open House.



ORIGINS OF THE HAWK MIGRATION ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA (HMANA)

Eric Single

In the last newsletter (#49) John Stevens reported on the 40th anniversary conference of HMANA, which was held in Rochester, New York. One of our members, Eric Single, was in on the founding of HMANA and in this article he tells us how it all began.

The Hawk Migration Association of North America (HMANA) was formally founded at the North American Hawk Migration Conference, held in Syracuse, New York, in April 1974. The conference and the creation of the new association had been planned at a previous meeting of more than a dozen hawk watches, organized by Mike Harwood (author of *The View from Hawk Mountain)* in January of 1972. The planning meeting was held at my home at the base of Hook Mountain in Upper Nyack, New York. This was due to the central location of my home rather than any key role I played!

The Syracuse conference was co-sponsored by the National Audubon Society and the Hawk Mountain Sanctuary. Mike Harwood deserves special acknowledgement for the creation of HMANA. His core idea was to create a network of hawk watches that would report results in a standardized way to each other and the birding community in general. It

was further hoped that the new organization might bridge a perceived gap between amateur hawk watchers and professional raptor researchers.

The conference commenced with a series of "show and tell" presentations describing various hawk watch locations and their migration results. Sixteen hawk-watches were presented by such notable figures as Alex Nagy (Director of Hawk Mountain Sanctuary), Don Heinzelman (Bake Oven Knob), Bill Clark (Cape May) and Stiles Thomas (Hook Mountain and Mt Peter). Marshal Fields of St. Thomas astounded the Appalachian hawk-watchers with his report on the large numbers of migrating hawks seen at Hawk Cliff.

After Chandler Robbins presented a history of hawk-watching in North America, there followed a series of technical presentations on the "mechanics" of hawk watching. These included papers by Thomas Dunstan on telemetry, John Richardson on radar studies, myself on computer usage in migration research, Colin Pennycuick on studying vultures with motor gliders and John Haugh on local weather conditions as they affect migration patterns. There were also spirited sessions on banding and on problems of hawk identification. These involved notable birders such as Dan Berger, Bill Clark, Dean Amadon, Dick Fyfe and Dave Copeland, who is recognized on one of the benches at Beamer for his work in identifying the site. In the final session Mike Harwood presented the proposal for a new organization (HMANA) and Maurice Broun was honoured for the pioneering work that he and his wife Irma did in establishing Hawk Mountain in the 1930s despite the intimidating tactics of hawk shooters.

Some 275 persons registered and attended the conference, which was by all accounts a success. The day following the conference, most of the participants went to view the spring hawk migration at Derby Hill along the southeastern shore of Lake Ontario, recording more than 3,000 hawks, including five Golden Eagles. It was as if the hawks themselves were endorsing the new organization.

(Individuals are encouraged to join HMANA, which provides:

1. *The Hawkcount data base that we and 200 other sites use.*
2. *A semi-annual journal.*
3. *Hawk migration studies.*
4. *A subscription-based e-mail list-serve.*
5. *Support for the Raptor Population Index (RPI) that is used for scientific analysis.)*

RAPTORS IN NORTHERN CAMEROON

Sandy Darling

The Bulletin of the African Bird Club (Vol. 21 No 1 2014, pp 26-53) contained an article by Ralph Buij and Barbara Croes who conducted raptor surveys in Northern Cameroon between December 2005 and December 2010. Northern Cameroon lies south of the Sahara Desert between Nigeria to the west and Chad to the east, and has three types of savannah with varied topography. The paper provides short reports on the **60 (yes, sixty)** raptor species that were observed. You may not have five years free to replicate the study, but it is interesting to note the diversity of raptors that one may find in parts of Africa.

Five of the species seen had not previously been recorded in Northern Cameroon: African Cuckoo Hawk, Levant Sparrowhawk, Red-thighed Sparrowhawk, Common Buzzard and Eleonora's Falcon. There is an interesting discussion on how the rains affect the distribution of raptors, which appear when food suitable for them is available. The rainy season occurs at the time of the boreal spring and summer, so there are few northern migrants around, but termites are plentiful. In the dry season grasshoppers provide the main source of insect food and so a different set of species moves in. Overall there has been a decline in numbers, because of human impact and more crop-growing. Rodent-hunting species like the Black Kite and Marsh Hawk, however, have benefitted.

Vultures are well-represented with six species, all of which can be seen elsewhere in Africa. Eleven eagles, the African Fish Eagle and four snake-eagles were reported, including Ayre's Eagle and Beaudouin's Snake Eagle, neither of which I saw when I was in Africa. Eleven falcons were observed, but as many as nine are migrants and so

could be seen in Europe; Fox and Gray Kestrels are the two falcons that are restricted to this "sahel" region between the Sahara and the more forested areas to the south. There were six buzzards or honey-buzzards, three of which are northern migrants; one buzzard which is not widespread is the Red-necked Buzzard, which moves with the rains as its food becomes available.

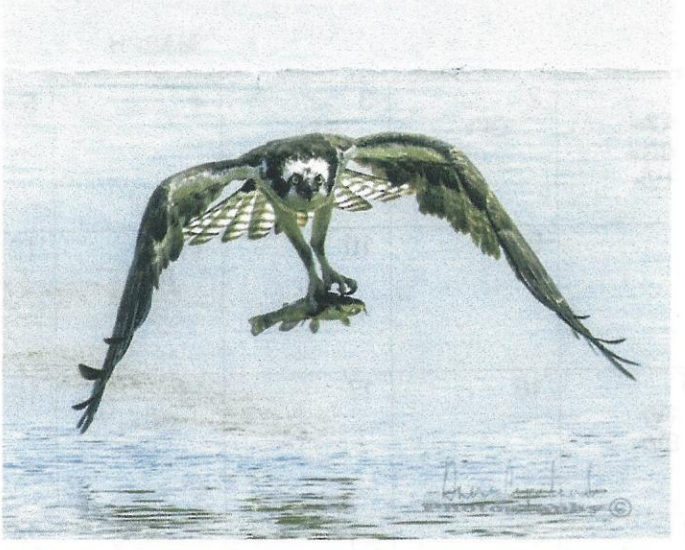
Surprisingly perhaps, there were only two harriers, and the Western Marsh Hawk is the commonest palearctic migrant in the region. There were four accipiters, of which the Red-thighed Sparrowhawk is the rarest. There are two goshawks (Dark Chanting and Gabar) that are not accipiters, although their behavior is similar to that of accipiters. The remainder of the 60 species observed include some interesting species. The Secretarybird walks across grasslands and stamps its prey to death. The African Swallow-tailed Kite is found in the sahel and looks like its American equivalent; the Black-winged Kite is more widespread, and is very similar to the White-tailed Kite. The African Harrier Hawk (Gymnogene) is double-jointed so that it can pluck prey out of tree hollows, and the Bataleur wobbles just like a Turkey Vulture; both are widespread in Africa. The Bat Hawk is found across that latitude in Africa and hunts at dusk and dawn. The African Cuckoo Hawk is the last of the 60 reported and is more widespread in Africa, although I have never seen it. Northern Cameroon is not particularly special and many of the birds reported can be seen either in Europe or elsewhere in Africa. What the article does emphasize is the richness of raptor species in many African countries. The visits my wife and I made to various countries, for example, yielded 37 raptors in Namibia and Botswana in 3 weeks, 33 in Ethiopia in 12 days, 29 in Kenya in 17 days, and 28 in Gambia (the smallest country in Africa) in a week. If you want to boost your raptor list, Africa is a great place to visit.

N.P.H EXECUTIVE

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"DINNER IS COMING"

The photo below first appeared in The Hamilton Spectator and is reprinted with the permission of the paper and the photographer, Dan Copeland. It was taken near Valley Inn in Hamilton.



- **Ask a member of the Executive Committee for a dinner ticket!**
- **Call or e-mail Mike about counting!**
- **Come to the Open House on April 3!**

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH CALENDAR FOR BEAMER MEMORIAL CONSERVATION AREA

NOTES:

1. Species initials and Right (>) or Left (<) arrow:
   This combination indicates the start (>) or end (<) of the normal migration period at Beamer for that species. The same in bold type indicates the start or end of a noticeable period for that species. The box in which this combination is located indicates the day and month the period is likely to start or end.
2. A number followed by species initial, followed by a slash (/) and a two-digit number:
   In this combination the largest number of that species ever seen in one day is given first, and the year it occurred second. The box where the combination is located indicates the day and month of the event. Example: 655 RS/94 in March 23 indicates that the highest number of Red-shouldered Hawks recorded in one day occurred on March 23, 1994.

TV – Turkey Vulture
BV – Black Vulture
OS – Osprey
SK – Swallow-tailed Kite
MK – Mississippi Kite
BE – Bald Eagle
GE - Golden Eagle
NH – Northern Harrier
SS – Sharp-shinned Hawk
CH – Cooper's Hawk
NG – Northern Goshawk
RS – Red-shouldered Hawk
RT – Red-tailed Hawk
SW – Swainson's Hawk
RL – Rough-legged Hawk
FH – Ferruginous Hawk
AK – American Kestrel
ML – Merlin
PF – Peregrine Falcon
PR – Prairie Falcon
GY – Gyrfalcon
BW – Broad-winged Hawk

The following information, based on 40 years of data, shows significant events up to January 2015.

The largest number of raptors in a season was 20,368 in 2011.

BE>, NH>, SS>, CH>, RT>, RL>, AK> begin about February 20.

MARCH

1 **RT>** **NG>** TV>	2 GE>	3 RS>	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11 **RL>**	12 **AK>**	13 **CH>** **RS>**	14 **44 AK/90**
15 **TV>** BV>	16 **744 RT/96**	17 **1 GY/06**	18 **BE>**	19	20 ML> **PF>**	21
22 **2 BV/12**	23 **NH>** **655 RS/94**	24 **11 NG/84** **19 BE/03**	25	26 **SS>**	27	28
29 **46 RL/04**	30	31 OS>				

Largest count for month: 6,389 in 2011; largest count in one day: 2,080 March 26, 1988

APRIL

	2 **7 GE/09** **2,021 TV/09**	3	4	5 **50 CH/93**	6	7
8 **OS>** **<RS**	9	10 BW>	11	12 **16 OS/92**	13 **1 FH/92**	14
15 **BW>** SW> **1 SK/94**	16 **<BE**	17	18 **35 NH/96** **1,556 SS/76**	19 **1 PR/95****	20 **1 GY/77**	21 **6,007 BW/85**
22	23 **1 FH/98***	24 **<OS** **1 FH/02***	25 **<TV** **6 ML/96**	26	27 **3 PF/10**	28 <BV
29 **2 SW/98***	30 **<RL** **<CH**					

Largest count for month: 15,012 in 1984; largest count in one day: 7,007 April 21, 1985

MAY

1	2 **2 SW/97***	3	4 **<RT**	5 <SW	6 <PF	7
8	9	10	11 **1 MK/97***	12 **<NH** **<AK**	13 <CH <BE	14 **<SS** **1 MK/03***
15 **<BW** <RL <ML **1 MK**/12	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31 <TV<NH <SS<OS <NG<RS <AK<GE	*BW & RT continue after May 31*			

Largest count for month: 2,685 in 1980: largest count in one day 1,492 May 4, 1989

* Sighting not reviewed/ accepted by Ontario Bird Records Committee
** First accepted Prairie Falcon record in Ontario

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch

Newsletter

August 2015 Newsletter # 51

A BETTER YEAR

After two years of unusually low numbers of migrants, the Spring of 2015 was markedly better, as reported by John Stevens in his annual statistical report at the end of the newsletter. Especially pleasing were the relatively large numbers of Red-shouldered Hawks and Golden Eagles, and we have photos of both species taken by Tom Thomas in this newsletter.

Members of the executive have been happy over the last year to have added Bruce Mackenzie and Matt Mills. Bruce has focused on publicity and some of his initiatives are noted in the report on the Open House. Matt has joined more recently, but added great eyes in helping with counting and he is also working on some new initiatives that we hope might be introduced soon. Another good sign this year was an increase in exhibitors at the Open House.

As usual we wish to thank all those who help in preparing and taking down the site (including the all-important wind-shields on the tower), counting, and working at the Open House and the banquet. We hope that all members will help in some way and encourage others to become members. Our greatest need currently is for someone to assume responsibility for coordinating counters - a critical position if we are to ensure full coverage during the period from March 1 to May 15. This newsletter includes contributions from two members: a commentary by Ron Pittaway on changing taxonomy and related matters, and a summary of the after-dinner speech by Bill Rapley.

Again we thank the Niagara Peninsular Conservation Authority (NPCA) and all its staff who gave us access to the park, maintained the site and helped us with the Open House.

2015 N.P.H. OPEN HOUSE

The Open House was held on Good Friday, April 3, and the timing was good for providing a variety of species. The day was foggy to start, but after the fog cleared viewing was good as the sky alternated between being clear and cloudy. In general the birds flew at low altitude and the total seen was 732, of which 587 were Turkey Vultures. Other species that added significantly to the count were 60 Sharp-shinned Hawks and 52 Red-shouldered Hawks. Other notable species were 2 Osprey, 4 Bald Eagle, 2 Northern Harrier, 2 Rough-legged Hawk, 1 Golden Eagle and 2 American Kestrel, although the Bald Eagles and Rough-legged Hawks came after the close of the Open House.

Visitors numbered in the hundreds, and, as usual, the raptors brought by James Cowan of the Canadian Raptor Conservancy pleased the crowd. James showed and talked about a great Horned Owl, a Bald Eagle and a Red-tailed Hawk. Bruce

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Mackenzie attracted sponsors and used the funds to purchases bird guides that he distributed to some of the younger members of the visitors. We were also able to attract some new exhibitors, who were pleased with their experience. All those who helped to make the day a success deserve our thanks.

CONSERVATION, EDUCATION AND RESEARCH AT TORONTO ZOO

The annual meeting and banquet was held on April 18 and was attended by about 40 people. Our speaker at the annual meeting and dinner was Dr. William Rapley, one of our own members. Bill grew up in Stoney Creek, trained to be a veterinarian at the University of Guelph, and earned a master's degree in Pharmacology (Environmental Toxicology) at Western University. He was the first vet at the zoo and has worked there for 35 years. Most of us were surprised to learn how extensive the range of programs of the zoo is.

Bill had four key messages in his talk:

- Most of the zoo's work in these areas is achieved through working with partners, and this is an important way in which the resources available can be expanded.
- There are things we can do to stop the decline in the number of living species, and one of the most important things is to preserve natural habitat.
- We need to use all the media available – the zoo has 34 million hits on its website annually.
- Education is important and one of the key things is to connect people to nature, because increased urbanization has decreased most people's contact with nature.

To illustrate these points Bill used a variety of examples. The zoo is partnering in a project with a budget of $380,000 to help first nations people to restore a greater understanding of the environment. The zoo is working with partners to implement a species survival plan for the Grevy's Zebra, a native of northern Kenya and the extreme south of Ethiopia. This zebra is distinctive, because it has narrow black and white stripes with no shadow stripes, and is the editor's favorite zebra. Closer to home the health of Common Loons is a key indicator of the presence of mercury and other heavy metals, and this can be measured from the eggs. He also talked about the program to bring back Bald Eagles from the ravages of DDT using a captive breeding program in the 1980s. Whereas there was one nest in Southern Ontario in the 1960s, there are now 63 nests in the same region. Similar programs were run for Ospreys and Peregrine Falcons, so that now over 100 Peregrine Falcons nest in southern Ontario. Other successes have been Sandhill Cranes on the Bruce Peninsula and Loggerhead Shrikes. An example of where habitat is critical is with Red-shouldered Hawks, which have been hurt by the loss of wetlands.

The Toronto Zoo is also working with international partners to support reserves in other countries, such as Cameroon. In some countries reserves are not adequately monitored and the killing of "bush-meat" takes place. The world population of wildlife has declined by 52% since 1982. The challenge is multi-dimensional and so the solutions must be carefully crafted. Within Canada a major effort is being made to raise awareness and understanding through the use of various media and an extensive set of educational programs. The efforts of the zoo are leveraged by using over 500 volunteers, and collaborating with universities through the placement of students at the zoo and by assisting in university programs. Links with colleges and universities enables joint research to be undertaken and currently the zoo is involved in 75 research studies. All of us gained a much better understanding of the range and diversity of the zoo work in conservation and the critical role of education and research in supporting such efforts.

DR DAVID HUSSELL (1934 -2015)

David Hussell, who played a major role in developing migration monitoring died of a stroke on April 10. He was born in England and immigrated to Canada. He was part of a team that in 1959 investigated whether Long Point would be a suitable place for a banding station, and, as a result, the Long Point Bird Observatory (LPBO) was established the following year. David served as the first Executive Director of LPBO from 1974 to 1982. He played a major role in establishing migration monitoring stations elsewhere and in developing research programs of Bird Studies Canada. He was involved in developing the 'Raptor Population

Index' (RPI) for hawk monitoring stations in North America. David was our speaker at the April 2010 dinner when he talked about the use of the RPI. David was the recipient of honors from many ornithological groups, including the Hawk Migration Association of North America, in recognition of his significant contributions.

COMMENTARY: DNA, TAXONOMY, HAWK OR RAPTOR, SUBSPECIES AND TERMINOLOGY

Ron Pittaway

[Ron Pittaway is a member of NPH and has served since 2010 as the Canadian representative on the American Birding Association's Checklist Committee.]

Very likely the main reason we go to the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch is the fun of seeing both hawks and longtime friends. We also love to debate hawk lore. This commentary discusses a few of the changes that hawkwatchers have experienced over the years.

Taxonomic Changes and Checklist Order: Until 1998 all hawks (diurnal birds of prey) were in the order Falconiformes based historically on morphological similarities. That year the American Ornithologists' Union (AOU 1998), citing DNA studies, transferred the New World vultures and condors in the family *Cathartidae* out of the order Falconiformes into the order Ciconiiformes, which included storks and ibises. However, not long afterwards this decision was reversed and vultures/condors were returned to Falconiformes. Then in 2010, the AOU split Falconiformes into two orders: (1) Accipitriformes, which included the families *Cathartidae* (vultures and condors), *Pandionidae* (Osprey) and Accipitridae (accipiters, buteos, harriers, ospreys, kites, eagles), and (2) the order Falconiformes now with only one family, the *Falconidae* (caracaras and falcons). Surprisingly, also based on DNA, the AOU in 2012 moved the order Falconiformes with its only family *Falconidae (caracaras and falcons)* to immediately before the New World Parrots in the family *Psittacidae* of the order Psittaciformes. Now falcons and caracaras are separated from other hawks by more than 150 pages in the new Sibley Guide (2014). Regardless of current phylogeny, I'd prefer that all hawks be kept together in field guides for practical convenience. Finally, the latest 56th supplement to the AOU (2015) list changed the sequence so that Rough-legged Hawk now precedes Ferruginous Hawk on the checklist.

Hawk or Raptor: These two terms are often confused. They are not taxonomic categories and have different meanings. Hawk is the general term for the diurnal birds of prey which includes vultures, kites, accipiters, buteos, eagles, harriers, ospreys, caracaras and falcons. Raptor, however, includes both hawks and owls so these two terms are not synonymous. Over the years the meaning of raptor has become more and more associated with hawks and less so with owls. Also, older hawkwatches often have hawk in their official names such as Hawk Cliff, Hawk Mountain and the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch. Whereas many more of the recently established hawkwatches call themselves raptor watches, such as the Rosetta McClain Gardens Raptor Watch on Toronto's Scarborough Bluffs, but with rare exceptions these raptor watches do not count owls. Raptor sounds sexier than hawk and it seemingly increased in popularity after the release of the motion picture Jurassic Park in 1993 and possibly because modern birds are now known to be descended from a lineage of feathered dinosaurs.

Turkey Condor and Black Condor: Palmer (1998) in the Handbook of North American Birds wrote that "At least all of the dark species of Vultures might better be called Condors". New World vultures in the family *Cathartidae* are unrelated to the true Old World vultures in the family *Accipitridae,* so calling our birds vultures is a misnomer. Their similarities are due to convergent evolution. Is it time for the AOU to change the names to Turkey Condor and Black Condor? This would correct the misleading name vulture used for our two Ontario condors. It also would be good public relations because vultures are considered ugly and looked down upon by many people. Imagine the increase in visitors coming to Beamer to see migrating condors.

Juvenile or Immature: Older field guides and old-timers used immature for hawks in their first year of life. Now the more precise term juvenile is used in modern hawk handbooks. In most hawks, the juvenile plumage, which is acquired in the nest, is held for almost a year before the hawk undergoes a prolonged complete moult over the summer into its

first adult plumage. Northbound juvenile hawks in spring at Beamer are wearing the same feathers that they migrated south with in the previous fall. Some spring hawks, particularly juvenile Broad-winged Hawks, show missing primaries in late April and May indicating they've begun their first annual moult.

Morph or Phase: Morphs are different color forms that coexist in the same interbreeding population. Just as juvenile has replaced immature, morph has replaced *phase* as the modern term used in ornithology. No authoritative publication since 1990 uses the outdated term phase. Morph is preferred because phase suggests changes over time such as the phases of the moon, whereas a hawk hatched as a light or dark morph remains the same morph its entire life. Juvenile and adult plumages have different appearances, but they are different ages/plumages, not morphs. Albinism, leucism and other aberrant color variations are not true morphs. Unlike subspecies, morphs do *not* have scientific names. Morphs presumably arose as adaptations to local conditions. For example, the different color morphs, particularly in buteos, may confuse mammalian prey making them more likely to be caught.

Subspecies: Subspecies is the official term in ornithology for taxonomically distinct subpopulations of a species. Subspecies differ from morphs in having separate breeding ranges. They interbreed freely where their ranges meet and intermediates are called intergrades, not hybrids. Different subspecies mix together during migration and in winter. Subspecies, unlike morphs, have scientific names. Race is a less formal synonym whose present-day use now has a negative connotation.

Northern Red-tailed Hawk: There is an overlooked subspecies that is a common migrant at Beamer. It is the Northern Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis abieticola*) that breeds mainly in the boreal forest. *Abieticola* means dweller of the fir. It was first described by W. E. Clyde Todd in 1950 in the Annals of the Carnegie Museum, Pittsburgh. However, Northern *abieticola* has not received much recognition until recently because it was poorly known, nesting in remote areas. Now more and more authors are recognizing it. Northerns are highly migratory whereas many of the Red-tails that breed locally are resident or short distance migrants. Adult Northerns migrate in March and April when local birds are at their nests. In my experience at Beamer, many of the adult Red-tailed Hawks passing Beamer are Northerns. Typical Northerns look like "heavily printed" versions of the Red-tails breeding in southern Ontario. Compared to more southern local birds, adult Northerns usually have a darker throat (more streaked), heavier belly band with large dark blotches, and they often have a buffy wash on the breast. Some Northerns are more richly marked and therefore more easily recognized. In the past, Northerns in the East were overlooked or confused with light morph Western Red-tailed Hawks (*calurus*). Watch for Northern Red-tails at Beamer. Type the link below into your URL line. It is the best reference on Northern Red-tailed Hawks, authored by Jerry Liguori and Brian L. Sullivan (2014) and published in *North American Birds* 67(3):374-383. http://bit.ly/1JSHqmE

Hawk Specialty Books: Up until 1987, we used mainly general field guides to identify hawks. The illustrations and texts were often inadequate or misleading. The first authoritative hawk ID guide was *Hawks* in 1987 (revised 2001) in the Peterson guide series by Bill Clark and Brian Wheeler. *Hawks in Flight* came out soon afterwards in 1988 (revised 2012 – *reviewed in newsletter #47*) by

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Pete Dunne, David Sibley and Clay Sutton. These two specialty guides revolutionized hawkwatching. They were followed by photographic guides by Wheeler and Clark in 1995, *Raptors* (Eastern and Western editions) by Wheeler in 2003, *Hawks From Every Angle* by Liguori in 2005, *Hawks At A Distance* by Liguori in 2011 and *The Crossley ID Guide: Raptors* in 2013 by Crossley, Liguori and Sullivan (*reviewed in newsletter #48*). More guides and apps are forthcoming.

Good News Story: This article would have been a bad news story if written in 1934 when Maurice Broun first climbed Hawk Mountain in Pennsylvania to count migrating hawks and protect them from shooters. Back then most hawks were unprotected and considered vermin. They were shot at every opportunity. Golden Eagles were often poisoned when they accidently ate strychnine placed in bait to kill wolves and coyotes. The pesticide DDT caused major declines in Bald Eagles, Ospreys, Peregrine Falcons and Merlins. The good news story today is that most hawk populations are doing well following the banning of DDT and strychnine, and because of protective laws, education, and a shift to greater public appreciation for birds of prey. The Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch continues to play an important role in monitoring population trends in conjunction with other well-established hawk lookouts in North America.

2015 MIGRATION SUMMARY AT BEAMER MEMORIAL CONSERVATION AREA

John Stevens

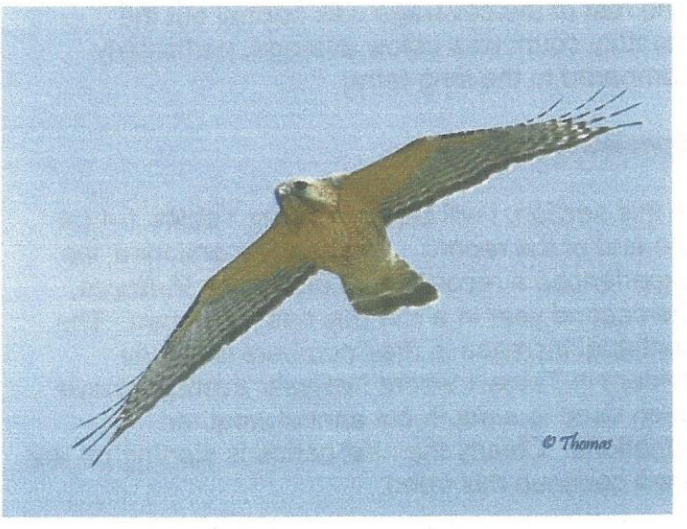
A record high count of Turkey Vultures led to the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch's 2015 spring migration being an average year overall. The total count for all species, 14,869, was within a hundred birds of the most recent 5-year average, 14,771, and only about 5% above the long term (35-year) average of 14,254. Such a mediocre result still came as a welcome relief to all the watchers after the serious decline in the number of birds counted that we had experienced in the last three years.

While the Turkey Vulture was the only species having a record high annual count for Beamer, Bald Eagle and Golden Eagle had their second highest counts on record, and Red-shouldered Hawk had the second highest count since 1997, almost doubling last year's total. By contrast, historically very low counts were recorded for Northern Goshawk, American Kestrel, Merlin, Northern Harrier, Red-tailed Hawk and Sharp-shinned Hawk.

Highlights during the season included 298 Red-shouldered Hawks among 1,176 birds on March 31st, twelve species on each of April 2nd and April 12th, and a Swainson's Hawk along with 1,594 Broad-winged Hawks on April 25th. No Black Vultures were counted this year and no mention of any sightings of them was made at Beamer.



This Golden Eagle (above) and Red-shouldered Hawk were photographed during the season by Tom Thomas.



The Season

Winter 2015 was still in full swing as the beginning of March approached and no counts were conducted in February. Counting began on schedule on March 1st but almost nothing was counted until after the middle of the month. The cold, snowy winter was experienced well south in eastern North America and this may have delayed the arrival of the earlier migrants that spend the winter in the Appalachians. Temperatures were slightly below normal for the entire month but notably there were no warm days, the highest temperature of 10°C being reached on the 16th. Precipitation events affected five days to some degree so the monthly total of 4,687 birds, being slightly above both short and long-term averages, was quite encouraging after the slow start.
In April we experienced slightly above normal temperatures and rain but almost no snow. Rain impacted the counting on the 8th and 9th but otherwise there was little effect and almost 220 hours of counting occurred. This produced a slightly above average total of 9,654 birds for the month. The first Broad-winged Hawk appeared on April 11, which is about normal. Of course our winter has no relevance to this species that spends the winter in South America.

The first part of May was quite warm with several days having temperatures in the high 20s or low 30s. For the most part, rain was not a factor as, although it was noted on several days, it was either light, of short duration, or both. May 14th was not covered but that was likely of little consequence as the flow of birds had pretty well stopped by then. The rest of the coverage was normal but the monthly count was below average, particularly compared to the long term.

Species Accounts

In this section, I will be referencing Tables 1-4 (at the end of the report). As already mentioned, we experienced a record count of ***Turkey Vultures***, the second year in a row this has happened. The continual increase in their numbers is clearly evident in Table 1 where five-year averages have been used to smooth out annual weather variations. Clearly the next period is starting off like it will continue this trend.

It was a below average year for ***Ospreys***. Like other large raptors, this species was severely affected by chlorinated pesticides such as DDT. After they were banned, it made a remarkable recovery but the number seen at Beamer has now remained fairly steady for the last 25 years at between 40 and 70 birds. The 42 recorded this year is near the low end of that range.

Recovery from the effects of persistent toxic chemicals in the environment has been slower for ***Bald Eagles*** than for Osprey but it has been more dramatic (Table 1). The number counted at Beamer appeared to have peaked between 2005 and 2009 when the three greatest counts were recorded prior to this year. The count of 80 birds in 2015 is nearly double the 43 of last year, which was the lowest total since 2001. There was at least one sub-adult bird residing in the area this year that was seen on numerous occasions moving both east and west. Efforts were made to avoid counting it but it is possible that it got counted several times and inflated the annual count.

The news for ***Northern Harrier*** is not good. The 2015 count of 68 represents the second lowest total since we began full season coverage and is only half the long term average for Beamer. Last year the record low count of 63 was set. While this year was an improvement, it should be noted that the counts in the last four years represent four of the five lowest counts in our history.

We counted 50% more ***Sharp-shinned Hawks*** in 2015 than we did last year, which is a real improvement. However, the 1,253 sharpies was still the second lowest total in our history. Twenty-five to thirty-five years ago we routinely counted over 4,000 a year (Table 1). The pronounced decline in their numbers is almost as stunning as the increase in the Turkey Vulture counts.

The ***Cooper's Hawk*** count of 153 was greater than the recent five-year average but still well below the long-term average of 189. This was the highest count since 2007. The population of this species has increased in the last 35 years in southern Ontario but the counts at Beamer generally remained static between 1980 and 2007. In recent years the migration numbers had declined at Beamer as they have for a number of species.

It was another poor year for ***Northern Goshawks*** with only a single bird but that was an improvement on 2014. Derby Hill at the eastern end of Lake Ontario had the second lowest count of goshawks (9) in their 36 year history. Other spring watch sites around the Great Lakes all experienced low numbers this year as they have been reporting for several years. Fall migration numbers in the lower Great Lakes area have also been low for several years with the last modest irruption occurring in 2003-2004, an event we did not experience at Beamer.

The ***Red-shouldered Hawk*** count fell between the recent five-year average and the long term average. The count of 698 birds in 2015 was 78% above last year's record low. Almost all the birds counted were adults and the last bird passed the watch on April 23rd. The absence of any significant flight of juvenile birds seems rather unhealthy.

While not a banner year by any means, the count of ***Broad-winged Hawks*** was up slightly from last year but still below the five-year and long term averages. 55% of the flight passed on April 25th (Table 3) when 1,594 were counted.

There were no reports of unusual color versions within the 1,778 ***Red-tailed Hawks*** counted this year. This total was in line with the recent 5-year average but 33% below the long term average. As with the Red-shouldered Hawks, there seemed to be a poor flight of immature birds in late April and May.

The 46 ***Rough-legged Hawks*** seen was the most since 2011 but only represents about 64% of the long term average for the species. The weather last winter was the kind of year when one might expect these birds to move further south looking for food. Having less than two-thirds of an average count was disappointing.

American Kestrel as well had the second lowest count in our 36 years, with only last year's dismal total being lower. The 40 birds counted represent just 43% of the long term average. As shown on Table 1, 40 birds is only about a third of the five-year average in the late 1980s and early 1990s. This low count represents further evidence of the declining population of this beautiful species.

Merlin was one of the three species in 2015 (along with Osprey and Peregrine) to show a decline from their 2014 counts. The count of nine birds was their lowest count since 2001 and was not only below the recent five-year average but also below our long term average. Merlins have never been a common species at Beamer.

The ***Peregrine*** count of six birds was above the long term average although below the recent five-year average. The fact that they now nest a few kilometers along the escarpment from Beamer does not appear to have impacted the frequency with which they are seen at Beamer.

Summary

All in all there were a few bright spots this year such as the recovery of the Red-shouldered Hawks and the more frequent sightings of both eagle species. On the other hand, the decline of the small hawks like Sharpies and Kestrels as well as Harriers, remains a concern. This year, Turkey Vulture moved ahead of Sharp-shinned Hawk as the second most frequently counted raptor since we began monitoring in 1975.

The NPH salutes the following fourteen people who served as the designated counters this season: Bouwe Bergsma, John Black, Craig Corcoran, Sandy Darling, Chris Escott, Tim Foran, Gord Kozak, Bruce Mackenzie, Matt Mills, Brian Mishell, John Stevens, Chris Street, Mike Street, and Phil Waggett. Thanks for your help.

TABLE 1
2015 Results Compared to 5-Year Annual Averages since 1980

Period	1980-1984 avg.	1985-1989 avg.	1990-1994 avg.	1995-1999 avg.	2000-2004 avg.	2005-2009 avg.	2010-2014 avg.	2015	1980-2014 average
Black Vulture	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.4	0.2	2.0		0.40
Turkey Vulture	664.6	1,299.8	2,057.6	2,974.0	4,043.4	5,735.0	6,774.2	7,730	3,364.09
Osprey	25.6	35.2	52.8	43.0	55.0	50.4	53.4	42	45.06
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0		0.03
Mississippi Kite	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.2		0.09
Bald Eagle	5.6	12.8	21.6	27.8	47.4	70.2	57.2	80	34.66
Northern Harrier	111.4	162.0	184.8	129.2	133.8	126.6	87.2	68	133.57
Sharp-shinned Hawk	4,440.6	3,508.8	4,506.0	2,659.8	2,568.2	1,886.6	1,611.4	1,253	3,025.91
Cooper's Hawk	157.0	191.2	240.6	238.4	213.2	170.2	115.8	153	189.49
Northern Goshawk	40.4	23.6	35.6	15.2	8.6	7.4	4.4	1	19.31
Red-shouldered Hawk	662.4	900.8	1,148.0	687.0	502.2	669.8	503.0	698	724.74
Broad-winged Hawk	5,217.0	3,780.8	2,714.4	2,179.2	3,424.8	3,688.8	3,600.0	2,898	3,515.00
Swainson's Hawk	0.0	0.6	0.8	1.2	0.4	0.2	0.2	1	0.49
Red-tailed Hawk	2,862.8	3,141.8	3,189.4	2,679.6	2,354.0	2,662.0	1,779.2	1,778	2,666.97
Ferruginous Hawk	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0		0.09
Rough-legged Hawk	70.6	60.4	101.6	66.0	78.0	89.2	37.8	46	71.94
Golden Eagle	5.0	7.0	9.2	7.6	8.6	11.0	8.2	14	8.09
American Kestrel	88.8	128.2	138.8	72.4	92.0	74.8	55.2	40	92.89
Merlin	2.4	6.2	13.0	15.0	15.8	13.8	16.2	9	11.77
Peregrine Falcon	1.4	2.0	4.8	2.0	5.6	6.2	8.0	6	4.29
Gyrfalcon	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0		0.03
Prairie Falcon	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0		0.03
Unid. Raptors	539.6	775.2	984.2	298.2	349.0	141.0	57.4	52	449.23
Total Raptors	14,895	14,036	15,404	12,096	13,901	15,404	14,771	14,869	14,358.14
Hours Counted	560.9	594.7	546.8	504.1	531.2	521.9	502.9	537	537.5

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Table 2- March 2015

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	March Species Totals
Black Vulture																																0
Turkey Vulture									2		2	8	7		12	8	121	138	315	348	119	74	126	220	23	11	26	271	197	238	737	3,003
Osprey																																0
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite																																0
Mississippi Kite																																0
Bald Eagle		3							1	1	1	2	1		1			4	10	6	1	3	2	6				4			3	49
Northern Harrier																2			2	1	1									2	1	9
Sharp-shinned Hawk								1			1	1	1			1			5	2			1	5	1			1	9	1	6	36
Cooper's Hawk		1									2		2		1	1	1	3	8	1			3	3					5	8	18	57
Northern Goshawk																																0
Red-shouldered Hawk																1	1		156	16	1	2	18	66				3	12	12	298	586
Broad-winged Hawk																																0
Swainson's Hawk																																0
Red-tailed Hawk		1				1	1	1	3	3	3	12	6		15	2	15	62	321	128	25	18	42	107			4	17	11	6	108	912
Ferruginous Hawk																																0
Rough-legged Hawk								1	1		1				1	2	1		4	1								1			2	15
Golden Eagle																	1		3	2			1	1								8
American Kestrel																				1				1								2
Merlin										1								1	1													3
Peregrine Falcon																																0
Gyrfalcon																																0
Prairie Falcon																																0
Unid. Accipiter																																0
Unid. Buteo																							1								3	4
Unid. Falcon																																0
Unid. Eagle																					1											1
Unid. Raptor																							2									2
Total Raptors	0	6	0	0	0	1	1	3	7	6	10	23	17	0	30	17	140	208	825	506	148	97	196	409	24	11	30	297	234	267	1,176	4,687
Hours Counted	7.25	6.00	2.50	9.00	7.00	5.50	6.00	9.00	8.00	8.00	9.00	8.00	7.50	3.00	7.50	7.50	8.50	8.00	8.25	9.00	6.50	9.75	8.75	8.25	6.00	2.50	3.75	7.00	6.50	8.00	8.50	220.00
Precipitation	S		S											R											R	S						

* indicates no counter

Table 3 - April 2015

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	April Species Totals
Black Vulture																															0
Turkey Vulture	699	360	587	235	11	585	223	9		76	274	678	167	125	105	20	17	24	6		45	30	2	42	5	50	2	40	64	6	4507
Osprey	1	2	2	1		3				2	4	4	4	1		1		1	1	2		1	1			5		2	1		39
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite																															0
Mississippi Kite																															0
Bald Eagle	4	1	4	1			2				1	3	1	1	1	1					1				3		1	1			26
Northern Harrier	3	6	2	2		5				1	1	9	5			2		1		6		4			2		1	1			51
Sharp-shinned Hawk	26	44	60	9	1	87	8			51	48	194	279	17	6	29	21	2	4	48	5	20	3	6	27	5	6	26	16	11	1061
Cooper's Hawk	5	4	5	1		2	1			6	1	10	1	7		3	3	2				4	1	4	1	2	7	2	1	4	77
Northern Goshawk						1																									1
Red-shouldered Hawk	63	1	15	4		14					2	7	2	1	1	1							1								112
Broad-winged Hawk											1	25	146	167	24	24	142	1	39	9	3	9	16	61	1,594	32	13	151	346	27	2830
Swainson's Hawk																									1						1
Red-tailed Hawk	186	10	52	32		91	43			4	35	170	44	19	25	6	7	8	9	1	1	3	1	2	23	7	2	20	20	4	825
Ferruginous Hawk																															0
Rough-legged Hawk	2	2	2	2		4	1				1	6	4	2							1				1	1		1			30
Golden Eagle			1		1							3																		1	6
American Kestrel		4	2	1			1			3	1	3	3	1		1			2	1	3	1		2	1			3	2		35
Merlin		3				1								1												1					6
Peregrine Falcon		1																								3			1		5
Gyrfalcon																															0
Prairie Falcon																															0
Unid. Accipiter		2				3																									5
Unid. Buteo												25	4	1												1					31
Unid. Falcon																1															1
Unid. Eagle												1																			1
Unid. Raptor													1	1														2			4
Total Raptors	991	460	732	286	13	796	279	9	0	143	369	1,138	661	344	162	89	190	39	61	67	59	72	25	117	1,668	107	32	249	451	53	9,654
Hours Counted	8.25	7.75	8.00	7.00	5.00	8.25	7.00	3.00	0.00	7.58	9.00	8.50	9.00	9.00	8.00	7.25	7.92	6.75	7.00	8.33	7.75	8.00	6.50	7.75	7.00	8.00	8.17	8.25	8.00	7.50	219.50
Precipitation		R			S	R		R,F	R							R				R											

* indicates no counter

Table 4 - May 2015

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	May Species Totals
Black Vulture																0
Turkey Vulture	41	27	29	31	19	6	10		18	13	3	14	9			220
Osprey			1			1	1									3
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite																0
Mississippi Kite																0
Bald Eagle	2							1	1				1			5
Northern Harrier	1			2		2		1			1	1				8
Sharp-shinned Hawk	6		24	55	3	8	6	21	16	2	7	6	1		1	156
Cooper's Hawk	2	2		1	1	4	1	1	1	2	2	1	1			19
Northern Goshawk																0
Red-shouldered Hawk																0
Broad-winged Hawk	2	13	10	13		3		2	21		3		1			68
Swainson's Hawk																0
Red-tailed Hawk	9	4	6		1	8			6	2	4		1			41
Ferruginous Hawk																0
Rough-legged Hawk			1													1
Golden Eagle																0
American Kestrel				1							2					3
Merlin																0
Peregrine Falcon									1							1
Gyrfalcon																0
Prairie Falcon																0
Unid. Accipiter				1												1
Unid. Buteo			2													2
Unid. Falcon																0
Unid. Eagle																0
Unid. Raptor																0
Total Raptors	63	46	73	104	24	32	18	26	64	19	22	22	14	0	1	528
Hours Counted	8.00	7.00	6.00	8.75	6.00	8.00	5.50	5.33	7.00	8.00	8.00	7.00	9.00	0.00	5.50	99.08
Precipitation					R									*	R	

* indicates no counter

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch

Newsletter

January 2016 **Newsletter # 52**

LEARN ABOUT THE SECRET LIVES OF RED-SHOULDERED HAWKS AT OUR ANNUAL BANQUET

We have a special treat in store for the Annual Meeting and Banquet. Dr. Cheryl Dykstra is going to talk about "Secret Lives of Red-shouldered Hawks - the Fascinating and Little-known Behaviors of our Wild Neighbors". Cheryl is an independent consultant in Cincinnati, Ohio, and has been the Editor-in-chief of the Journal of Raptor Research for the last ten years. She earned her M.S. and Ph.D. in Wildlife Ecology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where she studied Bald Eagles nesting along the shores of Lake Superior, and has since published more than 30 papers in peer-reviewed ornithological journals. After graduation she worked for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Cheryl and her colleagues have studied the ecology of Red-shouldered Hawks in southern Ohio for the last 19 years, during which time they have banded more than 2,200 nestling Red-shouldered Hawks and have recently used cameras to study nesting behavior. You can learn more about her studies by visiting http://redshoulderedhawkstudy.com/.



Red-shouldered Hawk **Photo: Tom Thomas**

The Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch has one of the highest counts of Red-shouldered Hawks for spring migration sites, and so it is fitting that we have such a well-qualified speaker to talk about this beautiful bird. Please make a special effort to come to **St Andrews Church in Grimsby on Saturday, April 16.** Socializing and the bucket raffle will begin at 5:00 p.m. and dinner around 6:15. As always we welcome contributions to the bucket raffle and you can inform one of the members of the executive if you plan to contribute an item.

Tickets are **$35 for members and $45 for non-members.** We encourage you to bring friends for what should be a great evening to chat and learn.

NEW INITIATIVES

In our last newsletter we were happy to report that we had added new members to the executive committee, and in this newsletter we are pleased to

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report some new initiatives that are designed to look to the future and build our membership base. Many of our members have been watching and counting hawks for many years, and we need to make sure that we have others to follow you. One new initiative has been to introduce Facebook as a means for members and others to learn about our activities and news during the season. It also provides you with an opportunity to share some of the excellent photos that you take at Beamer. We are also offering an award to secondary school students that will encourage then to study raptors and to spend time during the season with us. Full details about the scholarships appear below. Another new initiative last year was obtaining sponsors for the Open House and this enabled us to distribute bird guidebooks to many families who were visiting. Given the good response, we shall be doing this again.

We are excited about our speaker for the banquet and she is excited to be coming to a spring hawk-watch. Red-shouldered Hawks are a favourite of many and you have the opportunity to learn more about them from a person who has spent a lot of time studying them. Please attend the annual meeting and dinner, and support us in other ways too. Our first need is for helpers at 9:00 a.m. on March 1 to set up the site – the more help we have the faster we complete the job. You can also help by counting, or helping at the Open House, or even by renewing your membership. We look forward to seeing you again during the season.

2016 OPEN HOUSE: FRIDAY MARCH 25

As usual, we shall have our Open House on Good Friday, which this year is on **March 25 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.** – one of the earliest dates that we can have. It is interesting to note that on March 24, 2015 we had eight species of raptors and 409 migrating birds. We hope that we shall have lots of Red-shouldered Hawks passing through along with some eagles and some Rough-legged Hawks. Last year we had more exhibitors and we plan to ask them all to return, and we shall work on bringing other groups too. Once again James Cowan of Canadian Raptor Conservancy will bring raptors to provide one of the highlights of the Open House. Mike Street will give explanatory talks about the migration of raptors. For this event we receive a lot of help from the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority and we owe them a special vote of thanks. Please come and also promote the event to your friends.

One other new venture last year was to solicit sponsorships in advance and as a result we were able to distribute bird books to some of the younger members of the crowd. We plan to do the same again this year. We wish to recognize last year's sponsors, who were: Wild Birds Unlimited (Burlington), Tarbutt Construction, Boston Pizza, Grimsby Ford, Queenston Chev Olds, Kerman Car Wash, Judge and Jester Pub, Real Canadian Superstore, and Elm Street Cafe Grill.

NPH SCHOLARSHIPS FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

The Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch is entering its 42nd year of recording migrating raptors at the Beamer Memorial Conservation Area, and like any such organization we need to develop the next generations of people who will be interested in raptors and counting them. This is an important part of our mission of public education, which also includes holding an Open House each year on Good Friday and speaking at special events. To expand our contacts in the community and heighten our education goals the executive of the NPH is offering for the first time a **$500.00 scholarship to a successful secondary student** from any academic background. We encourage you to bring this to the attention of potential contestants.

The competition involves three parts:

1) Students write and submit an essay of about 500 words on why they are interested in the biology of raptors and their migration, or on the cultural significance of the raptor migration in Niagara. The submission deadline is February 28, 2015.

2) Based on the essays, five to ten successful students will be invited to attend the Hawkwatch in Grimsby between March 1 and May 15 to work and learn from the official counters. In doing so they will learn how to identify migrating raptors and learn about the biology and geography of raptor migrations. The students will also learn about the various groups of raptors and their behavior. The participation of the

students and their level of interest will be counted towards their scores in the scholarship contest. We are looking at a minimum of 15 hours of participation, and hope that this time can be applied to the 40 hours of community service required of students before graduation.

3) Students who complete the required 15 hours at Beamer will be invited to write another essay or create a project about the significance of hawk migration for submission by June 1, 2015. Our intention is to entertain a broad spectrum of topics from which the students may choose to write their essay. The combined points from the final essay and the participation portion will be used to determine the successful recipient. Participants will be notified of the results by July 1.

The scholarship will be presented to the selected student upon his or her acceptance at a postsecondary institution. The scholarship contest is open to all students and all grades in high school. If a student below Grade 12 wins the scholarship, the funds will be held until graduation and acceptance at a postsecondary institution. NPH intends to use the student's work in our newsletter and for other educational purposes and promotion of the NPH.

'NORTHERN' RED-TAILED HAWKS AT BEAMER

Matt Mills

A hint of warm, spring air brings a welcome push of returning raptors to our region each March. Gliding over stubborn vestiges of winter come hordes of Turkey Vultures and smaller groups of our beloved, yet oft discounted, mainstay – the Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*). With a diverse array of subspecies and colour morphs from coast-to-coast this bright-tailed buteo is undoubtedly worthy of closer study and admiration.

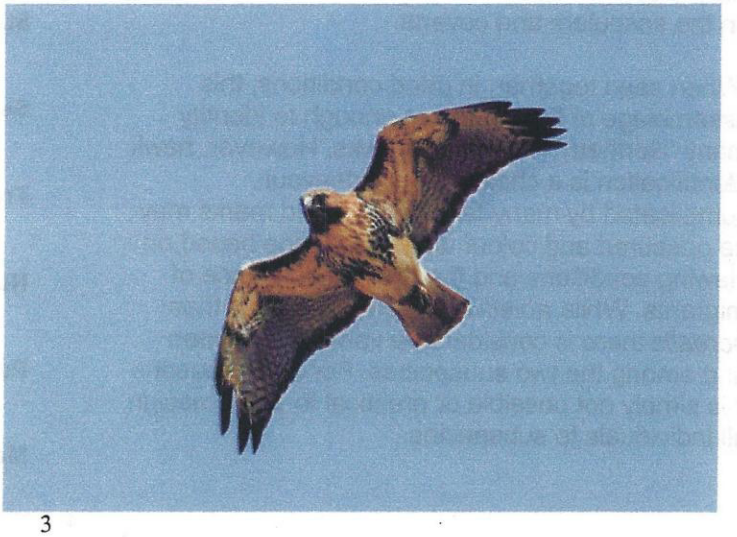
The majority of spring migrant Red-tailed Hawks over Beamer are the classic 'Eastern' Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis borealis*). Seen from below, adult 'Eastern' birds exhibit a familiar array of traits - pale red tail with a thin dark subterminal band, a moderately streaked (though occasionally absent) belly band, thin dark patagials, and a dark trailing edge to the wings. Brown or golden head feathers showcase a clean white or variably streaked throat. Soaring birds often bank to show their upperparts. In these instances, one can spot the bright red tail, brown to golden brown upperparts, and white-speckled scapulars and coverts of 'Eastern' Red-tailed Hawks.

But what of the richly marked, so-called 'boreal' Red-tailed Hawks noted in smaller numbers each spring? Recent work by Liguori and Sullivan (2014) has advanced the original efforts of Todd (1950) and supporting literature by Dickerman and Parkes (1987) to provide a more complete picture of this distinct population. The result has been the elevation of these boreal breeders to full subspecies status – the 'Northern' Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis abieticola)* – along with an emerging picture of plumage traits, breeding range, migration timing and wintering habits.

The 'Northern' Red-tailed Hawk can be found breeding across the boreal forest from Labrador to Alaska. The subspecific epithet *abieticola* assigned by Todd (1950) literally, and fittingly, translates as "dweller of the fir". Most of the population is thought to winter east of the Rocky Mountains in the central and northeastern United States and parts of southern Canada.

Recent data from several hawkwatches in the US northeast suggest that spring passage of *abieticola* averages two weeks later than the bulk of 'Eastern' passage birds. Large flights of Red-tailed Hawks

Red-tailed Hawk *abieticola* Photo: Claude King



past Beamer typically occur between March 10 and April 15 which would make late March through much of April prime time to study 'Northern' birds. The fun part certainly comes in identifying subspecies of Red-tailed Hawks as they pass overhead in the spring. Due to the great overlap in plumages of juvenile Red-tailed Hawks among subspecies, Liguori (2001) cautioned that many juveniles are difficult to confidently assign to subspecies. As this article is not intended to be a complete treatment of all things *abieticola* only the identifying features of adults is given.

A typical adult 'Northern' Red-tailed Hawk averages darker, and more distinctly marked than their 'Eastern' counterpart. Seen from below (see photo), adult 'Northern' birds show a pale red tail with a thicker, dark subterminal band, occasionally complemented by variable thin banding. A thicker, blobbier bellyband is a prominent feature of *abieticola* and should serve as the first clue when determining subspecies. The marks are often teardrop shaped and quite prominent. At times this band is dark and broad on the belly edges but tapers to a narrow center in a manner reminiscent of Rough-legged Hawks (*Buteo lagopus*). The patagials are thicker, darker and often 'bleed' dark streaks into the wing linings. Dark head feathers border a thickly streaked or completely dark throat – a trait rarely seen in 'Eastern' birds. Dark or rufous streaking along either side of the breast appears to 'drip' down toward the belly band. The base colour, or colour of the body feathers, tends to have a rufous cast (see photo) reminiscent of 'Western' Red-tailed Hawks (*Buteo jamaicensis calurus*). Viewed from above, 'Northern' Red-tailed Hawks appear darker brown with restricted white on the scapulars and coverts.

When seen together, in good conditions, this assemblage of field marks is enough to identify many 'Northern' Red-tailed Hawks. However, hawk identification is a challenging endeavour complicated by many factors. Key field marks may be obscured and colour difficult to judge based on viewing conditions and the height or distance of migrants. While *abieticola* averages darker than *borealis* there is considerable variation between and among the two subspecies. For these reasons it is simply not possible or practical to safely assign all individuals to subspecies.

The search for 'Northern' Red-tailed Hawks adds a welcome dimension to spring hawkwatching at Beamer. This fresh challenge offers something new to watch for, debate, identify, record, and celebrate. With the 2016 season upon us we are requesting descriptions and photographs of potential *abieticola* seen passing the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch at Beamer Conservation Area. Several excellent example photos can be viewed on e-bird by following the link to Ruddy (2014) in the references listed at the end of this article.

Please forward descriptions and photos between March 1 and May 15 to Matthew Mills matt.ja.mills@gmail.com and indicate if you would like your photo included on our Facebook page for discussion.

References:

Dickerman, R. W., and K. C. Parkes. 1987. Subspecies of the Red-tailed Hawk in the Northeast. *Kingbird* 37: 57-64.

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Todd, W. E. C. 1950. A Northern Race of Red-tailed Hawk. *Annals of the Carnegie Museum (Pittsburgh)* 31: 289-296.

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NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH CALENDAR FOR BEAMER MEMORIAL CONSERVATION AREA

NOTES:

1. Species initials and Right (>) or Left (<) arrow: This combination indicates the start (>) or end (<) of the normal migration period at Beamer for that species. The same in bold type indicates the start or end of a noticeable period for that species. The box in which this combination is located indicates the day and month the period is likely to start or end.
2. A number followed by species initial, followed by a slash (/) and a two-digit number: In this combination the largest number of that species ever seen in one day is given first, and the year it occurred second. The box where the combination is located indicates the day and month of the event. Example: 655 RS/94 in March 23 indicates that the highest number of Red-shouldered Hawks recorded in one day occurred on March 23, 1994.

TV – Turkey Vulture
BV – Black Vulture
OS – Osprey
SK – Swallow-tailed Kite
MK – Mississippi Kite
BE – Bald Eagle
GE - Golden Eagle
NH – Northern Harrier
SS – Sharp-shinned Hawk
CH – Cooper's Hawk
NG – Northern Goshawk
RS – Red-shouldered Hawk
RT – Red-tailed Hawk
SW – Swainson's Hawk
RL – Rough-legged Hawk
FH – Ferruginous Hawk
AK – American Kestrel
ML – Merlin
PF – Peregrine Falcon
PR – Prairie Falcon
GY – Gyrfalcon
BW – Broad-winged Hawk

The following information, based on 41 years of data, shows significant events up to January 2016.

The largest number of raptors in a season was 20,368 in 2011.

BE>, NH>, SS>, CH>, RT>, RL>, AK> can begin about February 20.

MARCH

1 **RT>** NG> TV>	2 GE>	3 RS>	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11 **RL>**	12 **AK>**	13 **CH>** **RS>**	14 **44 AK/90**
15 **TV>** BV>	16 **744 RT/96**	17 **1 GY/06**	18 **BE>**	19	20 ML> PF>	21
22 **2 BV**/12	23 **NH>** **655 RS/94**	24 **11 NG/84** **19 BE/03**	25	26 **SS>**	27	28 OS>
29 **46 RL/04**	30	31				

Largest count for month: 6,389 in 2011; largest count in one day: 2,080 March 26, 1988

APRIL

1	2 **7 GE/09** **2,021 TV/09**	3	4	5 **50 CH/93**	6	7
8 **OS>** **<RS**	9	10 BW>	11	12 **16 OS/92**	13 **1 FH/92**	14
15 **BW>** SW> **1 SK/94**	16 **<BE**	17	18 **35 NH/96** **1,556 SS/76**	19 **1 PR/95****	20 **1 GY/77**	21 **6,007** **BW/85**
22 **<RL**	23 **1 FH/98***	24 **<OS** **1 FH/02***	25 **<TV** **6 ML/96**	26 **3 PF/15**	27 **3 PF/10**	28 <BV
29 **2 SW/98***	30 **<CH**					

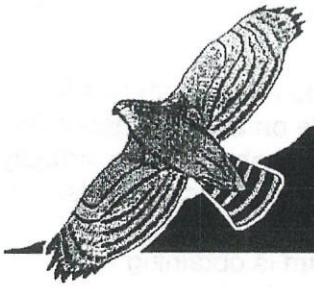
Largest count for month: 15,012 in 1984; largest count in one day: 7,007 April 21, 1985

MAY

1 <RS	2 **2 SW/97***	3	4 **<RT**	5 <SW	6 <PF	7
8	9	10	11 **1 MK/97***	12 **<NH** **<AK**	13 <CH <BE	14 **<SS** **1 MK/03***
15 **<BW** <RL <ML **1 MK/12***	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31 <NH <SS<OS <NG<AK <GE	*BW, TV & RT continue after May 31*			

Largest count for month: 2,685 in 1980: largest count in one day 1,492 May 4, 1989

* Sighting not reviewed/ accepted by Ontario Bird Records Committee
** First accepted Prairie Falcon record in Ontario



Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Newsletter

August 2016 Newsletter # 53

A YEAR OF INITIATIVES

2016 has been a year of highs and a low, and, unfortunately, the low was in the total count as described in our annual report towards the end of this newsletter. Some of the highs are noted in subsequent articles, and one article suggests that we may have another species to look for in the not-too-distant future.

Attendance at our annual dinner and general meeting was up significantly to 48, and this was, no doubt, a response to our recruiting a specialist researcher, Cheryl Dykstra, from Cincinnati to be our speaker. A summary of her excellent presentation follows this introduction.

The new scholarship program attracted three entrants, and the two winners spent twice the number of minimum hours specified. Their young eyes were greatly appreciated, as was their enthusiasm. We were delighted to receive a sponsorship for one of the scholarships from the Peninsula Ridge Estates Winery and Restaurant. The report written by one of our winners, Eric Geenan, appears in this newsletter, and that written by Zakhar Husak will appear in the winter newsletter.

In preparation for the Open House we were again able to attract sponsorships, and the most notable was a donation of $500.00 from Station 1 Coffee House in Grimsby. The donations from our sponsors enabled us to purchase and distribute bird guides to younger attendees. The day was cool and the ground wet underfoot, so numbers were down, but those attending seemed to enjoy the day.

Before the start of the season we developed a Facebook page to keep participants current with any events and notable sightings. We plan to include a report on this in the next newsletter with a reminder on how you can join.

We have included an article about the increased numbers of Crested Caracaras that have been observed in the northern United States and southern Canada, so perhaps we should be on the look-out for a new species in the count. This article has been reprinted with the permission of the author and the Hawk Migration Association of North America.

As is usual in the summer edition, the newsletter concludes with the report on migration and all the statistics. I am grateful to all those who have supplied ideas and text for a newsletter that is larger than usual. The executive also appreciates all the help that we receive from members and the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority to carry out the tasks that are needed to support our activities.

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SECRET LIVES OF SUBURBAN RED-SHOULDERED HAWKS

Our speaker at the annual dinner in April 2016, Cheryl Dykstra, has been working on a project dealing with suburban Red-shouldered Hawks since 1997 and was accompanied for the trip by her colleagues Jeffrey Hays and Ann Wegman. When she started almost twenty years ago, the literature said that Red-shouldered Hawks (RSHA) liked to live away from people in forests with nests in tall trees close to water, and that they were generalists in their diet including aquatic creatures. The group's studies have shown that there are many RSHA living in the Cincinnati area, especially in suburban areas where there are more trees and ravines with some of the nests remarkably close to houses. Following this introduction Cheryl described their research findings in a manner that was both full of content and light with humor, and included some excellent slides and video clips.

The nests of RSHA are made of sticks with one third of the city nests being in yards; the females lay eggs in the third week of March at intervals of roughly three days. They delay sitting on the eggs until the second is laid, so that the first hatchlings are closer together in timing and size, and subsequent young birds can be considerably smaller. The new birds stay in the nest for six weeks and then remain close to their parents for a further one to two months. For the purposes of comparisons the group has a control set of nests in a forested area east of the city in the Hocking Hills.

In the studies of reproduction rates sometimes the rural nests produce higher rates than the urban, but the main factor seems to be the quality of the habitat. The nests are typically at a height of fifty feet and so the researchers have to climb to the nest - sometimes under bombardment - so that they can take measurements, all of which are done on the ground. The researchers band and measure the birds, and sometimes color the heads with colored markers so that they can monitor behavior of individual chicks in the nest using video cameras. Overall the reproductive rates in the city and at the control area are comparable and are similar to those at other locations in eastern North America.
The banding data help in studies of dispersal and mortality, and the use of radio transmitters is helping greatly. Young birds may wander as far north as Lake Erie, but settle on average about 38 km from their birth sites, although there are virtually no re-encounters of birds born in Hocking Hills. Given the improvement in digital cameras and greater use of them, the team is obtaining more information from photos on which leg-bands can be read. The main causes of death are hits by vehicles and electrocution, although in many cases where a dead bird is found, the cause is not known.

By using graduate students to monitor the video-cam Cheryl's group has been able to learn a lot about nesting behavior, and we were entertained by a series of video clips showing the chicks with colored heads. Some of the conclusions are briefly summarized below:

- Eggs are laid at intervals of 69 hours on average. Incubation starts after egg #3 for a clutch of four and after #2 for clutches of three.
- The intervals between hatching are 0.56 days between #1 and #2, 1.25 days subsequently before #3, and a further 2.4 days for #4, so that there can be over four days between the oldest and youngest siblings.
- The feeding rates decline down the sibling line, so #1 gets the most, and #4 may even starve.
- Nest aggression among siblings is highest for larger brood sizes, and most aggression occurs in the first two or three weeks. Hatch rank is the most important factor; a four-day difference in hatch date is very significant in the first days.

Cheryl spent time talking about predation with video shots that included raccoons and Great Horned Owls either eating or taking away birds from the nest. They know of an owl taking a female at the nest and other cases of nestlings being lost. Raccoons have taken nestlings, and squirrel disturbance has caused birds to abandon nests. Overall, one third of nests are successful with all birds fledging, one third are failures and in the remaining third one or more nestlings are lost. The video-cams have also enabled the team to study diet, which includes voles/ mice, snakes,

frogs, cray fish, earth worms and fledgling song birds. It was noted in the introduction that they are generalist feeders! Cheryl's talk was followed by a lively series of questions and answers, and many agreed that this was one of the best talks we have had in recent memory. Cheryl, Jeff and Ann spent large parts of Friday and Saturday at Beamer, and, although it was slow, they enjoyed their first spring hawk-watch.

TWO HAMILTON STUDENTS WIN NPH SCHOLARSHIPS

In our last newsletter we announced an initiative to award a scholarship to a secondary school student as a means of creating interest in hawk-watching among younger generations. Three students applied, submitted an essay and then attended the Hawkwatch to work with and learn from our counters. The final requirement was the submission of an essay. The scholarship was to be funded from accumulated reserves of the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch (NPH), but we were delighted to receive a donation of $500 from the Peninsula Ridge Estates Winery and Restaurant, which was presented at the Open House on March 25.

The judges agreed that two students were equally meritorious and so the Executive Committee has agreed to award a scholarship of $500 each to Eric Geenan and Zakhar Husak, both of Hamilton. Both students completed twice the minimum number of hours at Beamer stipulated, and were a great help to counters. We are including the final essays in the newsletter – Eric's is in this edition and Zakhar's will be in the next.

Eric is completing Grade 12 at Cardinal Newman Catholic High School and will be starting at McMaster University in the fall to study life sciences. Zakhar is finishing Grade 10 and is home schooled. Zakhar will be receiving his scholarship upon his future completion of Grade 12 and upon his acceptance at a postsecondary school where he hopes to study engineering.

Bruce Mackenzie, who coordinated the program, stated "The committee was extremely pleased with the contribution and expertise of Eric's and Zakar's work at the Hawkwatch. They doubled the number of hours required at Beamer this spring and really showed their interest in studying hawk ecology. The generous contribution from Peninsula Ridge Winery is so important to the further contribution of this citizen science project and helping out with the future of these young students of science."

The two scholarship winners were recognized at an event at Peninsula Ridge Estates on Thursday, July 7 and photos from that event appear in this newsletter. Norm Beal, President of Peninsula Ridge, said "Peninsula Ridge is proud to be a contributor to such a worthy cause. Connecting today's youth with our unique and local ecology is extremely important if we are to ensure long term sustainability of our natural environment".



Scholarship presentation at Peninsula Ridge Winery and Restaurant: John Stevens (NPH), Norm Beal (donor), Zakhar Husak (winner), Eric Geenan (winner), Eric's mother, Bruce Mackenzie (NPH), Glenn Barnett (NPH)

We are delighted to report that the Peninsula Ridge Estates Winery and Restaurant will be supporting NPH in a new initiative. They are launching a new brand of Pinot Noir called Falcon's Nest, and will donate $1 for each bottle sold to NPH. Members of the NPH made the first purchases on July 7, and after a taste test we recommend that you make the journey to the restaurant and winery, which is located on 5600 King St, Beamsville and situated right under the spring hawk migration corridor along the beautiful Niagara Escarpment. You can drink and promote the health of NPH with each sip!

BEAMER MEMORIAL HAWKWATCH: 2016 SEASON JOURNAL

Eric Geenan

For the third part of the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Scholarship, I chose to assemble a journal about the times I spent watching. After every day, I recorded my observations about the weather, who I met that day and what the flight was like. This submission is based on those records, only more elaborate and expressive.

March 12, 2016 – 6 hours (8 am – 2:30 pm)

Weather: It was cold and windy on the tower, and the sun did little to warm me.
Counters and Visitors: I met Phil Waggett and made good use of his excellent pair of backup binoculars. I also went for a walk to the Lookout with Bruce and Laurie Mackenzie that included some early spring tree identification.
Description of the Count: Upon arriving, I was only able to differentiate between Turkey Vultures and "Other Birds of Prey". I knew that other birds like Red-tailed Hawks and Peregrine Falcons existed, but I would have had no idea as to how to tell them apart in flight. By the end of the day I had got as far as buteos, accipiters, falcons, eagles, and vultures, but was still in need of more experience. I had seen what I considered a manageable 60 or so birds, most of which were RTs and TVs but also some exciting species like an adult Bald Eagle and a male Northern Harrier. Non-raptor species were also fun to watch, and included a flock of 40-50 Tundra Swans as well as 20 Pintail Ducks. Red-Bellied Woodpeckers and Blue Jays made for constant action around the feeder.

March 18, 2016 7 hours (9 am – 4 pm)

Weather: When I try to remember the weather I had on these March Hawkwatch days, I still get the chills.
Counters and Visitors: I was pleased to be with Phil Waggett again who helped me tell the difference between RTs and Red-Shouldered Hawks. I also met Barry Cherriere.
Description of the Count: Today's count was a steady improvement from the last - just enough to be interesting, but not overly confusing for a new observer. I had the pleasure of seeing how local birds behave relative to migrating ones and was now becoming more familiar with the RTs and RSs – altogether about 160 birds that day. Again, I was able to see the massive size of a BE, this time a juvenile. In the early morning fog, I was able to spot another flock of about 50 Tundra Swans and a lone Sandhill Crane, with its long legs tucked behind it as it flew right over the tower.

March 19, 2016 7 hours (9 am – 4 pm)

Weather: Still windy and cold for a small guy like me. Phil had nothing around his neck but still appeared fine! Argh! The family Thermos of hot chocolate that I brought was gone by noon.
Counters and Visitors: With Phil Waggett again. He let me know that checking up on the Braddock Bay and Ripley hawk counts was a good way of gauging how the migration was progressing and was also useful for predicting what we at Beamer could expect in a day or two.
Description of the Count: I must've been a good luck charm or something. Every time I showed up the count more than doubled. Today had about 470 birds, with a busy morning for TVs and eventually a good afternoon for buteos, which decided to spend time in the upper-level atmosphere. My young eyes were put to work spotting the RTs and RSs that were up there. We also had another juvenile BE and 1 American Kestrel.

March 26, 2016 5 hours (9 am – 2 pm)

Weather: At least it was sunny.
Counters and Visitors: Chris Escott from Toronto, who was also kind enough to lend me his backup binoculars.
Description of the Count: This morning's TV flight was what I had been waiting for – kettles of 20-40 birds at a time both really close to the tower but also so far in the distance that we were counting "specks of pepper". A non-stop day that had good numbers of RTs, RSs, Sharp-shinned Hawks and Cooper's Hawks – while I was there, about 750 total, but by the end of the day they were up to 1259! Highest count of the season! Other birds like the 4 Great Blue Herons, 2 Woodcocks, and Blue Jays that sounded like RTs were also entertaining.

April 16, 2016 7 hours (9 am – 4 pm)

Weather: Sunny and warm, but the tower wind chill warning was still in effect.
Counters and Visitors: An entertaining day with the likes of Phil Waggett, Matt Mills, Gord Kozak and Tim Foran.
Description of the Count: The TVs were a pain to count, as the locals would always be wandering back and forth across the clearing. The SSs had the day, constantly shooting across the view in twos and threes. Diversity was high today, and I had the pleasure of seeing an eastbound PG, a light-phase Rough-legged Hawk, an Osprey, 5 NHs and the first Broad-winged Hawk of the season that won a cheer from the other Hawkwatchers. As yet, I had no idea what I was looking at - I had never seen one before - so my reaction was more subdued. In all, about 180 hawks, not to mention a pair of Wood Ducks that came bursting out of the forest, 5 Bonaparte Gulls, 5 Common Loons, 2 Pileated Woodpeckers, a melodious Eastern Phoebe and several energetic Golden-Crowned Kinglets.

April 23, 2016 4 hours (9 am- 1 pm)

Weather: Strong wind, sunny and around 8°C (on the ground anyway).
Counters and Visitors: Again, I had good company in Phil Waggett, Tim Foran and John Stevens.
Description of the Count: I was the first to arrive that day and so became the lone counter, even though it was only a half hour before the others showed up. I had been studying photos of BWs throughout the prior week, and so was pleased to see that one of the first birds of the morning looked exactly like it did in the pictures. The BWs continued to come throughout the day, together with a few RTs and SSs. Other birds included flocks of Cormorants, several kinds of Swallows and the pair of Wood Ducks again. Hawk count for the day was 156.

Final Reflection

My 36 hours of hawk-watching this spring have provided me with valuable experience and insight into the identification and behaviour of migrating hawks, opportunities to meet some very knowledgeable people, a whole array of exciting moments, "first-birds", and quirky raptor-themed puns. Much thanks to the organizers, sponsors, and fellow counters for the opportunity and for the time they took to pass on their knowledge. See you around the tower in the years to come!

2016 N.P.H. OPEN HOUSE

As usual the Open House was held on Good Friday, and this year we had an early date, March 25. Despite overcast, cold weather and a muddy field, we still had visitors and exhibitors. Seventy-one raptors of five species made appearances with the highlights being a Rough-legged Hawk and two Merlins. Our exhibitors showed good spirit and were able to talk to visitors who were not distracted by overhead activity. The counter for the day, Tim Foran, noted in the prediction section of his report that the following day could have the highest count of the year and he was correct. On the Saturday 1,259 raptors spread across eight species flew by on their way to summer grounds.

James Cowan of the Canadian Raptor Conservancy again attracted many of our visitors by showing and talking about a few species, and we owe a debt of gratitude to James for his cooperation. He always provides interesting information in a way that keeps the crowd involved. Bruce Mackenzie organized the event and was again successful in attracting sponsors and so we purchases bird guides that were distributed to some of the younger visitors. We wish to thank our sponsors, which were Peninsula Ridge Estates Winery and Restaurant, Station 1 Coffee House, Tarbutt Construction, Miss Acker, Queenston Chev on the Mountain, Waterford Group - Vinemount Quarry, Real Canadian Superstore, Elm St Café, and the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA).

Each year the staff of the NPCA prepares the site in the days before the event, and start early on Good Friday morning with placing directional signs in the vicinity of Beamer and then setting up the site. We continue to be grateful for the close relationship we have with staff – it would be extremely hard for us to mount the Open House without such cooperation. Our exhibitors too deserve our thanks, especially when the day is damp and cold as it was this year. Last, but not least, we should thank our visitors, many of whom come year after year.

WHAT IS GOING ON WITH INCREASING CARACARA SIGHTINGS ACROSS NORTHERN U.S. AND SOUTHERN CANADA?

Paul Roberts

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This spring [2015] at least four sightings of Crested Caracara were reported in Massachusetts over more than a month, representing almost certainly at least two individuals, unprecedented in the state's history. Crested Caracaras are primarily sedentary residents of south central Florida, southern Texas, southern Arizona, Baja and lands south to Tierra del Fuego. [*Note: both Clements and IOC world lists separate Crested Caracara and Southern Caracara, with the division occurring around the River Amazon.*]

However, a history of essentially stationary caracaras is found across much of North America. Ralph Palmer (Handbook, Vol. 5. 1988) cites caracaras seen in Washington State (1936), Wyoming, (1984), Idaho (1984), South Carolina (1983), North Carolina (1933), New York (1946) and Ontario (1892). There was a tendency locally to treat these birds as escapees rather than vagrants because the species was considered to be non-migratory. However, Palmer cites only one specimen, in Pennsylvania throughout the winter of 1955-56, as documented to be a zoo escapee.

In recent years, Crested Caracaras have been seen with increasing frequency across much of North America. A bird was found in Benton, Maine, about 150 miles north of Massachusetts, on August 27, 2014. During the spring of 2015 individuals were seen from Washington State, to New York, Massachusetts and Nova Scotia. In the first week of January, a soaring Caracara was seen in Orange County, a first New York record, and a possible second bird was reported from northern New York. Pennsylvania also had a caracara in early January, in Berks County, following an earlier Pennsylvania report in September 2014. Missouri reported its first Caracara in early June; King County, Washington, (fourth state record) reported one in mid-June, and a bird appeared in late June just south of Sydney, Nova Scotia. The 2015 New York bird was reported to be missing one eye, which might help track this individual if seen again.

On April 5 [2015] Paulina Zuckerman spotted a Crested Caracara at the end of Cotchpinicut Road in Chatham on Cape Cod, Massachusetts, about 9 a.m. She saw what she believed to be the same bird again a little later at Scatterce Road Beach in Chatham. (Photographs were taken.) I am not aware of additional sightings of any caracaras on the cape until May 8 when Jared Keyes reported seeing a Crested Caracara at Mass Audubon's Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary in Wellfleet, on the lower cape roughly 15 miles from Chatham. Keyes was excited to get the caracara in his scope, but was more excited when the bird flew about 75 yards and joined a second caracara. On May 10 Bob Prescott saw a lone caracara at Hemenway Landing in Eastham, a few miles south of Wellfleet. How many caracaras were on Cape Cod? We can relatively safely assume at least two, though no photographs were taken of the two together.

Massachusetts' first Crested Caracara was reported by Robert Finch in 1999, but the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee (MARC) did not accept the bird because of questionable provenance. In 2007, however, in light of the myriad reports of caracaras across North America, MARC reconsidered and accepted that sighting. On May 14, 2007, a caracara was seen by Whit Manter in West Tisbury, Martha's Vineyard, but no photographs were taken. Clearly something is going on with respect to wandering caracaras.

In 2013, Kristie Nelsen and Peter Pyle published a fascinating article in *Western Birds*, "Distribution and Movement Patterns of Individual Crested Caracaras in California." Through 2011, the California Birds Record Committee accepted 49 records they considered to be naturally occurring vagrants, out of a total representing 60 observations. Nelson and Pyle assessed the data and proposed that the observations involved only 11 individuals recorded between 1 and 34 times in the state, with a 12th individual reported from December 2011-April 2012.

Nelson and Pyle indicate that most of the vagrants arrived in California during their first or second fall or winter, in their first or second cycle, and based

on plumage proposed that six individuals remained in the state from five weeks to multiple years, including one that has remained for 11 or more years. Some of these individuals moved south in the fall and north in the spring. One apparently disappeared each winter, possibly returning to Mexico and then returning to the same spot in San Diego. Along Oregon's southern coast an adult Caracara was seen on approximately the same date for three consecutive springs, suggesting the bird was retracing a route annually.

There is little doubt that Crested Caracaras are wandering farther afield in increasing numbers. The exact causes are not unequivocally clear, but growing populations and warmer temperatures must play a part. What is clear is that hawk watchers and counters should be prepared, including getting up to speed on determining caracara plumages at a distance and attempting to photograph any seen.

HMANA TOURS

The Hawk Migration Association of North America (HMANA) has just announced four exciting tours coming up over the next year which may be of interest. These tours help fund Hawkcount, the Hawk Watch Fund, as well as HMANA's education, outreach and advocacy work – details follow.

There are THREE spots remaining for the **HMANA/ Pronatura Veracruz River of Raptor Tour in Mexico**, September 30 - October 8, 2016. The tour is planned during the peak of fall migration, when daily counts may number over 200,000 raptors including Broad-winged and Swainson's Hawks. http://www.hmana.org/veracruz-mexico-river-of-raptors-tour/

HMANA's "Get-together" event at Cape May, October 14 - 16, 2016. "Get-togethers" are low cost, self-drive, adventures aimed to bring hawk watchers together for a weekend to make new friends from across the country. HMANA provides a structured itinerary led on the ground by a local hawk watching expert which attendees are free to stick to as rigidly as you wish. http://www.hmana.org/hmana-get-together-cape-may-nj/

HMANA Southern California Winter Raptor Getaway, January 16 - 22, 2017. Species will include California Condors, Ferruginous Hawks (a common wintering bird in Southern California), White-tailed Kites and more. Highlights include a visit to a number of sites that are not open to the public including ones that boast the highest density of Golden Eagles of any Audubon Christmas Bird Count and California Condors.: http://www.hmana.org/southern-california-winter-raptor-getaway/

Panama Raptor Migration Spectacular, October 28 - November 4, 2017. Witness the magic of hawk migration through Panama. Based at the world renowned Canopy Tower, the tour will take in visits to both their own hawk watch (Semaphore Hill) and to the world famous Ancon Hill at the peak of raptor movement when flights might range from the tens of thousands up to the record breaking 2 million birds that were tallied at Ancon on November 2, 2014. http://www.hmana.org/panama-raptor-migration-spectacular/

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2016 AT THE NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH

John Stevens

It was a record-breaking year for the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch at the Beamer Memorial Conservation Area in 2016. Unfortunately, the record broken was for the lowest count since we began full season coverage in 1980. We easily fell below the previous record from 1987 of 10,508 with only 10,066 birds. To achieve this discouraging result, we can clearly lay the blame on the month of April where the 4,500 birds counted represented less than half the long-term average of 9,079. Looking through the daily reports (Tables 1-4), there was not much in the way of highlights either; with no unusual species sightings, no particularly large daily counts of any species, and the best day for variety was the eleven species seen on April 14. The diversity that day was very good as there were only 138 birds in total.

The Season

After a much milder winter than the previous two and with a very low amount of snowfall, the watch began on the last Sunday in February under clear skies with very warm temperatures for the date. While a few birds passed by, the count was disappointingly low. The presence of a couple of Turkey Vultures that appeared to have taken up residence meant there were birds in the sky more often than twelve birds in five hours would suggest.

Conditions had normalized by the start of March so low counts were realized during the first week. On balance though, March was considerably warmer than normal with the average temperature being four degrees higher. Perhaps one result of that was an abnormally high amount of rain. Despite having only 60% of the normal snowfall, there was more than double the normal amount of precipitation including 17 days with some amount of rain. Fortunately it was most often during the early morning or evening so only four days' counts were wiped out. The result was the monthly count of 4,590 birds was slightly above our long-term average.

So, what about April? Well, temperatures averaged almost two degrees below normal making them very similar to March. Those of us shivering on the tower wondering where the sharpies and broad-wings were can relate to that. Total precipitation was slightly below normal but there was more than five times the usual April amount of snow! In contrast to March, only one days' count was dismal although most days were sub-standard for April with only one day, April 27th, having more than 300 birds. The result was the record low count for what is usually the most productive month.

The first part of May continued the trend from April with respect to cooler temperatures than normal. It wasn't until after the official count period was over that temperatures really rose so the mean temperature for the entire month was above normal. The absence of a counter on May first is unlikely to have affected the year's total because the temperature never exceeded 7 C and the site was shrouded in fog. Three other days had some impact from precipitation events. The count for the month of 942 was below the long-term average but above that of recent years. Over half the birds passed on May 4th.

Effort

A record low count cannot be blamed on a lack of effort on the part of the counters. Hours during the rainy March were slightly below normal, understandably so. In April though, the 228+ hours were more than ten above the long-term average. This produced a birds-per-hour rate for the month of 19.7 that was less than half the long-term average for April (see Table 5). May hours were the most since 2003 with counters hoping to see some of the birds that didn't come through during April. The fourth highest daily count of the season on May 4th helped but the rest of May was slow.

Species Accounts

The 4,862 **Turkey Vultures** counted was the lowest total since 2004. It represented a decline of 34% from last years' record count and is the first serious decline in their number since 1989. TVs have shown an amazing growth trend since 1980, seldom going more than a year or two between new record high counts. It will be interesting to see if their numbers rebound quickly again or whether they have reached some sort of saturation level.

The number of **Osprey** actually rose slightly from last year. The count of 45 birds was exactly equal to their long-term average although slightly lower than the recent five-year average. This was one of the few bright spots in 2016. The first Osprey was not counted until the first of April, rather surprising in light of the warmer weather in March. April 14 was the best day with eight.

The only species whose numbers have increased over the years at a rate comparable to Turkey Vultures is the **Bald Eagle**. In 2015 we counted 80, second highest total ever. This year there were only 35, the lowest total since 2001. My impression from reading the accounts was that we were not seeing full adult birds like we have been in recent years. Clearly though a decline of 56% from year to year means there were likely fewer birds of all ages.

Another species that fared a little better in 2016 than last year was **Northern Harrier**. The 84 birds counted represent the best total in the last five years but still was 36% below their long-term average.

The second lowest count ever of **Sharp-shinned Hawks** was recorded in 2016 at 1,039. That is little more than a third of the long-term average for the species and well below the recent five-year average of 1,394. The best day was May 4th with 138 while April 16 with 123 was the only other day with more than one hundred. In years past we had daily totals of more than a thousand sharpies at Beamer or what we saw in the entire 2016 year.

The number of migrating **Cooper's Hawks**, 119, was close to the recent five-year average but well below the long-term average of 188. Resident Cooper's Hawks were present near the watch again this year although not as much in evidence as they are in some years. These birds probably get counted a few times during the season although we try to avoid it. There seemed to be fewer of the slow wing beat display flights than usual, which might suggest that no nesting was conducted this year. There were also no reports of anyone seeing a Cooper's Hawk carrying food.

Two **Northern Goshawks** were recorded this year, doubling last year's count. This is unlikely to suggest resurgence in their numbers toward the long-term average of 19 birds a season. It may be noted that both Hawk Cliff and Holiday Beach watches in Ontario last fall had record low counts of Northern Goshawks.

The **Red-shouldered Hawk** count absolutely crashed in 2016. A record low total of 275 birds was tallied, well below the previous record set in 2014 of 395. The total represents just over 50% of the recent five-year average and only 38% of the long-term average for the species. The signature species for our watch that normally passes during late March was just not seen in its usual numbers despite our March counts being close to normal.

Broad-winged Hawks had a below average year. Only April 27th produced more than one thousand and only two other days had more than one hundred. On good days single kettles of these birds can have more than a hundred individuals. On many days during the latter half of April and early May, a group of these birds might consist of only two birds with many cases where only single birds were seen.

At least two pairs of **Red-tailed Hawks** had territories within view of the tower. Despite efforts to avoid counting these local birds, undoubtedly they were counted on numerous occasions when headed west. Despite this, the species total of 1,312 was the second lowest ever recorded at Beamer, ahead only of 2014. The count in March was near normal and there was a trickle of immatures through May but the early April numbers were missing. As this is when the adult females are usually passing, it doesn't auger well for the breeding season. No noticeably blacker birds were reported this year.

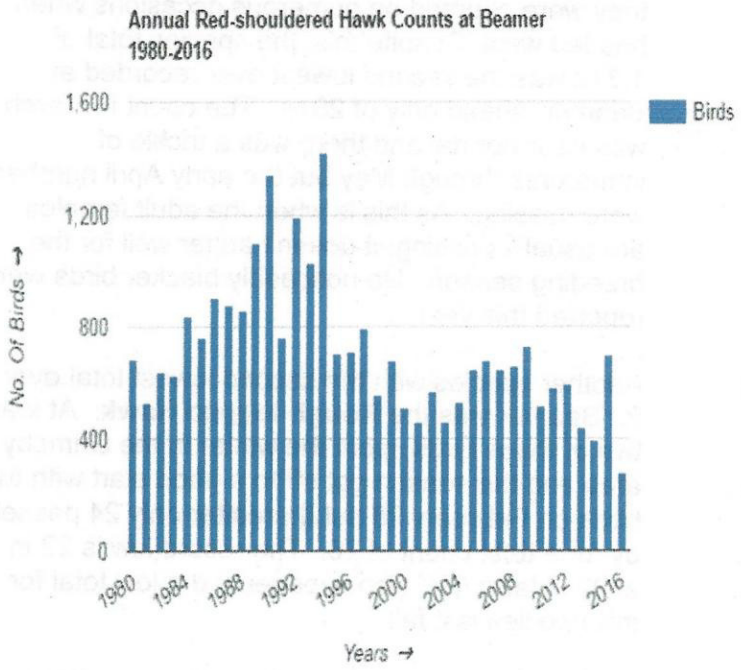
Another species with the second lowest total ever for Beamer was the **Rough-legged Hawk**. At least two of these birds spent the winter in the Grimsby area and the season got off to a good start with two birds on February 28 but thereafter only 24 passed by for a total count of 26. The record low is 22 in 2002. Hawk Cliff also experienced a low total for this species last fall.

It was a strange year for **Golden Eagles**. Only four were counted and none before April 28th. This is about half the long-term average and the lowest count since 1995. None of the other spring counts

along Lakes Erie and Ontario had good numbers of Golden Eagles this year either and Derby Hill's count at the eastern end of Lake Ontario was well below their normal total.

American Kestrels have never been abundant at our watch site. Their long-term average has fallen to less than one hundred as a result of the overall decline in their numbers throughout the continent. Thus it is with some relief to report that for the second year in a row, their count increased at Beamer. The 56 birds were slightly above the recent five-year average although still just 61% of the long-term average.

At least one pair of **Merlins** was nesting in the Grimsby area in 2016. Their presence might account for the increase in their count at the watch site. The 21 birds counted is nearly double the long-term average for the species and about 50% above the recent five-year average. Similar increases were not seen at other watch sites around lakes Erie and Ontario this spring or last fall.



Only four **Peregrine Falcons** were seen in 2016. This is the lowest count since 2007 and while it is about the long-term average count, it is below the recent five-year average. With several nesting pairs in the Hamilton/Niagara area, I find it surprising that more are not seen at Beamer. In most cases it would be difficult to distinguish between a migrating and a resident bird. Clearly our counts are not skewed by local Peregrines.

Discussion

To illustrate how poor a year it was for shoulders, on the accompanying chart the year by year counts are shown since 1980. Numbers appeared to be in an upward trend for a while, peaking in 1994. A sharp decline occurred in the following year and the numbers have never recovered in subsequent years. 2015 was another relatively good year for the post-1994 period but the drop in 2016 was proportionately like the drop in 1995. Bird Studies Canada and partners including Environment Canada recently reported on the status of all North American birds (The State of North America's Birds 2016 by the North American Bird Conservation Initiative). Red-shouldered Hawks were placed in the same category of risk as Red-winged Blackbirds and Blue Jays, a fact that seems very surprising in light of our yearly observations during spring migration.

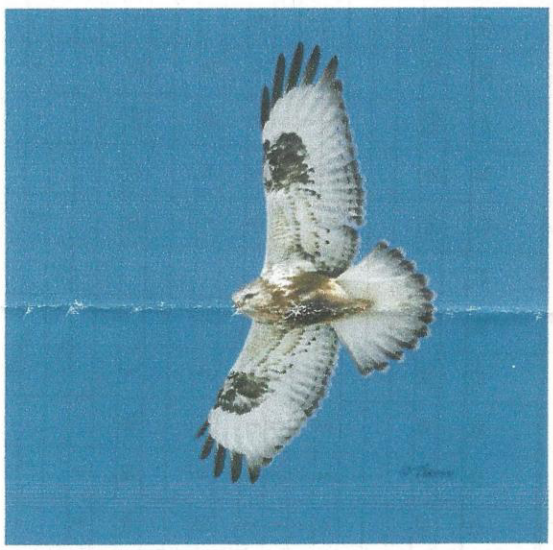
None of this analysis is possible without the efforts of many people, not least of whom are the designated counters. This year they were; Bouwe Bergsma, John Black, Barry Cherriere, Sandy Darling, Chris Escott, Tim Foran, Gord Kozak, Bruce Mackenzie, Matt Mills, Brian Mishell, George Naylor, Darren Smillie, Bill Smith, John Stevens, Mike Street, Tom Thomas, and Phil Waggett. Our thanks go to all of you for helping with this fine example of citizen science. I would also like to thank Zakhar Husak for preparing the chart.

Table 1 - February 2016

			February Species
	28	29	Totals
Black Vulture			0
Turkey Vulture	7		7
Osprey			0
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite			0
Mississippi Kite			0
Bald Eagle	1		1
Northern Harrier			0
Sharp-shinned Hawk			0
Cooper's Hawk	1		1
Northern Goshawk			0
Red-shouldered Hawk			0
Broad-winged Hawk			0
Swainson's Hawk			0
Red-tailed Hawk	1		1
Ferruginous Hawk			0
Rough-legged Hawk	2		2
Golden Eagle			0
American Kestrel			0
Merlin			0
Peregrine Falcon			0
Gyrfalcon			0
Prairie Falcon			0
Unid. Accipiter			0
Unid. Buteo			0
Unid. Falcon			0
Unid. Eagle			0
Unid. Raptor			0
Total Raptors	**12**		**12**
Hours Counted	*5.00*	*0.00*	*5.00*
Precipitation		*	

* indicates no counter







Birds at Beamer in 2016: Cooper's Hawk, female and juvenile Rough-legged Hawks (Tom Thomas)

Table 2- March 2016

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	March Species Totals
Black Vulture																																0
Turkey Vulture				1		3	30	52	68		159	19	38	25	27		317	87	215	106	46	23	18		59	1009	113	57	529	145		3,146
Osprey																																0
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite																																0
Mississippi Kite																																0
Bald Eagle							1	2			5	2	5	3			2	1	1													22
Northern Harrier							1	4	6		1	1					1		1		1					3	5		3	4		31
Sharp-shinned Hawk									1		1	6	3	3			8	4	8	2		2				16	47	2	10	37		150
Cooper's Hawk					1	1	1	6	1		1	4	1				3	1	4	2	3					6	7		3	3		48
Northern Goshawk																																0
Red-shouldered Hawk								2	2		22	9	30	3	1		1	54	96	10		3			1	22	5	1	2			264
Broad-winged Hawk																																0
Swainson's Hawk																																0
Red-tailed Hawk	3		4	1	4	3		34	18		164	22	67	4	8		21	71	143	30	7	1	1		8	187	11		37	18		867
Ferruginous Hawk																																0
Rough-legged Hawk								9	1		6	1													1							18
Golden Eagle																																0
American Kestrel						1	1	1									7		1	2						2	4					19
Merlin							1							2											2	1						6
Peregrine Falcon																													1			1
Gyrfalcon																																0
Prairie Falcon																																0
Unid. Accipiter																										3						3
Unid. Buteo															1		1									4						6
Unid. Falcon														1												1						2
Unid. Eagle																																0
Unid. Raptor								1												1						5						7
Total Raptors	3	0	4	2	5	8	35	111	97	0	359	64	144	41	37	0	361	218	469	153	57	29	19	0	71	1,259	192	60	585	207	0	4,590
Hours Counted	*7.00*	*0.00*	*4.75*	*6.00*	*6.00*	*8.00*	*7.50*	*7.25*	*8.00*	*0.00*	*9.00*	*8.00*	*9.00*	*7.00*	*1.83*	*4.00*	*6.00*	*8.00*	*7.50*	*8.00*	*8.00*	*7.25*	*6.00*	*0.00*	*6.50*	*10.00*	*6.00*	*5.33*	*8.33*	*8.00*	*0.00*	*188.24*
Precipitation		*	S							R,F					R	R,F	R						R	R				R			R	

* indicates no counter

Table 3 - April 2016

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	April Species Totals
Black Vulture																															0
Turkey Vulture	163	101	52	47	185	62	45	61	38	70	22	158	138	60	2	49	47	78	9	46	2	18	11	20	9		47	6	20	9	1575
Osprey	3								1			4	1	8	5	2	1	3	3	3	1	1				1	1	1		1	40
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite																															0
Mississippi Kite																															0
Bald Eagle		1						1					1	1				1									1			1	7
Northern Harrier		2			1	1				2		2	3	7	6	6	4	1	2			1	1				1	2			42
Sharp-shinned Hawk	8	10	2		2	1	3	2		17	1	18	5	1	56	123	88	60	44	31	15	9	36	13	4	1	80	10	5	26	671
Cooper's Hawk	2	3			3				2					3	4	6	5	7		5	1	3	7	4	1		2	2	1		61
Northern Goshawk														1	1																2
Red-shouldered Hawk	1													1	1		1		3				1					1	1		10
Broad-winged Hawk																1	15	83	69	23	6	15	76	19	4		1,044	217	8	71	1651
Swainson's Hawk																															0
Red-tailed Hawk	3	9	3		12	2	1	4	22	12		22	47	52	16	35	7	20	8	12		1	24	19	2		10	14	3	9	369
Ferruginous Hawk																															0
Rough-legged Hawk	1							1							1	1								1							5
Golden Eagle																												1			1
American Kestrel				2	3	2						4	1	2	2	2	5		3	1		1				1				2	31
Merlin								1		1		1		1	1		1				1			1		1	1	1	1	2	14
Peregrine Falcon												1				1															2
Gyrfalcon																															0
Prairie Falcon																															0
Unid. Accipiter														1				4													5
Unid. Buteo		1																2													3
Unid. Falcon																															0
Unid. Eagle							1																								1
Unid. Raptor										1							1	8													10
Total Raptors	181	127	57	49	206	68	50	70	63	103	23	210	196	138	95	226	175	267	141	121	26	49	156	77	20	4	1,187	255	38	122	4,500
Hours Counted	8.00	6.00	8.00	7.83	8.25	6.00	7.25	7.75	6.00	5.25	5.50	7.75	8.00	8.50	8.00	8.00	9.00	10.00	7.75	8.00	7.00	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.33	6.25	9.75	7.50	8.00	7.00	228.66
Precipitation		SI				S.R					R											R				R					

* indicates no counter

Table 4 - May 2016

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	May Species Totals
Black Vulture																	0
Turkey Vulture		9	1	32	4	7	2	13	8	7	8	2	24	14		3	134
Osprey			1		1					2			1				5
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite																	0
Mississippi Kite																	0
Bald Eagle				4	1												5
Northern Harrier			1	2	3				3			1				1	11
Sharp-shinned Hawk		3	21	149	20	4	7	1	6			1	5			1	218
Cooper's Hawk			1	3	2					1		1	1				9
Northern Goshawk																	0
Red-shouldered Hawk									1								1
Broad-winged Hawk		17	79	338	9	2	5		17	18	1		4			1	491
Swainson's Hawk																	0
Red-tailed Hawk		2	2	25	7	2			11	9	7	1	5	2	2		75
Ferruginous Hawk																	0
Rough-legged Hawk							1										1
Golden Eagle				1							1				1		3
American Kestrel			2	1		2									1		6
Merlin		1															1
Peregrine Falcon				1													1
Gyrfalcon																	0
Prairie Falcon																	0
Unid. Accipiter																	0
Unid. Buteo										1							1
Unid. Falcon			1														1
Unid. Eagle																	0
Unid. Raptor			1														1
Total Raptors	0	32	110	556	47	17	15	14	46	38	17	6	40	16	4	6	964
Hours Counted	*0.00*	*8.25*	*6.75*	*8.00*	*8.00*	*8.00*	*7.00*	*7.00*	*8.67*	*7.50*	*8.00*	*5.25*	*9.00*	*4.00*	*6.50*	*1.00*	*102.92*
Precipitation	F,*	R												R			

* indicates no counter

TABLE 5 - MONTHLY SUMMARIES, 1981-2016

Year	February			March			April			May			Year Total		
	# Birds	Hours	#/Hr	# Birds	Hours	#/Hr	# Birds	Hours	#/Hr	# Birds	Hours	#/Hr	# Birds	Hours	#/Hr
1981	22	4.5	4.9	2,957	181.9	16.3	11,185	202.5	55.2	1,758	173.7	10.1	15,922	562.6	28.3
1982	40	8	5.0	2,699	179	15.1	7,259	223.7	32.4	1,970	172.4	11.4	11,968	583.1	20.5
1983	49	10.3	4.8	2,301	164.8	14.0	8,991	210	42.8	2,369	179.9	13.2	13,710	565	24.3
1984	*258*	10.4	24.8	1,674	151	11.1	15,012	232.8	64.5	1,358	170.4	8.0	18,302	564.6	32.4
1985	0	0	0.0	4,059	202	20.1	14,818	242.2	61.2	398	164.3	2.4	19,275	608.5	31.7
1986	19	8	2.4	5,361	210.3	25.5	7,894	207.4	38.1	783	150.5	5.2	14,057	576.2	24.4
1987	81	23	3.5	3,943	213.4	18.5	4,719	233	20.3	1,765	*212.1*	8.3	10,508	*681.5*	15.4
1988	6	2	3.0	5,670	216.9	26.1	6,344	205.4	30.9	2,114	183.9	11.5	14,134	608.2	23.2
1989	0	0	0.0	2,951	179.25	16.5	6,699	241.8	27.7	*2,558*	78.25	32.7	12,208	499.3	24.5
1990	0	0	0.0	5,065	220	23.0	12,801	234.5	54.6	1,377	120	11.5	19,243	574.5	33.5
1991	0	0	0.0	4,308	215.8	20.0	9,291	223.2	41.6	1,352	109.5	12.3	14,951	548.5	27.3
1992	0	0	0.0	3,480	193.5	18.0	9,710	236	41.1	1,488	112	13.3	14,678	541.5	27.1
1993	0	0	0.0	2,014	176	11.4	8,836	227	38.9	1,257	135.5	9.3	12,107	538.5	22.5
1994	0	0	0.0	5,194	201.8	25.7	10,149	233.4	43.5	634	95.8	6.6	15,977	531.0	30.1
1995	0	0	0.0	4,231	214.6	19.7	5,801	230.75	25.1	776	110.3	7.0	10,808	555.7	19.5
1996	0	0	0.0	3,378	182	18.6	8,650	187.1	46.2	1,075	85.4	12.6	13,103	454.5	28.8
1997	0	0	0.0	4,304	181.85	23.7	6,712	221.25	30.3	1,089	105.25	10.3	12,105	508.4	23.8
1998	80	8	10.0	4,432	167	26.5	6,847	223	30.7	2,128	101.0	21.1	13,487	499.0	27.0
1999	0	0	0.0	4,190	200	21.0	6,538	206	31.7	267	96.0	2.8	10,995	502.0	21.9
2000	256	5	51.2	4,302	216	19.9	6,068	195	31.1	1,039	112.0	9.3	11,665	528.0	22.1
2001	49	25	1.9	2,576	181	14.2	11,620	*243*	47.8	588	96	6.1	14,833	545.0	27.2
2002	23	*28*	0.8	5,030	223	22.6	8,885	213	41.7	939	93	10.1	14,877	556.3	26.7
2003	4	4	1.0	5,632	214	26.3	7,769	209	37.2	955	105.5	9.1	14,360	532.0	27.0
2004	18	14.17	1.3	3,962	181.83	21.8	8,554	212.9	40.2	1,127	86.58	13.0	13,661	495.5	27.6
2005	33	5.5	6.0	3,129	197.5	15.8	11,829	193.08	61.3	1,610	95.58	16.8	16,601	495.17	33.5
2006	5	5.33	0.9	5,362	222.35	24.1	8,502	211.67	40.2	452	95.17	4.7	14,321	534.52	26.8
2007	6	3	2.0	5,241	202.33	25.9	6,584	201.58	32.7	1,115	100.17	11.1	12,946	507.08	25.5
2008	2	3	0.7	4,401	222.58	19.8	10,624	229.58	46.3	547	96.42	5.7	15,574	551.58	28.2
2009	0	0	0	5,548	*225.92*	24.6	11,646	204.92	56.8	383	89.42	4.3	17,577	520.25	33.8
2010	3	4.25	0.7	3,925	206.92	19.0	10,736	229.92	46.7	511	77.33	6.6	15,175	518.42	29.3
2011	0	0	0.0	*6,389*	209.53	30.5	*13,667*	210.67	64.9	318	75	4.2	*20,374*	495.2	41.1
2012	5	5.5	0.9	5,849	222	26.3	7,298	207.75	35.1	1280	53.25	24.0	14,432	488.5	29.5
2013	0	3	0.0	4,193	212.85	19.7	7,641	185.58	41.2	375	90.75	4.1	12,209	492.18	24.8
2014	0	0	0.0	2,658	214.25	12.4	8,427	213.91	39.4	586	87.5	6.7	11,671	520.17	22.4
2015	0	0	0.0	4,687	220	21.3	9,654	219.5	44.0	528	99.08	5.3	14,869	537.58	27.7
2016	12	5	2.4	4,590	188.25	24.4	4,500	228.67	19.7	964	102.92	9.4	10,066	524.83	19.2
AVERAGE 2011-2015				4755.2	215.7	22.0	9337.4	207.5	45.0	617.4	81.1	7.6	14711.0	506.7	29.0
AVERAGE 1981-2015				4145.6	200.7	20.7	9078.9	217.2	41.8	1110.5	114.5	9.7	14362.4	537.7	26.7

Underlined values in italics are record highs

Revised: JUL 2016

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Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch

Newsletter

February 2017 **Newsletter # 54**

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT AND HAWKWATCH DATA?

The Annual Meeting and Banquet will again be held at St Andrew's Church Hall, 7 St Andrew's Avenue, Grimsby on **Saturday, April 22.** Socializing and the bucket raffle begin at 5:00 p.m., and the pre-supper wine and cheese at 5:15. Dinner will start around 6:15. As always, we welcome donations for the bucket raffle – please contact a member of the executive if you can make a donation.

Tickets are $40.00 for members and $50.00 for non-members. Please contact a member of the NPH executive (see page 6) to obtain tickets.

Our speaker this year is Rob Porter, who is currently the Field Events Director of the Hamilton Naturalists' Club (HNC) and compiler of the Hamilton Christmas Bird Count (CBC). He is a member of OFO and has led many birding hikes for both HNC and OFO. As compiler of the CBC, Rob has cleaned up a lot of the data from earlier years and used his work-skills to start analyzing the CBC data. In preparation for his talk entitled **"What can we learn from Hamilton Christmas Bird Counts and Hawkwatch data?"** Rob will also be working with data supplied by our past counters and eBird entries. Members of the NPH Executive have already provided some of their pet hypotheses for Rob to look at, and it should be interesting to see what the data can tell us.

Rob developed his interest in nature early by identifying birds on the family farm, participating in scout programs for fourteen years and by founding his school's outdoor club. He first came to Hamilton to study at McMaster, where he earned degrees in Music and in Peace Studies & Theatre and Film Studies, while also working as a web developer/ programmer. After graduation he worked for various NGOs, where he organized conferences and worked with many environmental organizations, while still working at web programming on the side. Eventually, he and another web developer, with whom he was working on a project, teamed up on a tech startup, which has developed into Weever Apps Inc. where he is Chief Information Officer and Co-founder. He is also a co-author of a published and granted US patent.

Through the years Rob has explored Hamilton and other places where he worked, by cycle and hiking, and used photography as a way to learn more about birds and identifying them. He has maintained his interest in nature as a balance to his work-life, and so he tries to get out each day in the early morning, or on summer evenings or weekends, and those of us on the Hamilton Birds group often see his postings. He has used his programming skills to simplify his recording in the

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field and has written a program to update the results easily to eBird. He is now turning these skills to the analysis of data on bird observations and we shall be the beneficiaries of some of his findings.

Rob publishes all the tools he writes that interface with eBird and Audubon data, etc. in the "open source" which means it is published openly for others to use and improve. Right now they are published at https://github.com/rgeraldporter. You may wish to explore what is available.
We hope to see you for an interesting and enjoyable evening, when you can chat with all your hawk-watching friends! If you have hypotheses that you would like Rob to consider, please send an e-mail to darlinga@cogeco.ca.

AN ACTIVE SEASON AHEAD

Sandy Darling, Editor

A priority for any organization is to look to the future so that the organization may continue to fulfil its purpose and objectives. We have one of the richest, uninterrupted time series of data on the migration of diurnal raptors, and we need to make sure that we are developing the counters of the future. Last year we took the significant step of offering a scholarship to high-school students, who would spend time counting at Beamer and write about their experience. We had two excellent candidates and we were pleased to be able to offer both of them a scholarship, thanks to a donation of $500.00 by Peninsula Ridge Estates Winery. In the fall newsletter we published the report of one candidate and in this issue we are pleased to include the report of Zakhar Husak. Zakhar was an enthusiastic counter and your editor enjoyed Zak's assistance on more than one occasion.

We are delighted to announce that Norm Beal, the President of the Winery, has agreed that the winery will again sponsor a scholarship in 2017. You may also remember the promise to donate one dollar for every bottle of Falcon's Nest Pinot Noir sold from their retail store. Sales have been good, starting with members of your executive, who enjoyed the wine, and so we shall be receiving a larger donation than expected. You can help us now by encouraging secondary school students to apply for the scholarship (application details appear below).

One of our major educational efforts is the **Open House, which will be on Friday April 14** and this date is in the most productive part of the season. You can check what may be flying by looking at the Season's Calendar that appears on the last two pages of this newsletter. To help our educational efforts we have sought sponsorships in the last two years and so have been able to hand out field-guides to families attending the Open House. We shall continue this effort, so come join us.

The Ontario Field Ornithologists is organizing a field trip for its junior members on Saturday April 22 and this will supplement our own educational efforts. If you can come, you may be able to help the leaders of this trip and participants in identifying migrating raptors and other birds at the field. Also on **April 22 is our Annual Meeting and Banquet**. Our speaker, Rob Porter, organizes the Hamilton Christmas Bird count and has spent time analysing the resulting data from even more years than the Hawkwatch has data. Details appear above.

We shall be assembling the site on March 1 – please call Bruce Mackenzie if you can help. As always, we look for your help in counting whether it be for one day or 12 days. The executive has been strengthened in recent years by two additions: Matt Mills and Bruce Mackenzie. Matt Mills will be speaking to the Hamilton Bird Studies Group on February 27 at the Burlington Seniors' Center about his experience as a counter at the Corpus Christi Hawk Migration, so please come to support him. Bruce has done excellent work for us and he has been active on so many fronts. These activities have been recognized by the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority Foundation, which awarded him the Rt. Hon. John Turner Water: Environmental Leadership Award. Bruce is only the second winner; John Turner was the first. Well done, Bruce!

SECOND NPH HIGH SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP COMPETITION

Last year the NPH began a scholarship program for high school students, and with the generous sponsorship of Peninsula Ridge Estates Winery and Restaurant we were able to award two $500.00 scholarships. Thanks to the continued sponsorship by the winery for a full scholarship, the program will

continue for 2017. We encourage all members to visit Peninsula Ridge Estates Winery at 5600 King Street, Beamsville to show your appreciation and to sample their fine wines.

A $500.00 scholarship will be made available to the winner of the competition after the winner provides a letter indicating successful registration at a post-secondary education institution. Should the winner not be in Grade 12 the winner will receive a promissory letter for the scholarship once the student attends post-secondary education.

Applicants must register with the NPH by March 15, 2017 and fulfil the following conditions:

- Attend a minimum of 8 hours of observation at the hawkwatch at the Beamer Memorial Conservation Area in Grimsby spread over at least two days.
- Submit by June 1 a 500-word essay on aspects of hawk migration that the student observed or learned about at the hawk count. Students also have a choice of submitting a project instead of an essay related to hawk migration.

Applicants do not need to have prior experience with identification and counting of hawks, but should have a keen interest in nature and must be willing to learn about hawk identification and their migration ecology. Students will be required to visit Beamer with a guardian and attend the hawk count on at least two separate days to gain their hours in the count season between March 15 and May 1. Forty per cent of the score will be based on student evaluations by the official hawk counters, and sixty per cent will be based on the essay or project. The hours can be counted towards the 40 hours of community service required by schools. Students are encouraged to attend the Hawkwatch beyond the required minimum of 8 hours. Winners of previous NPH scholarships may not apply.

We encourage all NPH members to bring the scholarship program to high school students that you know. Students interested in applying should contact Bruce Mackenzie (Kintail52@gmail.com).

2017 NPH OPEN HOUSE

FRIDAY, APRIL 14

The 2017 Open House will be on Good Friday, April 14 at Beamer. This is a date that should provide a good variety of raptors, and we hope that the day and fine weather will draw lots of raptors and crowds. Counting will take place from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and the Open House hours are 10:00 to 3:00. Bruce is again seeking sponsors and we shall continue our educational efforts by distributing field guides. We shall again have exhibitors and live birds, always an attraction. Mike Street will give two talks on raptors and their migration, and there will also be a children's program provided by Carla Carlson of Niagara Nature Tours. We shall make best efforts to get a truck with food and drinks, but our experience is that we cannot guarantee arrival. We receive great help from the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority and our work would be much more without the great support we receive from them in preparing the site, putting up banners and directional signs, and bringing in tables and benches.

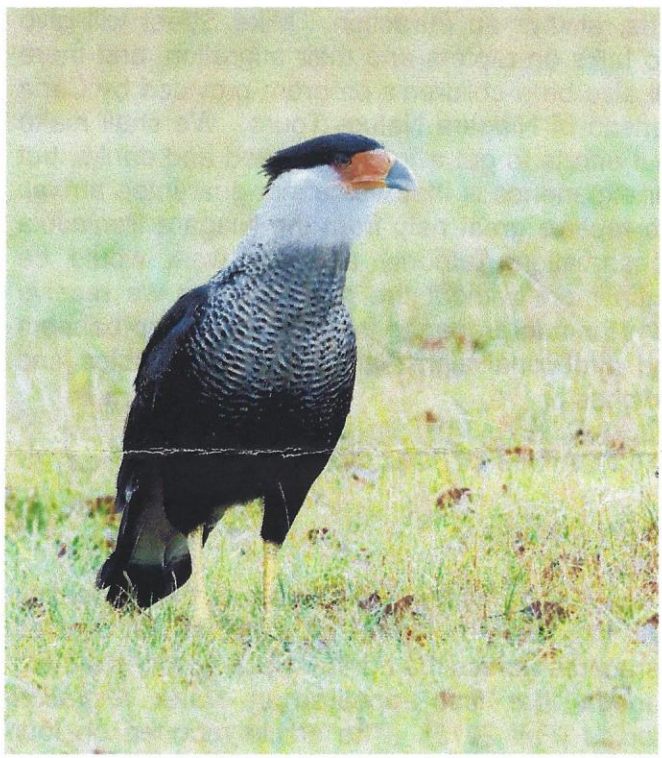
CARACARAS: A FOLLOW UP

Sandy Darling

In our last newsletter we carried an article dealing with increased numbers of sightings of Crested Caracaras across the northern U.S.A. and southern Canada that first appeared in *Hawk Migration Studies (Fall 2015).* The article reported on four sightings of at least two birds in Massachusetts in 2015, and other sightings ranging from Washington to New York states, and also Nova Scotia. The author concluded with the followings words, "What is clear is that hawk watchers and counters should be prepared, including getting up to speed on determining caracara plumages at a distance and attempting to photograph any seen."

This advice is worth following given the appearance of a Crested Caracara in November 2016 in Ontario. The bird was first reported through ONTBIRDS on November 28 by a person who had seen a photograph on Facebook by a person who was trying to identify the bird. There was a subsequent report by the same person the following day, again second-hand, and this

indicated that the bird was south of Wawa. On November 30 Josh Vandermeulen relocated the bird and posted photos on his blog, one of which appears here with his permission. The bird was in the town of Michipicotan and subsequent reports indicated that it stayed in the same location. The last report on ONTBIRDS was posted on behalf of Bob Curry and Glenda Slessor, who saw it on December 5, and there were no later reports on e-BIRD.



Crested Caracara *Photo: Josh Vandermeulen*

This is not the first record for Ontario, but the timing is unusual, because all previous accepted sightings have been in July. The first accepted record was of an adult female on July 18, 1892 on Victoria Island in Thunder Bay, and the second did not occur until July 6, 1994 when a bird was reported from Pelee Island. The third accepted record was from Fort Albany, Cochrane on July 16, 2002 and this bird's plumage was described as "definitive basic". There was also a claim from Ancaster on July 25, 2000 that was not accepted.

Caracaras are part of the family Falconidae and are restricted to the new world with most of them in South America. Eleven species of caracara are recognized and the Crested Caracara used to be regarded as a single species with a range from the southern U.S.A. to the southern cone, but both the I.O.C and Clements' check-lists have split it into two species. The Northern Crested Caracara (I.O.C.) or Crested Caracara (Clements) is found north of the Amazon, whereas the Southern Crested (I.O.C.) or Southern Caracara (Clements) is south of the Amazon. They are very similar in appearance, but it unlikely that we shall have to try to distinguish between them at Beamer!

Caracaras are usually prominent and easy to identify because of the long neck so that the head projection is proportionately much larger than any other raptor we shall see and the tail is also long. The wings are plank-like and both of the Crested Caracaras show very prominent white flashes towards the end of the wings, as do many of the caracara species. In open country it usually flies low to the ground, and will walk on the ground or perch on posts in an upright position. If the bird is in a tree, it will normally be prominent. The challenge for counters may come if the bird is flying high, because initially one may think that it is an eagle or a vulture or even a raven. The large white head, when viewed from underneath or the front, may suggest a Bald Eagle, and the white flashes may make one think of a Black Vulture, although the strong, deliberate flap of a caracara contrasts with the rapid flaps of a Black Vulture. The tail is like that of a juvenile Golden Eagle, but, if one is seeing the tail feathers, there should be plenty of other features to rule out a Golden Eagle.

This article is not meant to be a definitive guide to identifying Crested Caracaras, and so I encourage you to spend some time reading whichever hawk-identification guide you use.

[Thanks are due to the Secretary of the Ontario Bird Records Committee for data on previous sightings, ONTBIRDS and subscribers for carrying postings about the caracara in November and December, and Josh Vandermeulen for his blog entries and the photograph]

REVIEW OF AN APP PREPARED BY HAWKWATCH INTERNATIONAL ON RAPTOR ID

Phil Waggett

This app is available at the Apple Store or in I-Tunes at a list price of U.S. $9.99 and has been authored by Jerry Liguori and Brian Sullivan.

Organization & Content

The app is divided into two main sections: Overview and Browse Species. The Overview defines the term "raptor" and goes on to explain that the app covers the 34 species of diurnal raptors commonly found in North America and divides them into eight families: harrier, kites, accipiters, buteos, falcons, eagles, osprey, and vultures. The overview covers in a very basic way the essentials of hawk migration. One very valuable component in the overview is the glossary which gives both graphic and verbal explanations of feather identification on birds of prey.

Browse Species covers each of the 34 species of diurnal raptors under five categories: overview, images, video, range maps, and vocalizations. The **Overview** provides basic detailed information on the size, shape, flight, plumage and migration of each raptor. **Images** has excellent quality pictures of the adults and juveniles, both sitting and in flight, including morphs where appropriate. This section also provides side-by-side comparisons of similar species but, in my opinion, more comparisons are needed. The **Videos** provide excellent looks at the birds in flight and do a very good job of illustrating the flight characteristics of each raptor. The **Range Maps** are excellent but several of these require internet connectivity. **Vocalizations** are very good but are of primary use in a raptor's breeding territory.

How Useful is this App?

This app is an excellent field reference for all hawkwatchers and birders, although the primary beneficiaries are beginning and intermediate-experience hawkwatchers. Nothing, including this app, is a substitute for field experience and tutorials, particularly since no resource can cover the many "looks" that raptors in the field can give you. For instance, the videos, while excellent, need some experience to draw attention to the key characteristics that make the flight of a specific species unique. I would have liked to see a bit more emphasis placed on key field marks. Personally, I have used this app as a teaching tool when I was working with the student at the hawkwatch last spring. It allows for illustrating key points and reinforcing specific field marks.
I also use it as a personal reference with raptors that are rarely seen in this area such as kites and Swainson's Hawk. Overall, this is another good resource in the birding toolkit.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HAWK MIGRATION

Zakhar Husak

[Zakhar was one of our two scholarship winners, and his essay written at the end of the 2016 season follows.]

Humans have been fascinated by long-distance raptor migration for thousands of years. Accounts of hawk migration have been noted throughout history and have even been remarked on in the Old Testament (Job 39:26-29). In recent times, people have travelled from all over the globe to witness the annual journey that raptors undertake as they pass over prime observation sites such as Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, located along the Appalachian flyway in eastern Pennsylvania, and Eilat, the southernmost city of Israel and a busy port on the northern tip of the Red Sea, which provides the backdrop for an impressive spring migration. Since the late nineteenth century, established watch-sites have been used to count migrating raptors and to study migration ecology.

The use of migration counts is a critical component of a comprehensive monitoring and conservation program. Raptors are considered to be apex predators and are sensitive indicators of ecosystem health. They are highly mobile birds of prey which display secretive behaviour patterns and occur at low densities. This characteristic complicates data collection and is the reason that the precision of population estimates and trend data are often unreliable when it depends solely on assessments such as the Breeding Bird Survey (BBS). Raptor migration season grants a unique opportunity to monitor species not described effectively by BBS alone. Analysis of both information pools generates a more accurate evaluation of the overall picture with regards to population. But the use of

migration counts to determine raptor population trends is not without its limitations.

Open-ended ecological monitoring has been criticized for failing to address specific questions regarding the biological objective of interest. The Raptor Population Index (RPI) Partnership has taken up this challenge. The RPI program has been developed in order to monitor and produce statistically accurate estimates of annual population and to record trends for each species of migratory raptor from count sites across North America. The standardized protocol addresses the following points:

1. Why monitor raptors?
2. What parameters should be monitored?
3. How should hawk migration monitoring be done?

The goal of the RPI on-line system is to enhance the role that migration monitoring plays in conservation efforts. The RPI Partnership maintains the program in collaboration with Hawk Migration Association of North America (HMANA), Hawk Mountain Sanctuary (HMS), Hawkwatch International (HWI), and Bird Studies Canada (BSC).

Systematized monitoring protocols have become one of the most popular methods of recording raptor populations. They are cost-effective and easy to implement. The information collected has been used to determine species diversity, daily and seasonal timing of migration, volume of migration, as well as the effect of the weather on each of these factors. Likewise, these observations have indicated the behaviour of migrating raptors, such as the use of specific flight patterns, in addition to flocking and roosting behaviour. But such data become more meaningful when spread out over a period of several years.

Migration count data have already documented a 10-year trend for 16 different species of migrant raptors. This information was obtained from seven sites with 10 or more years of count data. All sites were located on a flight path following an east-west line along the Great Lakes. Examination of the evidence concluded that Bald Eagle populations increased an average of 8% in Eastern North America between the years of 1990 and 2000. This is substantiated by data tabulated by the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch at Beamer Memorial Conservation Area from 1990 to 2000, where there was a marked rise in the number of Bald Eagles flying through. The conscientious efforts of dedicated hawkwatchers have not gone unrewarded.

The allure of hawk migration has supplied an abundant source of data from which scientists have been able to glean pertinent knowledge about the flight mechanics and geography of the migratory phenomenon. Further and deeper analysis of raptor migration has made important contributions to avian ecology and to conservation efforts. The principles and practice of raptor migration monitoring should be considered to be an essential tool in the attainment of conservation goals. Without a doubt, continent-wide monitoring expands our knowledge and improves our understanding of hawks and consequently deepens our appreciation of the significance of hawk migration.

NPH FACEBOOK PAGE

Check out **Facebook.com/NPHawkwatch** for NPH news. During the season we shall update it frequently with announcements, current migration highlights, photos and raptor identification tips.

We always want photos taken at Beamer - especially of raptors - but also of hawkwatchers, scenery and other wildlife. Please contact Matt Mills at matt.ja.mills@gmail.com with any questions.

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NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH CALENDAR FOR BEAMER MEMORIAL CONSERVATION AREA

NOTES:

1. (<Species code) indicates the start of the normal migration period at Beamer for that species. (Species code>) indicates the end of the period. The same in bold type indicates the start or end of the prime period for that species. The box in which this combination is located indicates the day and month the period is likely to start or end.
2. A number followed by species initial, followed by a slash (/) and a two-digit number: In this combination the largest number of that species ever seen in one day is given first, and the year it occurred second. The box where the combination is located indicates the day and month of the event. Example: 655 RS/94 in March 23 indicates that the highest number of Red-shouldered Hawks recorded in one day occurred on March 23, 1994.

TV – Turkey Vulture
BV – Black Vulture
OS – Osprey
SK – Swallow-tailed Kite
MK – Mississippi Kite
BE – Bald Eagle
GE - Golden Eagle
NH – Northern Harrier
SS – Sharp-shinned Hawk
CH – Cooper's Hawk
NG – Northern Goshawk
RS – Red-shouldered Hawk
RT – Red-tailed Hawk
SW – Swainson's Hawk
RL – Rough-legged Hawk
FH – Ferruginous Hawk
AK – American Kestrel
ML – Merlin
PF – Peregrine Falcon
PR – Prairie Falcon
GY – Gyrfalcon
BW – Broad-winged Hawk

The following information, based on 42 years of data, shows significant events up to January 2017.

The largest number of raptors in a season was 20,368 in 2011.

BE>, NH>, SS>, CH>, RT>, RL>, AK> can begin about February 20.

MARCH

1 <RT <NG <TV	2 <GE	3	4 <RS	5	6	7 <NH
8	9	10 **<RT**	11 **<RL** **<TV**	12 <AK	13 **<CH** **<RS**	14 **44 AK/90**
15 <BV	16 <SS **744 RT/96**	17 **1 GY/06**	18 **<BE**	19	20 <ML <PF	21
22 **2 BV**/12	23 **<NH** **655 RS/94**	24 **11 NG/84** **19 BE/03**	25	26 <OS	27	28
29 **46 RL/04**	30	31				

Largest count for month: 6,389 in 2011; largest count in one day: 2,080 March 26, 1988

APRIL

1 **<SS**	2 **7 GE/09** **2,021 TV/09**	3	4	5 **50 CH/93**	6	7
8 **<OS**	9 **RS>**	10 **RL>**	11 <BW	12 **16 OS/92**	13 **1 FH/92**	14
15 <SW **BE>** **1 SK/94**	16 **CH>**	17	18 **<BW** **35 NH/96** **1,556 SS/76**	19 **1 PR/95****	20 **1 GY/77**	21 **6,007** **BW/85**
22	23 **1 FH/98***	24 **OS>** **1 FH/02***	25 **6 ML/96**	26 **3 PF/15**	27 **3 PF/10**	28 BV>
29 **2 SW/98***	30 **RT>** **TV>** RL>					

Largest count for month: 15,012 in 1984; largest count in one day: 7,007 April 21, 1985

MAY

1 RS>	2 **2 SW/97***	3	4	5 SW> **BW>**	6 PF> CH>	7
8	9	10 **SS>**	11 **1 MK/97***	12 **NH>** **AK>**	13	14 **1 MK/03***
15 BE> ML> **1 MK/12***	16 OS>	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31 <NH <SS<NG<AK <GE	*BW, TV & RT may continue after May 31*			

Largest count for month: 2,685 in 1980: largest count in one day 1,492 May 4, 1989

* Sighting not reviewed/ accepted by Ontario Bird Records Committee
** First accepted Prairie Falcon record in Ontario

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch

Newsletter

August 2017 Newsletter # 55

AN ACTIVE SEASON

This year we had an increase in the number of raptors counted after a disappointingly low number last year, and we thank all our counters. This newsletters concludes with an analysis of and the statistics for the 2017 season compiled by John Stevens.

The Open House was held on Good Friday and we had good attendance; a further bonus was the addition of a dozen new members. Once again we attracted sponsors, whom we acknowledge later, and so were able to distribute nature guides to families as part of our educational effort. The dinner and annual meeting in April was well attended and a report of the interesting talk given by Rob Porter appears below.

As part of our continuing efforts to raise interest and provide education about raptors a number of special events and talks were organized. Matt Mills provided a session at Beamer on hawk identification on Saturday, April 8th and over twenty people, suitably armed with binoculars, attended. There were sufficient raptors coming through for Matt to apply the identification tips he had been providing. Bruce Mackenzie provided a class to a Grade 11/ 12 class of Westmount High School in Hamilton as part of a programme called Wild, and this was followed up by a field trip to Beamer on April 5th. He also presented a talk at Station1 Coffeehouse in Grimsby, open to the public entitled *Water, Land, Wings and a Cliff: A Composite View of Birds along the Niagara Escarpment.* This was a fund-raiser for a teen resource center and was attended by 40 people. Bruce's many activities were recognized by his being a finalist in Individual Hometown Heroes Award Finalists organized by Earth Day.

The Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch has one of the longest time-series of hawk migration statistics in North America, and these have been stored in Hawkcount, but the early years have not been available through the normal Beamer site, because the data have not been audited. Over the last few months John Stevens, Mike Street and I have been auditing these old records and these are being added to those available in the regular site records. We have written an article for this newsletter about our activity and some of our observations of changes in migration from those early days to our current experience.

Our February newsletter will include an article on some of the more challenging observations from the 2017 season; we hope that this will serve as a primer as you prepare for the 2018 season and help some of our newer members. Even though we have some articles already for our next issue, I always enjoy receiving suggestions and proposals for articles – especially if someone else is going to write them. I look forward to receiving your suggestions!

Sandy Darling, Editor

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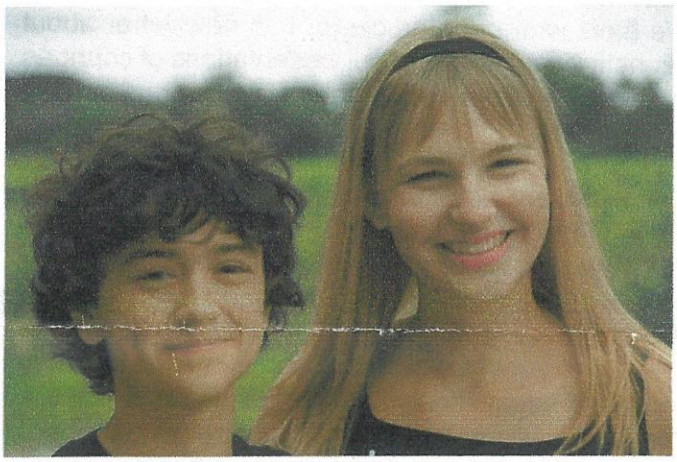
N.P.H. Executive 8

2017 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

The High School Scholarship Programme continued in 2017 and we are pleased to announce that the two winners of $500.00 scholarships are Wynne Reichheld and Karlie Haining.

Wynne is graduating from Welland Centennial Secondary School and is enrolled at Brock University for the fall where she will be studying Biophysics.

Karlie is graduating from Blessed Trinity High School in Grimsby and is enrolled at the University of Guelph and will be studying Agricultural Science.



Wynne Reichheld and Karlie Haining
(Photo: Sandy Darling)

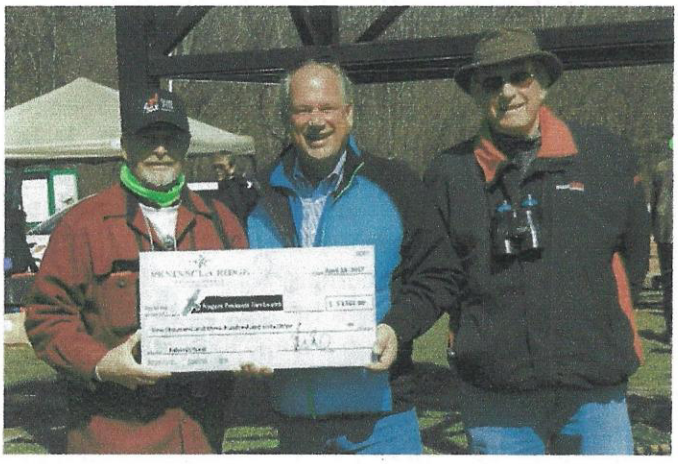
The High School Scholarship Programme has become an important part of promoting the significance of the spring hawk migration along the Niagara Escarpment. Involving youth is an important goal of the Hawkwatch, and so high School students from Burlington, Hamilton and all of Niagara were invited to participate in the scholarship programme.

Each of the winners had to complete a minimum of 8 hours of observing hawks at the Beamer Memorial Conservation Area in Grimsby with one of the hawk counters during the spring migration period. After completing the 8 hours candidates had to submit a project or essay to the scholarship committee. For her project Karlie developed a poster for educational purposes for children about the hawk migration, and Wynne produced an animated computer game for hawk identification.



Tony Quirk, Regional Councilor for Grimsby, presenting the donation from the NPCF, Matt Mills, Wynne Reichheld, Mike Street, Karlie Haining, Glenn Barnett & Bruce Mackenzie (Photo: Andrea Crosby, NPCF)

The scholarship programme was made possible through the generous support of **Peninsula Ridge Estates Winery and Restaurant** and the **Niagara Peninsula Conservation Foundation.** This is the second year for sponsorship of the scholarship programme by Peninsula Ridge Estates Winery and Restaurant.



Norm Beal, President of Peninsula Ridge Estates Winery and Restaurant, presents a cheque to Bruce Mackenzie and Mike Street (Photo: Sandy Darling)

The scholarships were presented at on Saturday August 5th at the Peninsula Ridge Estates Winery and Restaurant with the donors, press, families and directors of the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch present.

THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS

The Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch benefits from support from sponsors and this helps us in our educational activities. Once again we have been able to present two scholarships to two fine young people who spent time at Beamer during the season and both submitted novel projects as part of their applications. For this we thank **Peninsula Ridge Estates Winery and Restaurant** and the **Niagara Peninsula Conservation Foundation**. This is the second year in which Peninsula Ridge Winery has provided funding for a scholarship, and in addition we received funding from sales of a newly launched wine during the past year. We thank Norman Beal and the winery for such generous support. We were also pleased that the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Foundation agreed to provide the funding for the second scholarship, as part of its mandate to promote conservation of the environment.

A new sponsor, which we recognized at the Open House, is **Grand River Brewing**. As part of its sponsorship the brewery is going to donate five cents for each can of Red Tail Ale sold. Now you have a reason for drinking a great ale and know that you are helping to support N.P.H.

Many of our sponsors help to support the Open House and our distribution of nature guides to families as part of our educational and promotional activities. We would not be able to carry out such work without the support of all our other sponsors, and so we wish to thank and recognize them here. They are **Tarbutt Construction, Grimsby Handling Specialty, Grimsby Waterford Quarries, Queenston on the Mountain Chevrolet, Buick GMC, The Judge and Jester, Grimsby Elm Street Café, Grimsby Kerman Car Wash, The Real Canadian Superstore Grimsby, Station One Coffeehouse Grimsby, and Pics Plus Grimsby**.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT AND NPH DATA?

Our annual meeting and dinner were held on Saturday, April 22nd in Grimsby at the St Andrew's Church Hall again. More than forty people came to spend happy times together and to listen to Rob Porter talking about what we can learn from Christmas bird counts and hawk-watch data. Rob is the Field Events Director of the Hamilton Naturalists' Club and compiler of the Hamilton Christmas Bird Count. Professionally Rob is involved in data analysis and so was able to bring expertise to examining two large data sets.

Rob started by discussing historical thought about migration going back to the Greeks, who, for example, thought that Redstarts transmuted into European Robins. Things started to become more professional in the nineteenth century as people traveled more and bird-banding started, and in the twentieth century understanding was driven more by data collection and interpretation. The main reasons that birds migrate are to find food sources and breeding territories, to avoid predators or diseases, genetic disposition, and environmental changes. There are two types of migration: facultative (such as need to find food) and obligate (genetically driven).

Rob then discussed Christmas bird counts and what he has learned from reviewing the Hamilton data. The first Hamilton count was done in 1921, uses a fifteen-mile circle and has averaged 89 species. In the period 1953 to 2016 the total birds counted has ranged from 13,000 to 103,000, depending primarily on weather. Some of the more recent arrivals in the counts have been House Finch, Carolina Wren and Red-bellied Woodpecker. Evening Grosbeak numbers are well down. He also identified some birds to look out for in future counts, such as Turkey Vultures, Wild Turkey, European Collared Dove, Eurasian Tree Sparrow, Rusty and Red-winged Blackbirds, and Brown Cowbirds.

He then turned to the Hawkwatch data, noting that the hours of observation have been fairly constant at about 600 hours. The raptors per hour have been fairly constant, but there has been a significant decrease in "unidentified" birds. Rob then reviewed data by species:

Turkey Vulture numbers have increased steadily over the forty years.
Ospreys increased in the post-DDT years and have now stabilized.
Peregrine Falcon numbers are small but increasing.
Bald Eagles were also affected by DDT and numbers have taken off in the 2000s.
Golden Eagle numbers have always be small.

Sharp-shinned Hawk numbers have declined, but have increased in Christmas Bird counts, suggesting that fewer birds may be migrating.
Cooper's Hawk numbers increased and then declined to previous levels.
Northern Goshawk: there has been a steady decline, but there is little in literature to indicate why this has occurred.
Broad-winged Hawks can be highly variable with some years still producing large numbers.
Red-tailed Hawk numbers have declined steadily.
Rough-legged Hawks are wintering and breeding further north.
Red-shouldered Hawks: they do not migrate far. Numbers increased in the early years and after peaking have dropped to a plateau.[1]
American Kestrel numbers have declined, as other studies have shown.[2]
Merlin numbers have bounced back well.

While many of us have intuitively known of some of these trends, it was valuable to have a more systematic presentation of what one can learn from the data we have at hand, and Rob was able to do this succinctly and clearly.

REMEMBERING PAUL SUMMERSKILL

John Stevens



In April we learned of the sudden passing of my friend, Paul Summerskill of St. Catharines (1929-2017). In recent years he had become an infrequent visitor at the Beamer hawk watch, but in the past he had been a staunch supporter. He served several years on the executive, mainly responsible for education in which role he spoke about hawks to students at their schools and met with school groups at the watch site. He was also a valuable counter, far more so than our records indicate. In the last couple of years that Walter Klabunde counted on weekdays, his eyesight was not sufficient to find all the birds. Walter kept the tallies, but on many days Paul was present to spot the birds so the two of them could then make the identifications.

Paul was a greeter; not the irritating kind found in retail outlets but quietly. He spoke to everybody, whether he knew them or not, with an inquiring mind, endeavouring to engage with them and frequently learning astonishing things about total strangers. Young and old considered him a friend because he was willing to listen.

He was also an artist and, perhaps because of that, an innovative thinker. He and his wife, Tineke (Tina), loved to travel (they must have driven the Dempster Highway to Inuvik a half dozen times). On visiting Newfoundland, Paul was so taken with the people and the place that he purchased a property in Twillingate so they had a place to stay. Realizing it had been habitat for Great Auks, an extinct, flightless seabird, Paul investigated their size and appearance, crafted a likeness, created a mold and then cast a dozen replicas with concrete. These he placed around his property. They may not swim as well as the originals but they do fly just as well!

Through discussions with indigenous Canadians, Paul learned that their respect for nature matched his own. The celebration of life service for him was led by a native pastor and included a native funeral ceremony complete with a drummer that was very moving. The large crowd that attended included several hawk watchers. Paul touched many people and gave freely of his time. He will be missed by all.

IMPROVING MIGRATION DATA FROM THE EARLY YEARS

Mike Street, John Stevens, Sandy Darling

Most members are probably familiar to varying degrees with how migration counts are recorded and transformed into the daily reports that normally appear on-line later in the evening of a count day. Basically the counter records the count and other relevant information for each hour, transfers the information to a standardized sheet, and then enters the information into Hawkcount, the on-line data base maintained by the Hawk Migration Association

[1] Our speaker in 2016 talked about Red-shouldered Hawks; see summary in the August 2016 newsletter.

[2] This was noted in the Raptor Population Index Project, described in the February 2012 newsletter.

of North America (HMANA)[3]. The reporting sheets are sent to our coordinator, who audits the entries in Hawkcount to make sure that the data are accurate. (Eventually the daily sheets are archived at the Royal Ontario Museum.) This all seems so simple and commonplace in today's on-line world, but this arrangement is far more recent than many probably realize.

So what happened before that and how do we know that the data from earlier years are accurate? We have just completed a project that allows us to answer those questions.

The Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch (NPH) has recorded data on migrations at the Beamer Conservation Area site since 1975, one year after HMANA was established in 1974. One of our members, Eric Single, hosted the planning meeting that led to the founding of HMANA, and his account of that appeared in our February 2015 newsletter. One of the first tasks of HMANA was to devise a standard reporting form that made provision for recording hourly counts, weather and flight data, such as height and direction of flight. Over the years, this form has been modified several times.
In the early 2000s HMANA developed Hawkcount, a mechanism for recording daily count data in a master database via the internet, which has since expanded to include reports from over two hundred hawk-watch sites in Mexico, the United States, Panama and Canada.

As Hawkcount was being programmed, Mike Street, who was on the HMANA Board of Directors at the time, remembered that in 1992 David Hussell had written an important technical paper for the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources titled *Population changes in diurnally migrating raptors at Duluth, Minnesota (1974-1989) and Grimsby, Ontario (1975-1990)*. At the time David was helping HMANA with the Raptor Population Index (RPI). At a HMANA Board meeting Mike asked David if the data from the early years had been entered into a computer database and, if yes, were they still available? Three minor miracles happened: 1. David said yes, the data had been computerized; 2. David said that the data were still available; 3. Jason Sodergen, the developer of Hawkcount, was able to work out a way to transfer all 1975-1990 Beamer data from David's files directly into Hawkcount!

A second major step in building the computer records occurred in 2006 when hawk-watcher Bill Smith volunteered to enter all the data from the 1991-2006 Beamer daily sheets into Hawkcount. The transcribed data were audited by NPH Committee members, after which the 1991-2006 data were made available to HMANA members for research and for the RPI project. Bill also agreed to transcribe the daily data for 2007 into Hawkcount.
In 2008 regular counters at Beamer were introduced to Hawkcount and asked to enter data themselves at the end of any day they counted. Everyone agreed, and this has continued ever since – 2017 marks the tenth consecutive year of direct entry of daily Beamer data into Hawkcount, so that daily records can be read the same evening. Until 2013 the on-line data were audited at the end of the season against the paper version, and since then as sheets are received by mail. After all sheets have been checked, the year's data are confirmed and the annual summary is prepared.

So what happened to all the data from 1975 to 1990, which had been placed in a special section of Hawkcount called "Beamer Backup"? Once again we got a lucky break. Mike Street received an e-mail from Chris Risley, one of the MNR staff who had computerized the 1975-1990 data for David Hussell. While tidying up his office, Chris had found a box with copies of the 1975-1990 data sheets they had used, and asked if we were interested in having them. Following a resounding "YES", the copies duly arrived at Mike's.

All that remained was to audit the data stored in "Beamer Backup" for those years against the data sheet copies, although It took a few years to get to this task. In 2016 Mike's wife Carol and daughter Alison scanned all the 1975-1990 data sheets. This year the authors of this article have spent a significant amount of time comparing the data recorded in Hawkcount for these years against those on the sheets submitted by counters, and also recording some of the notes from the sheets such as

[3] The website of HMANA and Hawkcount were used in writing this article and in some cases text from these websites has been used verbatim.

those about the time at which an eagle passed or the ages of eagles recorded.

In some cases it was necessary to make corrections and special notes, such as when we had to interpret what a number should be when column and row totals resulted in different totals for the day. In most cases data had been recorded accurately, and so only minor adjustments were needed. In a very few cases there were major discrepancies, such as on two days when the hourly totals were entered as "unidentified raptors". The computer program then added these to give new totals that were double the number of birds actually seen; on both days over 1,000 birds were seen, so that we suddenly had a difference of over 2,000 between the paper and computer records over the two days. In another case over 1,000 Broad-winged Hawks were entered on the wrong line. Another aspect of the audit was to separate birds seen only from Beamer Point or other area locations from birds seen from the circle, which is our standard reference point. In the early years, before 1980, this on occasion proved to be difficult and has been noted in the days' notes. The net result is that we are now sure that the information in Hawkcount is reliable, subject only to the usual uncertainty arising from counting migrating birds in conditions that are not always ideal.

At times the auditing work was tedious, but it was interesting to review what was recorded and how it differed from what we experience today. Some of the main impressions we had are set out below.

- Firstly, we wish to acknowledge the tremendous debt we owe to Walter Klabunde, who counted from March 1 to May 31 each season and stayed around some days long after many would have gone home. Walter had a Ph.D. in chemistry and worked at Du Pont in Niagara Falls, New York until 1969. He first started counting in 1979 and did five days a week until 1987, after which he cut back to three days a week until 1993, for an estimated total of between 700 and 800 days. He travelled from Lewiston, New York each day to do this. If you've heard about the "Klabunde line", now you know the origin. Walter would not count a bird until it had passed the flagpole. [4]
- The total of Sharp-shinned Hawks for a season in the early years was typically over 4,000 and there were often two days in a season with over 1,000.
- At the other end of the scale there were fewer than 100 Turkey Vultures in a season. Total raptor counts then were similar to recent years, so the growth in TV numbers, especially since 2000, has been accompanied by decreases in the numbers of Red-tailed and Sharp-shinned Hawks.
- The appearance of a Northern Goshawk these days is a major event, whereas they could number between 10 and 100 in earlier seasons.
- One of the most notable differences between counts in early years and now was the large number of "unidentified" birds recorded in the early years. We do not think that counters were any less skilled then. We are fortunate today to have access to much better optics and reference books that we can consult that have clear diagrams and photos. Digital cameras can give instant feed-back and there are apps on mobile phones that can be consulted immediately.

We invite you to spend time searching the full 1975-2017 range of our records using the "Beamer Conservation Area Daily Count Summaries" and "Beamer Conservation Area Monthly Count Summaries" links on the "Most Recent Migration Data" page of the NPH website, knowing that they have all been checked. For those who have been active at Beamer for many years, the statistics will probably bring back some happy memories.

[4] More detail about Walter appears on the "In Memoriam" page of the NPH website.

2017 MIGRATION SUMMARY

John Stevens

The most recent hawk watch season at the Beamer Memorial Conservation Area (Beamer) produced a below average migration count of 12,520 birds (Table 1). On the bright side though, that was almost 25% above last year's record low total. Nevertheless it continues a recent trend of low counts since we set our record high count in 2011. One disturbing aspect that no doubt contributed to the low count was the fact that there were nine days when no counter was assigned. That's more than ten percent of the season. For many years we've been able to say that we had complete coverage from the first of March to the middle of May, but unfortunately that was not the case this year.

Although four of the days without an assigned counter got partial coverage and a storm effectively covered another, the reduced coverage produced our lowest count hours since 1979. The total was about 100 hours below the long term average of 535 hours. This can partially be explained by the weather that impacted more days this year then I can remember it doing in any past year.

Speaking of the weather, the season got off to a pretty good start with the last few days in February being quite warm. Counts were conducted on three days and 81 birds recorded (Table 2; page 12). It then cooled markedly and it was another ten days before a total of 81 was surpassed in March. The following week had a major snowfall and a second storm with the result that by the twentieth of the month, there had been only 165 birds counted during March including just five Red-shouldered and only one Rough-legged Hawk. The Turkey Vultures picked up after that and the remainder of the month had reasonable counts on most days but never a big count (Table 3). Another rain event wiped out the last day of the month. The 160 hours recorded was about 40 to 50 below what we have been generally doing.

Precipitation during March was almost double the normal amount and then in April it got worse. The local weather station recorded 236% of the normal amount for the month, with less than 4 cm of snow. Not all fell during daylight hours but, as is evident in Table 4, there were four days wiped out by rain and two more days without a scheduled counter so the 191 count hours were about 25 below a normal April.

Most of the first half of May was cool and very wet. The temperature never exceeded 20 C, even when it wasn't raining. Once again there was more than double the normal amount of precipitation for the month. Only one of the first six days in the month was at all productive because of the weather. Later, a day without a counter contributed to the total hours counted being the third lowest since 1979 for May (Table 5).

We did manage to tie a record in 2017, one that had previously been reached seven times (2012, 2008, 2002, 2000, 1997, 1994 and 1992) when seventeen species of raptor were counted during the season. Five years ago, I announced in the annual summary that Black Vulture had become our sixteenth raptor to visit regularly. This may have been a little premature as they are not visiting every year as yet but they did make appearances on three days in 2017. In addition, a Swainson's Hawk was seen on May 9th bringing the species total to seventeen. A possible Mississippi Kite on May 11th would have set a new record, but it was not recorded so we're left with a tie.

The Turkey Vultures were certainly moving very early with 37 recorded before March. Normally the first of them shows up around the fifth of March. By contrast Rough-legged Hawks were rather late this year. Their best day coincided with the first good flight of Broad-winged Hawks on April 13th when normally they would have moved through in March. A late bird was seen on May 9th. The first Broad-winged Hawk arrived on April 9th, on the early side of normal by a few days

.

While it would not be meaningful to compare this year's data with prior years when there was complete coverage, some trends can be noted. First some good news in that for the third year in a row, the number of American Kestrels seen has increased. Historically, the total is still low for Beamer but at least the current trend is upward. By contrast, Braddock Bay near Rochester has had quite stable counts of the species in recent years albeit much below their counts in the last century.
The Red-shouldered Hawk count was the second lowest since 1975, only last year's count being lower. Only one of the days during which this

species passes was not covered so it is unlikely many were missed. By contrast, Derby Hill at the eastern end of Lake Ontario had their second-highest count of this species since 1995.
Turkey Vultures comprised 47.9% of the year's total. This compares to 48.3% last year, 52.0% in 2015 and 62.8% in 2014. This species count has been increasing steadily since the watch began but may finally be starting to level off. However it should be noted that both Braddock Bay and Derby Hill set record high counts of Turkey Vultures this year.

A good crowd, including some young birders on an Ontario Field Ornithologists outing, witnessed the biggest count of the year on April 23rd when 1,381 birds were recorded. That day had twelve species including Black Vulture, but the prize for best variety goes to Sandy Darling on May 9th who had thirteen species including a Swainson's Hawk among 109 birds in total.

As always our thanks is extended to everyone who helped with the counts this year and in particular to the following who served as designated counters on at least part of one day: Barry Cherriere, Sandy Darling, Chris Escott, Tim Foran, Eric Geneen, Eric Holden, Gord Kozak, Kevin McLaughlin, Matt Mills, Brian Mishell, George Naylor, Darren Smillie, John Stevens, Mike Street, Tom Thomas, and Phil Waggett.

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Matt Mills (second from right) leading an identification workshop in April



Open House: the life bird presentation (above) always attracts a good crowd; Mike Street (below) talks about migration (Photos: Sandy Darling)



TABLE 1
Annual Summaries for Beamer 1998-2017

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Black Vulture			1				1				1		2	1	5		2			4
Turkey Vulture	3,277	3,384	2,971	3,532	4,065	5,026	4,623	5,158	5,934	5,385	6,107	6,091	6,732	7,125	5,986	6,698	7,330	7,730	4,862	5,995
Osprey	42	42	46	71	48	59	51	47	64	50	52	39	53	41	64	52	57	42	45	47
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite			0																	
Mississippi Kite			0			1									1					
Bald Eagle	32	30	25	30	54	66	62	71	85	54	65	76	64	60	57	62	43	80	35	50
Northern Harrier	85	91	125	108	115	98	223	128	96	115	173	121	109	104	83	77	63	68	84	73
Sharp-shinned Hawk	2,822	2,002	2,467	2,541	3,173	2,350	2,310	1,756	1,753	1,551	2,652	1,721	2,339	1,700	1,848	1,335	835	1,253	1,039	1,144
Cooper's Hawk	179	241	181	169	244	220	252	183	202	207	123	136	125	101	145	86	122	153	119	105
Northern Goshawk	14	6	3	14	9	6	11	12	6	8	5	6	8	2	7	5	0	1	2	2
Red-shouldered Hawk	553	675	508	458	566	455	524	641	679	641	658	730	513	581	592	437	392	698	275	306
Broad-winged Hawk	3,886	1,833	2,368	5,229	3,668	3,327	2,532	5,537	2,026	2,413	2,971	5,497	2,922	8,613	3,473	1,484	1,508	2,898	2,142	3,330
Swainson's Hawk	3		1		1						1						1	1		1
Red-tailed Hawk	2,159	2,218	2,617	2,351	2,031	2,258	2,513	2,693	3,099	2,209	2,457	2,852	2,156	1,857	2,002	1,750	1,131	1,778	1,312	1,279
Ferruginous Hawk	1		0		1															
Rough-legged Hawk	33	69	50	74	22	40	204	120	100	75	59	92	29	59	35	38	28	46	26	23
Golden Eagle	6	10	13	6	8	8	8	8	13	7	15	12	8	8	12	8	5	14	4	9
American Kestrel	77	69	95	77	99	102	87	45	63	77	120	69	55	44	55	92	30	40	56	63
Merlin	15	10	22	6	19	11	21	15	13	18	10	13	22	17	18	12	12	9	21	15
Peregrine Falcon	4	1	7	3	6	7	5	5	9	2	7	8	12	10	5	5	8	6	4	5
Gyrfalcon			0						1											
Prairie Falcon			0																	
Unidentified Raptors	227	345	165	282	737	327	234	183	178	134	96	114	26	45	44	68	104	52	40	69
Total Raptors	13,415	11,026	11,665	14,951	14,866	14,361	13,661	16,602	14,321	12,946	15,572	17,577	15,175	20,368	14,432	12,209	11,671	14,869	10,066	12,520
Hours Counted	499.0	502.8	527.4	545.0	556.3	532.0	495.5	495.2	534.5	507.1	552.6	520.3	518.4	495.2	488.5	492.2	520.2	537.6	524.8	439.8
Birds per Hour	26.9	21.9	22.1	27.4	26.7	27.0	27.6	33.5	26.8	25.5	28.2	33.8	29.3	41.1	29.5	24.8	22.4	27.7	19.2	28.5

Table 3- March 2017

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	March Species Totals
Black Vulture																							1									1
Turkey Vulture	8	3			1	3	1	3	14	5	8	11					3		12	1	84	64	168	66	304	358	387	72	259	201		2,036
Osprey																													1			1
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite																																0
Mississippi Kite																																0
Bald Eagle		1								1		1					1					2	7	1		2			2			18
Northern Harrier																							1			3	3		3	1		11
Sharp-shinned Hawk		1				2										1	1			1	1	1	4	4	1	8	20	1	25	4		75
Cooper's Hawk	1	1				1		2		1							1		1		1	1	8	1		5	4	2	7	2		39
Northern Goshawk																																0
Red-shouldered Hawk																			5		6	2	54	1	1	41	35	8	94	6		253
Broad-winged Hawk																																0
Swainson's Hawk																																0
Red-tailed Hawk	2	14			1	1		1	9	6		10				4			14	1	39	12	130	9	5	45	38	36	126	62		565
Ferruginous Hawk																																0
Rough-legged Hawk								1															2			1				3		7
Golden Eagle						1			1																	1				1		4
American Kestrel							1														3			6		2	1	2	2	1		18
Merlin																					2			1	1					1		5
Peregrine Falcon																											1		1			2
Gyrfalcon																																0
Prairie Falcon																																0
Unid. Accipiter																																0
Unid. Buteo						2																	1				15		9			27
Unid. Falcon																																0
Unid. Eagle																																0
Unid. Raptor																							1									1
Total Raptors	11	20	0	0	2	10	2	7	24	13	8	22	0	0	0	5	6	0	32	3	136	82	377	89	312	466	504	121	529	282	0	3,063
Hours Counted	5.50	6.00	0.00	1.00	2.00	6.50	3.50	8.00	6.00	8.00	5.00	7.00	3.33	0.00	0.00	5.00	8.00	0.00	8.50	4.25	7.50	8.00	8.50	7.00	4.00	8.00	8.50	8.00	8.00	5.50	0.00	160.58
Precipitation			*	*	*		R						S	S	*			S,R,F								R	F	F			R,S	R	

* Indicates no counter assigned

Table 4 - April 2017

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	April Species Totals
Black Vulture																							2								2
Turkey Vulture	76	751	840	3	581		3	591	144	200	77	28	128	30	6	93	27	32	19		44	8	34	11		17	8	11			3762
Osprey					1			1	4	5	1	1	5	1	1	4	10	1	1				3	2							41
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite																															0
Mississippi Kite																															0
Bald Eagle	1		2						1		1		1			1		1				2	5	3		2	2				22
Northern Harrier	1	1	6		4			1	6	4	2		2	2	4		1	4				1	6	2		2	3				52
Sharp-shinned Hawk	3	25	43	6	21		1	11	146	109	27	3	62	62	22	10	35	63	23		6	25	106	46		43	56	17			971
Cooper's Hawk		4	2		6				3	2	2		3			2	4	1	1		2	2	5	1		2	5	2			49
Northern Goshawk																	1														1
Red-shouldered Hawk	5	12	20	3	2			2					2	4			1						1	1							53
Broad-winged Hawk									1	1	1	1	380	14	5	3	194	646	3		1	553	1,174	179		42	22	43			3263
Swainson's Hawk																															0
Red-tailed Hawk	13	63	33	7	68			23	32	21	5	2	118	33	9	4	29	54	1			22	36	15		2	14	8			612
Ferruginous Hawk																															0
Rough-legged Hawk		1	3					1	1				6			1							1							14
Golden Eagle													3				1														4
American Kestrel	1	3	5	2			1		7	7	1		2			5		3	1				3				1				42
Merlin		1						1	3		1											1	1					1			9
Peregrine Falcon			1						1																						2
Gyrfalcon																															0
Prairie Falcon																															0
Unid. Accipiter										1			1										1	1							4
Unid. Buteo		1			4								1				2						2	1		1					12
Unid. Falcon																															0
Unid. Eagle																															0
Unid. Raptor		2								1			2				3						2	3			2				15
Total Raptors	100	864	955	21	687	0	5	631	349	361	118	35	716	146	47	123	308	805	49	0	53	614	1,381	266	0	111	113	82	0	0	8,930
Hours Counted	*8.00*	*9.50*	*6.75*	*0.75*	*7.00*	*0.00*	*5.00*	*8.00*	*8.50*	*8.75*	*8.00*	*8.00*	*8.25*	*7.00*	*5.00*	*8.00*	*9.00*	*8.00*	*8.00*	*0.00*	*8.00*	*8.00*	*10.50*	*8.58*	*0.00*	*8.00*	*8.67*	*8.00*	*0.00*	*0.00*	*191.25*
Precipitation				*		R,S	S,R								R				R	R	R				R,F				*	R	

* indicates no counter assigned

Table 2 – February 2017

Date	18	27	28	Totals
Turkey Vulture	1	25	11	37
Bald Eagle		1	2	3
Sharp-shinned Hawk		1		1
Red-tailed Hawk		17	19	36
Unid Raptor		2	2	4
Total Raptors	1	46	34	81
Hours counted	4.25	5.5	2.5	12.25

Table 5 - May 2017

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	May Species Totals
Black Vulture			1													1
Turkey Vulture			25	1			17	22	9	23	5	16		13	29	160
Osprey								1	2		1	1				5
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite																0
Mississippi Kite																0
Bald Eagle									4	3						7
Northern Harrier		1					2	1	2	1	1			1	1	10
Sharp-shinned Hawk			2	2			26	32	21	11		1		1	1	97
Cooper's Hawk			1				2	4	5	2				1	2	17
Northern Goshawk											1					1
Red-shouldered Hawk																0
Broad-winged Hawk			5					19	28	15						67
Swainson's Hawk									1							1
Red-tailed Hawk							2	6	29	11	4	3		9	2	66
Ferruginous Hawk																0
Rough-legged Hawk			1						1							2
Golden Eagle									1							1
American Kestrel									1	1	1					3
Merlin														1		1
Peregrine Falcon									1							1
Gyrfalcon																0
Prairie Falcon																0
Unid. Accipiter																0
Unid. Buteo																0
Unid. Falcon																0
Unid. Eagle																0
Unid. Raptor									4		1				1	6
Total Raptors	0	1	35	3	0	0	49	85	109	67	14	21	0	26	36	446
Hours Counted	4.67	4.50	8.00	2.25	0.00	0.00	6.00	8.50	7.75	8.00	6.00	3.50	0.00	7.50	9.00	75.67
Precipitation	R,F	R		R	*R	R						*	*			

* indicates no counter assigned



Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Newsletter

February 2018 **Newsletter # 56**

ARE YOU READY?

Sandy Darling

Are you ready for the new season? In 2017 we recruited about a dozen new members, and this has inspired much of the content for this newsletter. We have a series of articles that we hope will be useful to both new and returning members. These cover reference materials available, arrival times of various species, optimal weather conditions for migration and techniques used to identify some of the challenging birds of 2017. In addition, we have an article about the Corpus Christi fall count, where Matt Mills was a counter in both 2016 and 2017. Matt will also be speak on April 28 at the dinner about **Hawkwatching in Western North America**. Matt has some great photos and you will find that the sites are different from our experience in the east.

Are you ready to help? All of us benefit from the wind-shelters and other features at Beamer. Help us set up on March 1 – willingness is the primary skill needed. Simply show up at 10:00 a.m. If you can help at the Open House on March 30, please talk to any member of the executive.

Are you ready to count or learn how to do so? Last year we had more uncovered days than usual and this year some of our seasoned counters have indicated that they may not be as available as last year. For the migration counts to be valid, we need new counters. All of us had to start somewhere, and it was usually by standing close to a knowledgeable person. If you are willing to help count or want to learn, please contact Mike Street.

Are you ready to help run the organization? Most members of the executive have been in their positions for ten years or more, and we need renewal. For any organization to be healthy it needs new blood and willing volunteers. We on the executive benefited greatly from the energy of Bruce Mackenzie in recent years, but Bruce has another project in Grimsby where he needs to spend time. Thank-you, Bruce, for all your work! Matt Mills represents the future generation and we need more people like him who are under seventy! We can use any or all of the following skills: writing, organizing events, computer or website skills, financial or statistical knowledge, and many more. If you want to see the Hawkwatch continue, you need to step forward.

Let's look forward to a great season and some rejuvenation!

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LEARN ABOUT HAWK-WATCHING IN WESTERN NORTH AMERICA AT THE DINNER

The Annual Meeting and Dinner will again be held at St Andrew's Church Hall in Grimsby on Saturday, April 28, and we hope that you will attend and bring guests. The speaker – our own Matt Mills - will discuss **Hawkwatching in Western North America**. Matt has spent a lot of time in the west, and assures us that hawk-watching sites and the nature of hawk-watching are different from our experience at Beamer, so it will an interesting evening.

Matt grew up in Dundas, Ontario and first became interested in raptors when he was six years old. At age twelve a copy of *Hawks in Flight* by Dunne, Sutton and Sibley inspired Matt to observe autumn raptor migration from his own backyard. Encouraged by Mike Street, Bruce Duncan, Rob Dobos and other HNC and NPH members to pursue birding at a young age, Matt began volunteering at Beamer in high school.

Since then Matt has travelled extensively in the western United States for education, a variety of research projects, and, what else, but counting migrating raptors. Hawkwatch International invited Matt to count at the Corpus Christi Texas Hawkwatch during the 2016 and 2017 fall seasons. Matt writes about his experience later in this newsletter. He has also served the past three years counting at Beamer and on the NPH executive.

Matt will describe western migration hotspots from the Arctic to the Gulf of Mexico. Hawk-watching has traditionally been an eastern phenomenon since its inception at Hawk Mountain, Pennsylvania in the 1930s, but is still expanding west of the Mississippi. Matt's talk on **Hawkwatching in Western North America** will feature stunning photographs of the unique raptors and expansive landscapes awaiting our discovery in the Rocky Mountains, Great Plains, Pacific coast and southwest. Dark morph buteos (photo on this page of a Broad-winged Hawk), rare southwest and Texas specialties, eye-level mountain ridge views, abundant eagles and more serve to illustrate why the West is an incredible place to rediscover the joys of hawkwatching.

Socializing and the bucket raffle will begin at 5:00 p.m., and the pre-supper wine and cheese at 5:15.



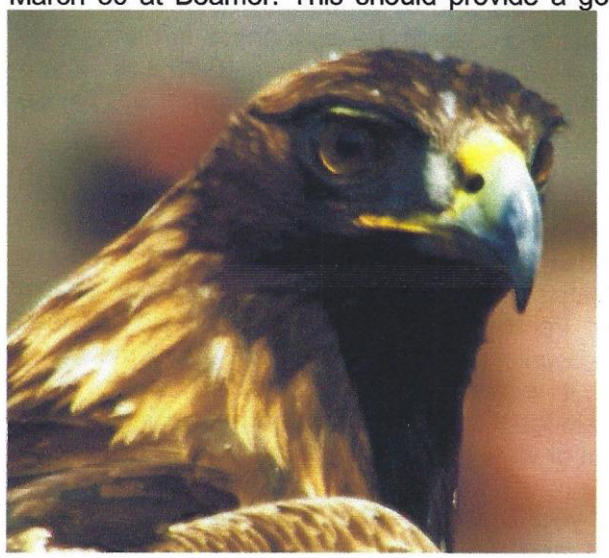
Photo: James Petersen

Dinner will start around 6:15. As always, we welcome donations for the bucket raffle – please contact a member of the executive if you can make a donation. Tickets are $40.00 for members and $50.00 for non-members. Please contact a member of the NPH executive (see page 10) to obtain tickets.

2018 NPH OPEN HOUSE

FRIDAY, MARCH 30

The 2018 Open House will be on Good Friday, March 30 at Beamer. This should provide a good

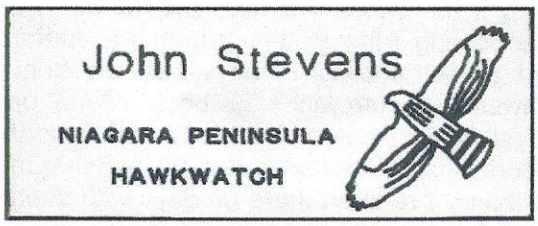


variety of raptors, and possibly the first Osprey of the season. We hope that the day and fine weather will draw lots of raptors and crowds. Counting will take place from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and the Open House hours are 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Live birds, such as the Golden Eagle on the previous page, will again on display the live birds – for many this is the major attraction of the day.

The Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority is a great help in organizing this event and it brings many people to one of the authority's sites. Our work would be much more difficult without the great support we receive from them in preparing the site, putting up banners and directional signs, and bringing in tables and benches. The Hamilton Naturalists Club is our other sponsor this year and we thank them for their support. The event provides a forum for other nature groups and we hope to have over ten exhibitors. Mike Street will give two talks on raptors and their migration, and there will also be a children's program provided by Carla Carlson of Niagara Nature Tours. We shall make best efforts to get a truck with food and drinks, but our experience is that we cannot guarantee arrival.

NPH NAME BADGE

For the 2018 season we are purchasing name badges for all our regular counters so that visitors may know who members of NPH are. We hope that this will promote the hawkwatch and enable visitors to direct questions. If you are not a regular counter but would like such a name badge, you may order one by using the membership renewal form and paying $7.00. The deadline for ordering is March 31, because we can minimize costs by ordering badges together. The badges are held in place by a magnetic clip and a sample appears below.



VALUABLE HAWK-WATCHING RESOURCES

Sandy Darling

As hawk-watchers we view birds in migration once or normally at best twice a year, and so we can all benefit from taking time before the season starts to refresh our knowledge base. There are a number of resources available for us to do this, and for someone who is new to hawk-watching these resources may be especially valuable. The purpose of this article is to remind you of the materials that you can draw on and how to find out more about them. So, what is available?

Standard bird guides: all birders must possess at least one guide to North American birds, and many of these are useful to get a quick overview of the raptors that we may see on the Niagara peninsula. Each of you will have your preference so this article will not spend time on specific guide-books. You will soon find, however, that these standard guides do not give the level of detail that is desirable for identifying hawks flying at various distances and angles, and so one is soon looking for more specialized reference materials.

Hawks in Flight[1]**:** This is probably the most widely used, specialized book, and it covers all the raptors of the United States and Canada. The second edition is a great improvement on the first edition and has extensive text supplemented with coloured photographs. Species are grouped into families (buteos, accipiters, etc.) and the species within the family are discussed. The second edition was reviewed extremely favourably in newsletter #47 in August 2013. If I were buying one book, this is the one I would chose.

The Crossley I.D. Guide - Raptors[2]**:** This book uses a different form of presentation that reflects how people learn. There is less text and more photos of birds from different angles with quizzes at the end of each chapter. The photos with the quizzes are particularly valuable, because different species of raptors within a family appear in the same photograph so that one can compare and

[1] Peter Dunne, David Sibley, Clay Sutton *Hawks in Flight: The Flight Identification of North American Raptors* (Second edition) Houghton Mifflen Harcourt Company 2012

[2] Richard Crossley, Jerry Liguori, Brian Sullivan *The Crossley ID Guide – Raptors* Princeton University Press 2013

contrast birds in flight, whereas most guides deal with one species at a time. This was reviewed favourably in newsletter #48 in February 2014.

Hawks from Every Angle – How to Identify Raptors in Flight[3]: This guide includes 339 color photos in 68 plates, and compares and contrasts similar species. It also deals with the impact of light conditions, molt on overall shape and aberrant plumages.

Hawks at a Distance – Identification of Migrant Raptors[4]: This book emphasizes distant birds more than some of the other books do. The text is supported by 558 color photos and 896 black and white photos.

App from Hawkwatch International[5]: This app, prepared by Hawkwatch International, on Raptor ID is available from the Apple Store. More birders are moving away from books towards apps that can be used in the field on a smart phone. Such apps can provide more flexibility and one has reference material readily at hand. The images in this app are of excellent quality and one thing that this app can do that books cannot is to provide videos of birds in flight. This was reviewed favorably in newsletter #54 in February 2017; one minor drawback (maps requiring internet connectivity) will not be a problem for those watching at Beamer.

Cornell webinar: If you want a more formal approach, you can enrol in up to six webinars on raptor identification prepared by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Each webinar costs US$12.99, and you can download approximately 50 PowerPoint slides for each one without charge. The first two deal with getting started and other things to use. Webinars 3 to 5 deal with birds by family group and the sixth covers rarities.

Photographs on the internet: These days there are thousands, if not millions, of photographs on the internet, and these can be found simply by typing in something like "[species name] photograph". In this way one can check out details of what you saw and see birds from different angles. Some years ago I saw a rarity from my car as it sat slightly above me and the only way I could check the underside of the tail was from photos – guidebooks did not provide that detail.

YouTube videos: All the migrating birds that we see are flying and the nature of the flight is part of how one identifies the birds. Books and photos may describe flight, but there is nothing like seeing what the flight pattern looks like. While there are not as many YouTube videos as there are photographs on the internet, searching on YouTube can provide some good videos. Sometimes there is an added benefit if the bird is vocalizing. I once had a raptor calling as it flew, but I could not find the sound in traditional audio materials or standard sources on the internet. I wanted to see the flight and so went to YouTube to find the bird flying and making the sound I had heard.

Watching, asking and listening: I find that I can read about birds and view images of them, but what the bird is like does not get imprinted until I actually see it. There is no substitute for time in the field spent watching, and practice will make identification easier the more you do. There are many knowledgeable people watching hawks at Beamer so do not be afraid to ask questions even if they sound trivial. We all had to start somewhere. The other thing to do is to stand with good hawk-watchers and listen to what they say they are seeing and how they decide what the species is. I have learned more in this way than from books. We shall be there from March 1 to May 15, so come along, but spend some time preparing before the season starts.

WHAT ARE THE BEST WEATHER CONDITIONS FOR SEEING RAPTORS AT BEAMER CA?

Mike Street

When I first started watching hawks at Beamer CA people told me different things. "Don't bother coming if the winds are from the North." "Don't bother coming if the winds are from the Northeast." "Don't bother coming if the winds are from the Northwest." "South winds are best." Yet at one of our first Open Houses the winds had a northerly component and we had over 700 birds! On the other hand, I've been there on days with southerly winds and not a single hawk came through! Note that this is not to dismiss the value of wind. Some

[3] Jerry Liguori *Hawks from Every Angle – How to Identify Raptors in Flight* Princeton University Press 2005

[4] Jerry Liguori *Hawks at a Distance – Identification of Migrant Raptors* Princeton University Press 2011.

kind of wind, from whatever direction, is usually necessary for a good flight to be observed. Lots of birds might pass on a calm day but you would be hard pressed to see them.

Over time I realized that the best time to go to Beamer to see hawks was when there were hawks to see! That sounds silly, but it's true in the sense that, if conditions are right, the birds will honour the Hawkwatcher's Prayer, "Here they come." So what are those conditions?

We all know that raptors need lift in order to migrate. We all know that they can get lift from winds blowing in off the lake and pushing up the Niagara escarpment. We all know that they can get lift from thermals forming over the farm fields to the south or over the Grimsby plains to the north. If there are no birds to lift, however, these two lift methods are useless.

Once spring approaches, raptors coming to Canada for the summer start moving from the south, from Central and, in a few cases, South America, and from Mexico, Cuba, Florida, and Texas. The majority of them hitch a ride in the air moving north **behind a warm front. This is the first and most important weather element a hawkwatcher should look for**. From early March into May, if a warm front is approaching the Niagara Peninsula, there will almost certainly be hawks coming right behind it.

Use the weather maps provided by Environment Canada, the Weather Network or Intellicast to look for an approaching warm front. Simple, yes? Not quite. The first thing to check is whether or not the front is expected to go past the Niagara Peninsula into central Ontario. Sometimes the natural climatic barrier provided by Lake Erie can slow a front down so that it stalls before getting to Beamer. There's nothing worse than standing on the tower watching the solid but unmoving line of a front to the south.

Normally the wind **right behind** a warm front at Beamer will be from the same southerly direction the front is travelling. This was the situation on 15 April 1994 when a warm front started to arrive around noon. By the end of the day over 2,200 raptors, including our first and only Swallow-tailed Kite (so far), as well as a Swainson's Hawk (seldom seen at Beamer) had come through.

Once a warm front has passed Beamer, is that the end of the flight? Depending on the strength of the front and the amount of temperature rise accompanying it, birds could keep coming through for a couple of days **regardless** of what the wind is doing on those **subsequent** days. Unless there's a major snow storm or gale force winds now coming from the north, birds that came a little further behind the warm front will still keep moving north for a day or two, past Beamer if we're lucky.

It is equally important to ask what will keep hawks from coming to Beamer today or tomorrow. A cold front coming today from the north, with northerly winds behind it, will keep migrating birds down and migration will stop until the front works its way south and peters out. It is also necessary to see what happened **south of us** yesterday and the day before. If a storm system was active in the American states below Lake Erie, it could and likely will stop northward migration until it works its way to the Atlantic, meaning no birds at Beamer for a day or two or even three. We've all watched weather reports of a massive snow storm hitting Buffalo, only 60km from Beamer, while the skies over the Niagara Peninsula are clear and blue. There's little point being at Beamer on a day like that.

What about situations when today's forecast calls for rain? Unfortunately, television and radio forecasts often emphasize the bad parts without putting them into perspective with regard to timing or location. Yes, it may rain today – but not until 8PM! Yes, it may rain or snow all day in Toronto – but not at Beamer! The best way to check these factors is to look at the **hourly** details found on The Weather Network's site for Hamilton or St. Catharines at https://www.theweathernetwork.com

Although the notes above are meant to guide hawk-watchers, there will be exceptions. Mother Nature will see to that!

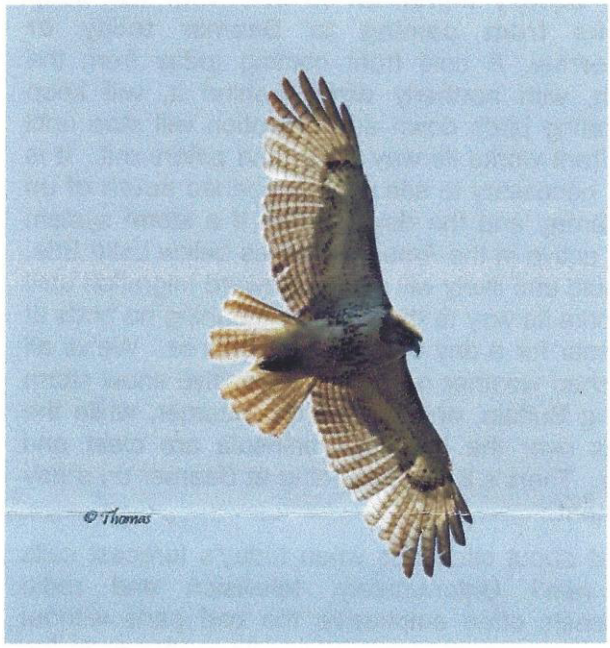
CHALLENGING RAPTORS

We are introducing this article, which continues on page 7, and the photos on page 6 to help new members learn and continuing members to refresh memories. We have selected a number of situations encountered in the past season and have described the process used to determine which species was being seen.

PHOTO GALLERY

The photos below complement the article about challenging raptors, which does not deal with juvenile birds.

Juvenile birds are not as distinctively marked as adult birds are, and the photos by Tom Thomas below give us some good views of juvenile birds.



Red-tailed Hawk (above) & Broad-winged Hawk below





Red-shouldered Hawk

On page 8 Matt Mills discusses the differences between Cooper's Hawks and Sharp-shinned Hawks. The photo below gives a classic view of a Cooper's Hawk.



Do you have photos to submit? We can always use them in the newsletter and on the website. Please send them to darlinga@cogeco.ca.

Buteos presenting side-views

Counter and observers: Sandy Darling, Tom Thomas and Matt Mills

On March 23 2017, 130 Red-tailed Hawks, 54 Red-shouldered Hawks and two Rough-legged Hawks were counted at Beamer, but most were well north of the tower in a slight haze and so presented side views only. The usual identifiers of crescents, belly bands and patagial marks were rarely visible, because the birds had gained height by the time they arrived in the north-east corner and glided with few wing movements across the sky to the north. What characteristics did the observers and counter use to identify all the birds except for one unidentified buteo and one unidentified raptor? The main characteristics used were overall shape, how the wings were carried, wing-movement, and relative sizes of different parts of the birds. The Rough-legged Hawks appeared lankier with longer wings, the flap of the wing was slower and "lazier", and the tail longer in relation to the body; on one the large amount of white on the tail confirmed the identification even though it was not possible from the side view to say whether it was a light or dark bird.

The main challenge was sorting out the Red-tails and Red-shoulders. Birds with a defined dihedral set to the wings could be identified as Red-tailed Hawks, but for many birds with the wings set in a glide there was no dihedral. Although the birds were in a glide, from time to time they needed to make an adjustment; the Red-shoulders gave short, quick flaps, whereas the Red-tails usually made a slight wing adjustments with a "shrug". The wings on the Red-tails appeared to be broader and the birds fly with the body flat; the Red-shoulders' wings appeared to be more pointed, because they are narrower, and the body is slightly raised at the front. The day provoked much discussion and provided a wonderful seminar for buteo identification on a day where most field marks could not be seen. It was also a good reminder of why it is important to pay attention to behavior.

A distant, dark bird

Counter: Sandy Darling

On March 9, 2017 a dark bird appeared well out to the north and my first thought was that it was a Turkey Vulture. When I got binoculars on the bird, the wings were in a dihedral, but the dihedral seemed shallow for a vulture and the bird was steady, whereas a Turkey Vulture rocks. As the bird banked I could see that the wings were broad and so I started to think about Red-tailed Hawk, but the tail seemed to be too long. Fortunately the bird came towards the escarpment, but gained height as it did so with a result that the bird continued to be distant. There were no other birds in the sky so that I could focus on the bird and get better views from underneath. It then was clear that the choice was between Bald and Golden Eagles. There was no white visible, as there would have been on an immature bird. The head was not large as it would be on a Bald Eagle, and the tail was long relative to the head as it would be on a Golden Eagle. The wings on a Bald Eagle appear to be long and plank-like, whereas the wings of a Golden Eagle are much broader with a bulge in the secondary flight feathers as they were on this bird. The bird was recorded as an adult Golden Eagle based on size and color of both head and tail, absence of white underneath, the bulging secondary feathers on the wings and the height the bird attained such that it was no longer visible to the naked eye when I stopped following it.

Unusual buteo

Counter and observer: Sandy Darling and Darren Smillie.

May 9 2017 provided an amazing variety of species, thirteen in total, even though the total count for the day was only 108. The subject bird was circling in the north-east corner at eye-level with the wings in a dihedral. Eagles, vultures, accipiters and falcons could be eliminated fairly quickly, so that it was clear that the bird was a buteo or harrier. In the dorsal view the head appeared to be light, the wings and back were dark, and the tail slate gray with some white at the base of the tail. This helped to eliminate Northern Harrier where the white is rectangular and on the rump, and Broad-winged and Red-shouldered Hawks, which have bands on the tail. As the bird circled it was possible to see the underside, which, although light, appeared to be "dirty"; the wings appeared to be longish and were examined to see if there were carpal patches as on a Rough-legged Hawk, but there were not. The patagial lines of a Red-tailed Hawk were not observed. Immature

Red-tails and dark-morph Rough-legs were considered. In dark-phase birds the coverts would have been dark; the flight feathers of Rough-legs would be a striking white and the white on the tail would have been more extensive. The primary flight feathers were not showing the light box that had been evident on immature Red-tails that we had been observing most of the day. This left Swainson's Hawk as the remaining buteo. In the adult the under-wing coverts are light and the flight feathers dark, so the adult was eliminated. In the juvenile the flight feathers are a light gray rather than dark and the coverts are off-white rather than white, which in combination were giving the generally "dirty" look. The head of young Swainson's appears light in the spring, and the small white crescent on the gray tail is also consistent with Swainson's. It was concluded, therefore, that the bird was a juvenile Swainson's Hawk.

Accipiter Refresher

Written by Matt Mills

From late March into early May each spring at Beamer the peak of the Sharp-shinned Hawk migrations overlaps with smaller numbers of passage Cooper's Hawks. Small male 'Coops' and large female 'Sharpies' are notoriously similar in plumage, apparent size, and proportions. These intermediate individuals present a notable identification challenge and source of frustration for hawkwatchers. Luckily there exists a suite of clues to differentiate the two. The local breeding pair of Cooper's Hawks at Beamer presents a golden opportunity to compare the sexes both within and between the species.

Sharp-shinned Hawk averages smaller, stockier, and less steady in flight. A small head, short and abruptly tapered wings, and squared tail are classic Sharpie clues. The leading edge of the wings are often pushed forward even in a full soar, and the wingbeat is snappy and erratic. Sharpies often migrate in loose groups of 2 to 5. A heavily marked immature small accipiter is almost certainly a Sharp-shinned Hawk.

Cooper's Hawk is lean, lanky and long. Males can appear deceptively small and compact but have a steadier flight and more purposeful wingbeat. Lines on a Coop are straight - the leading edge of the wing is straight in a full soar, the trailing edge smoothly tapered, and the tail long, often with a rounded tip. Cooper's Hawks are often solitary migrants. Young birds are neatly marked below with fine streaking on the chest. A close look at an adult will reveal a dark 'cap' on the head where a Sharpie would appear 'hooded'.

CORPUS CHRISTI HAWKWATCH:

Jaw-dropping numbers and world class diversity

Matt Mills

The history and humble beginnings of the Corpus Christi Hawkwatch somewhat parallel those of our very own Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch. Through the 1970s observers casually noted large concentrations of raptors passing over the region. From 1988 to 1996 the potential of several satellite sites was investigated during the two-week Broad-winged Hawk peak in late September and early October. Finally, in 1997, Hawkwatch International established a full-time count at Hazel Bazemore Park seventeen miles west of Corpus Christi in Calallen, Texas.

Hazel Bazemore Park is a 77-acre county park featuring open grassland, semi-open thorn scrub, forest, pond, seasonal wetlands, and riverfront located on the Nueces river delta. Access is free and several easy hiking trails and lookouts bring visitors close to bird life.

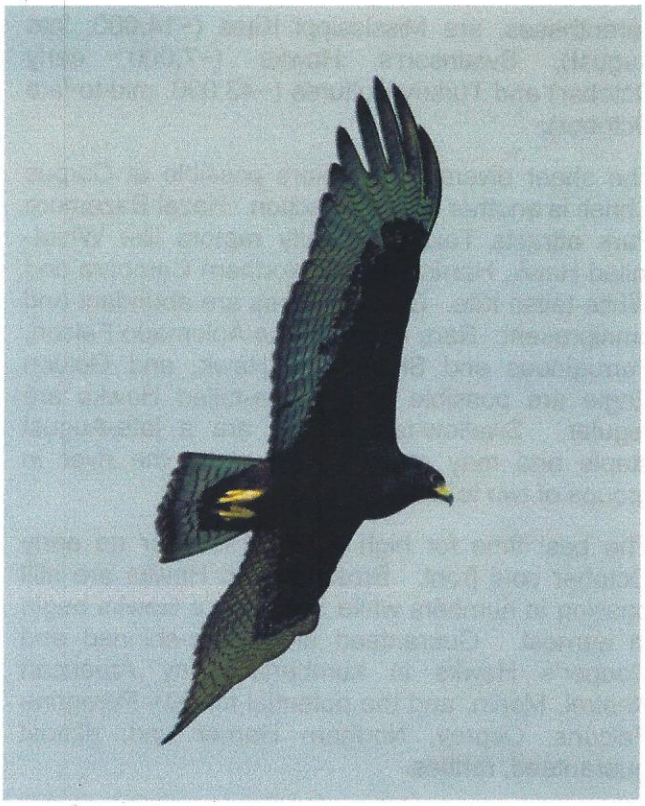
Corpus Christi Hawkwatch is now world famous for awe-inspiring kettles and a dizzying diversity of local and migrant raptors. The site also boasts an impressive viewing platform with near panoramic views of the Nueces River flood plain and comfortable shaded seating. Just to the south of the hawkwatch is a large stretch of impossibly flat farmland which discourages late-day migrants from continuing their migration and occasionally brings large numbers of raptors down to roost near the hawkwatch.

Hawkwatch International counters staff the platform daily from August 1st through November 30th each fall. August is Mississippi and Swallow-tailed Kite peak and a great opportunity to enjoy the free outdoor Texas summer sauna.

A two-week window in late September and early October affectionately known simply as 'Peak' attracts visitors from around the globe to see tens of thousands of migrating Broad-winged Hawks. Kettles of all sizes and descriptions rise from the surrounding coastal plain mid-morning and pass on all sides throughout the day. At times multiple large kettles are simultaneously in view and may come together to form five-digit groups right over the watch. Beautiful, towering masses of cumulus clouds serve as an evolving canvas on which high soaring birds play hide-and-seek with observers.

Broad-winged Hawks comprise the vast majority of migrants recorded each fall with an average of 535,000. Multiple days of 10,000 to 70,000 birds occur each fall and mega migrations of over 100,000 are always possible. September 25th to 30th are especially consistent for staggering numbers. Dark-morph Broad-winged Hawks are regular in small numbers especially after strong colds fronts in early October.





Photos: James Petersen

1. *One of the massive kettles*
2. *Zone-tailed Hawk*
3. *Swallow-tailed Kite*



The average sum of all other migrants is about 70,000 but can be as high as 200,000. Other large volume migrants, with averages and peak times in

parentheses, are Mississippi Kites (~14,000, late August), Swainson's Hawks (~7,000, early October) and Turkey Vultures (~43,000, mid-to-late October).

The sheer diversity of raptors possible at Corpus Christi is another major attraction. Hazel Bazemore Park attracts Texas specialty raptors like White-tailed Hawk, Harris's Hawk, Northern Caracara and White-tailed Kite. Black Vultures are abundant and omnipresent. Rare migrants like Aplomado Falcon, Ferruginous and Short-tailed Hawk, and Golden Eagle are possible while Zone-tailed Hawks are regular. Swallow-tailed Kites are a late-August staple and may stop to feed along the river in groups of two to ten-plus.

The best time for high diversity is after an early October cold front. Broad-winged Hawks are still passing in numbers while Swainson's Hawks begin in earnest. Guaranteed are Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks in numbers, many American Kestrel, Merlin, and the potential for 30+ Peregrine Falcons, Osprey, Northern Harrier and, almost guaranteed, rarities.

Rarity potential remains high through October as northern species appear. Bald Eagles are rare but regular and Red-tailed Hawks of nearly every North American subspecies and colour morph have occurred. In 2017 counters tallied Fuertes, Krider's, Harlan's, light and dark Western (Calurus), as well as Eastern (Borealis) Red-tailed Hawks.

South Texas coastal bend weather is hot, humid and amazing. Highs above 35C are the norm through August and dip only slightly through September. Fiery sunsets and afternoon thunderstorms help distract from the haze. Strong cold fronts may drop daily highs into the low teens later in the season but typical highs remain comfortably in the 20s even in November.

On top of the raptor migration Hazel Bazemore Park boasts a whopping 350+ species bird list. Texas specialties include: Green Jay, Great Kiskadee, Green Kingfisher, Couch's Kingbird, Buff-bellied Hummingbird, Olive Sparrow, and Groove-billed Ani (early fall). Fall migration is mostly eastern passerines with a little western flavour. More birding opportunities are close by as Corpus Christi Hawkwatch is a mere two hours from the world-famous birding sites in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, one hour from Port Aransas where Whooping Cranes arrive in mid-November, and three hours from migration hotspots on South Padre Island. The Texas coastal bend supports a rich diversity of shorebirds, waders and seabirds.

The Hawkwatch and surrounding area are a must-visit. If you go, be sure to check Hawkwatch International's official website with links to Weather, Directions, recent migration Counts, a site Brochure, and more information. The web address is https://hawkwatch.org/migration/item/82-corpus-christi-hawkwatch

The hawkwatch viewing platform has running water, electricity, Wi-Fi access, and a partial roof that provides shade. There are restrooms in the park. HawkWatch International crew are on site every day to answer questions and point out migrants. Be sure to bring sunscreen, a folding chair, water and pack a lunch. Nearby Calallen (a five-minute drive) has modern amenities including box stores, restaurants and hotels.

Happy Hawkwatching!

N.P.H EXECUTIVE

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(905) 570-6547 matt.ja.mills@gmail.com

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH CALENDAR FOR BEAMER MEMORIAL CONSERVATION AREA

NOTES:

1. (<Species code) indicates the start of the normal migration period at Beamer for that species. (Species code>) indicates the end of the period. The same in bold type indicates the start or end of the prime period for that species. The box in which this combination is located indicates the day and month the period is likely to start or end.
2. A number followed by species initial, followed by a slash (/) and a two-digit number: In this combination the largest number of that species ever seen in one day is given first, and the year it occurred second. The box where the combination is located indicates the day and month of the event. Example: 655 RS/94 in March 23 indicates that the highest number of Red-shouldered Hawks recorded in one day occurred on March 23, 1994.

TV – Turkey Vulture
BV – Black Vulture
OS – Osprey
SK – Swallow-tailed Kite
MK – Mississippi Kite
BE – Bald Eagle
GE - Golden Eagle
NH – Northern Harrier
SS – Sharp-shinned Hawk
CH – Cooper's Hawk
NG – Northern Goshawk
RS – Red-shouldered Hawk
RT – Red-tailed Hawk
SW – Swainson's Hawk
RL – Rough-legged Hawk
FH – Ferruginous Hawk
AK – American Kestrel
ML – Merlin
PF – Peregrine Falcon
PR – Prairie Falcon
GY – Gyrfalcon
BW – Broad-winged Hawk

The following information, based on 43 years of data, shows significant events up to January 2018.

The largest number of raptors in a season was 20,368 in 2011.

TV, BE, NH, SS, CH, RT, RL, and AK can begin about mid -February.

MARCH

1 <RT <NG <TV	2 <GE	3	4 <RS	5	6	7 <NH
8	9	10 **<RT**	11 **<RL** **<TV**	12 <AK	13 **<CH** **<RS**	14 **44 AK/90**
15 <BV	16 <SS **744 RT/96**	17 **1 GY/06**	18 **<BE**	19	20 <ML <PF	21
22 **2 BV/12**	23 **<NH** **655 RS/94**	24 **11 NG/84** **19 BE/03**	25	26 <OS	27	28
29 **46 RL/04**	30	31				

Largest count for month: 6,389 in 2011; largest count in one day: 2,080 March 26, 1988

APRIL

1 **<SS**	2 **7 GE/09** **2,021 TV/09**	3	4	5 **50 CH/93**	6	7
8 **<OS**	9 **RS>**	10 **RL>**	11 <BW	12 **16 OS/92**	13 **1 FH/92**	14
15 <SW **BE>** **1 SK/94**	16 **CH>**	17	18 **<BW** **35 NH/96** **1,556 SS/76**	19 **1 PR/95****	20 **1 GY/77**	21 **6,007** **BW/85**
22	23 **2 BV/17** **1 FH/98***	24 **OS>** **1 FH/02***	25 **6 ML/96**	26 **3 PF/15**	27 **3 PF/10**	28 BV>
29 **2 SW/98***	30 **RT>** **TV>** RL>					

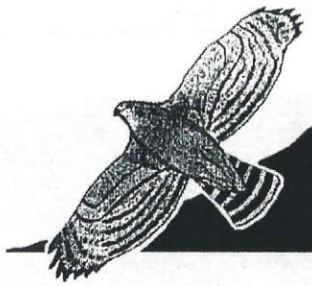
Largest count for month: 15,012 in 1984; largest count in one day: 7,007 April 21, 1985

MAY

1 RS>	2 **2 SW/97***	3	4	5 SW> **BW>**	6 PF> CH>	7
8	9	10 **SS>**	11 **1 MK/97***	12 **NH>** **AK>**	13	14 **1 MK/03***
15 BE> ML> **1 MK/12***	16 OS>	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31 <NH <SS<NG<AK <GE	*BW, TV & RT may continue after May 31*			

Largest count for month: 2,685 in 1980: largest count in one day 1,492 May 4, 1989

* Sighting not reviewed/ accepted by Ontario Bird Records Committee
** First accepted Prairie Falcon record in Ontario



Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch

Newsletter

August 2018 Newsletter # 57

A MIXED SEASON

The migration report and statistics prepared by John Stevens are always a main feature of our second newsletter of the year. These show another slow migration year in which winter lingered. Turkey Vulture numbers rebounded, but counts of other species, like Red-tailed, Sharp-shinned and Broad-winged Hawks that often add substantially to our count were low. I'll leave the details and any hypotheses to John.

The Open House and Dinner were both well-attended, and a summary of Matt Mills' talk at the dinner is part of this newsletter. In recent years we have operated a scholarship program to try to attract young people to hawk-watching. Bruce Mackenzie spent many hours promoting, organizing and judging (with John Stevens) the activity, but the number of participants remained low. We did attract some excellent participants, but we decided reluctantly not to offer the scholarships in 2018. We shall, however, continue our efforts to attract new and younger visitors to Beamer.

The hawk-watching year is not over and you have two opportunities to continue your interest. Each fall the Hawk Migration Association of North America (HMANA) has a conference and this year it will be held in Detroit, so this provides an opportunity to learn more about what is happening at other hawk-watches. The title of the conference is "Soaring Towards the Future: New Challenges in Raptor Migration" and the dates are October 12 to 14. Two of the featured presentations deal with raptors of the Rockies and Golden Eagle migration; an article on this latter work appears in this newsletter thanks to the cooperation of the American Birding Association. There are many other presentations and there will be field trips to some of the local sites that can get huge numbers in the fall. Full details and registration information appear on the HMANA website.

If you do not want to venture so far, you can always make a shorter trip to Hawk Cliff near Port Stanley. If you pick the right day, you can see more birds there in a day than we do in a season at Beamer.

One uplifting article below tells about her recovery of Red Kites in British Isles, and gives you a location to visit on your next trip there. On a sadder note we mark the passing of George Meyers, a character well-known and admired by those who have been around longer.

I do have some articles in mind for our February newsletter, but I am always ready to receive suggestions and, even better, articles.

Sandy Darling
Editor

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HAWK-WATCHING IN WESTERN NORTH AMERICA

The speaker at our annual meeting and dinner was Matt Mills, who grew up in Dundas, but attended university in Utah and has worked in the west, which he defined as west of the Mississippi for the purposes of this talk. He described the west as "wild", because hawk-watchers are still exploring new sites, and there are fewer cities and more wide, open space. The Rocky Mountains, Pacific slopes and Great Plains provide different habitats. Wellsville Mountains in Utah was where hawk-watching began in the west and Steve Hoffman explored a number of potential sites in the 1970s. Some of the best sites on steep mountains are hard to get to, but the north-south alignment of the mountains provide ridges along which raptors can migrate.

Much of the development has been sponsored by HawkWatch International, which started in 1986. The focus of many sites is banding and research, and Matt provided a synopsis of the importance of some sites:

- Bonny Butte: banding of Merlins;
- Bridger Mountain : 2,000 Golden Eagles pass by;
- Goshute Mountains average 25,000 migrants ;
- Corpus Christie, where Matt counted in 2016 and 2017, has high volumes;
- Sites in Alaska and Yukon have many Harlan's Hawks.

Matt focused on raptors that would be unusual or never seen here in the east, and provided some excellent photos from colleagues in the west and two members of NPH. These included a Cooper's Hawk seen from above as many raptors are seen from ridges, and a Prairie Falcon (a bird of open country where telegraph poles often provide perches). Much of the focus in watching in the west is on buteos such as Common Black Hawk, Zone-tailed Hawk which surprises prey, because it looks like a harmless Turkey Vulture, Harris's Hawk, and Rough-legged Hawk. Red-tailed Hawks require attention, because there are six sub-species and so counters look more closely and try to age the birds, because of the resulting variety in



Common Black Hawk at nest in Arizona *Sandy Darling*

appearance. Harlan's Hawks can be very variable, and many spend summer in the Yukon and winter on the plains. Another buteo common the west is the Swainson's Hawk and Matt has seen kettles of 12,000 in Texas in migration [*Editor: there have been 4 birds in the last 15 years at Beamer.*] A striking buteo is the Ferruginous Hawk and HawkWatch International is tracking their migration.

Golden Eagles are more numerous in the west, because there is space for the very large territories they require. They are sensitive to human disturbance and so will stay away from communities. Matt showed a photo of a kettle of seven Golden Eagles – a sight we shall not see at Beamer. Bald Eagles can be commonly seen in the right locations. Northern Harriers on the plains tend to be concentrated close to where there is water and so, if you find them, the numbers will often be larger.

Matt also talked about his experience of counting in Texas, where there are huge numbers and up to almost thirty possible species possible [*Editor: 28 species in 2017*] with twenty on a single day not uncommon. Some of the species that we would not see are Crested Caracara, 12,000 Mississippi Kites, and 200 to 300 Swallow-tailed Kites. Among the Broad-winged Hawks there are more dark morphs (typically several in a season out of 160,000 Broad-winged Hawks in 2017 and almost 600,000 in 2016), and days with 20,000.

At the end of the talk Matt was faced with many questions – always a good sign that listeners were interested and stimulated.

LESSONS FROM GOLDEN EAGLES ON WHAT PROMPTS MIGRATION

Nick Minor

[This article first appeared in the Birding magazine published by the American Birding Association (Vol.50, No. 1, February 2018 pp 34 -35) and is reprinted with the permission of the Association. The article, written by Nick Minor, describes research by the Todd Katzner lab and should not be reproduced without the permission of the American Birding Association. This study will be one of the featured topics at the HMANA conference in October]

With the regular and largely predictable procession of spring and fall migration also comes the inevitable: times when nature "breaks the rules." Any birder who's ever tried to forecast and understand bird migration knows how that goes! To be sure, tailwinds with clear, thermal-producing skies are favorable for migration; however, birds regularly migrate when it seems disadvantageous, in the face of headwinds, storm activity, precipitation, or other counterproductive factors. We still don't have a clear picture of the environmental factors that influence migration behavior.

There is a vast array of variable conditions on the ground and in the sky that could affect migration, and past research has documented some of them: the Earth's magnetic field, the location of the sun, the stars, topography, winds, atmospheric pressure, frontal boundaries, social cues, genetically based instincts, experience, and even how a locality smells. Discovering all these cues was a scientific triumph; disentangling how birds use them to assemble their migration itineraries is a substantially different job.

It is this task that Adrian I. Rus of Boise State University, Todd E. Katzner of the U.S. Geological Survey, and three other collaborators undertook in a study published in The Auk this past July (tinyurl.com/RusGOEA). Drawing from more than a decade of experience investigating migration, the researchers pose this overall question: How do weather and experience combine to influence individual birds' migratory strategies?

To investigate the matter, the Rus–Katzner team drew from a large GPS telemetry database on eastern Golden Eagles breeding in Québec, Labrador, and Ontario, and overwintering in the Appalachians. From previous studies, the group knew that weather, topography, and experience all influence migratory decisions. These decisions have consequences for three migration metrics: straightness of flight, different "modes," and duration of migration. Using statistical analyses, Rus, Katzner, and collaborators explored how well two of those predictor variables—weather conditions and experience—interact to explain the flight speeds of migrating eagles.

Not surprisingly, eagles migrated faster when clear skies allowed thermals to rise and when moderate tailwinds assisted their movement. In similar conditions, adult eagles, being more experienced, migrated faster and more directly than juveniles. Those results were expected, but the team also found a counterintuitive result: Inexperienced young birds often migrated faster than adults. The authors explain that this may have to do with phenological differences between the age classes. Juveniles migrate later in spring and earlier in autumn than adults, when the sun is higher in the sky. Thus, more thermals for migrating eagles. Previous work by this team has shown that migration using thermals is dramatically faster than migration when thermals are not present.

Another finding is that eagles occasionally flew more than 300 miles in a single day, taking advantage of the complex atmospheric conditions over eastern North America. Topography, humidity, and temperature in the skies over the Appalachians vary greatly over the course of the spring and the fall. These occasionally rapid flights attest to Golden Eagles' ability to seize the "perfect storm" of atmospheric conditions, and migrate efficiently regardless of the conditions they encounter.
The team's dataset also allowed them to explore a novel methodological question: How do the conclusions we draw from telemetry data differ when recorded at different time intervals? The telemetry units used to generate their data recorded location, speed, and altitude either every 15 minutes or every 30 seconds, allowing data from two timescales to be compared. The 30-second data capture variation in how eagles respond to topography at a much finer scale, which can reveal additional relationships between migration speed and other variables. In this case, the 30-second data showed a strong influence of tailwinds on flight speed that was not clear in the coarser-scale analysis.

Rus, Katzner, and their collaborators drive home the point that bird populations do not migrate as a monolith. Rather, different subsets of the population—in this case, different age classes—migrate in different ways depending on the conditions they experience, the timing of their movements, and how natural selection might act on them. With the proliferation of increasingly light wildlife tracking devices and the availability of precise weather datasets, studies like the one conducted by the Rus–Katzner team are sure to teach us much more about why birds migrate as they do, and how we can better predict their movements.

Project leader Katzner tells Birding, "Over the years, we've seen that eagle migration is highly variable, with some birds traveling only short distances in a day and others flying much farther. Understanding this variability and what causes it is important not only for ecologists, but also for the birders and hawk counters who delight in seeing these remarkable birds in eastern North America."

SUCCESSFUL REINTRODUCTION OF RED KITES TO BRITAIN

Sandy Darling

In the early twentieth century there were only a handful of pairs of Red Kites (*Milvus milvus*) in central Wales all descended from a single female, and now there are 1,800 breeding pairs spread across Britain. The biggest increase occurred between 1995 and 2014 during which time there was a ten-fold increase. British Red Kites now represent seven per cent of the world population and the increase is off-setting declines that have occurred in Spain and Germany. This increase has required a lot of work, largely coordinated by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) in England and Wales, and a similar organization in Scotland.

The Red Kite is a striking bird, chestnut-red in color with white patches under the wing, a grey head and a forked tail (see photos). It is about 26 inches in length with a wing-span of six feet and a body weight of two to three pounds, so that it is agile in the air, eating on the wing and also taking food from other birds. The Red Kite eats carrion, worms and small mammals, and prior to the sixteenth century, when a bounty was introduced, had been a valuable scavenger that cleaned up around human habitation. They were blamed for killing lambs, but, in fact, their beaks cannot break the skin of sheep and so they rely on members of the crow family to do so. By 1871 they had been extirpated in England and by 1879 in Scotland, and only a few pairs remained in Wales.

Early in the twentieth century the first concern for protection was voiced, but the real work started in the 1950s when action was taken to discourage poisoning, egg-collecting and shooting for taxidermy. Breeding success was low in the 1950s, because the birds were in areas of low feeding resources and there was a crash in the rabbit population because of myxomatosis. During the 1960s the birds expanded into lower and more productive areas and so there was a slight increase in population, but this was probably limited by pesticide use.

Reintroduction activities by RSPB and others started in 1989 when six Swedish birds were released in northern Scotland, and four Swedish and one Welsh birds were released in the Chiltern Hills about 50 miles north-west of London. (The RSPB and Wikipedia say "Swedish" birds, whereas the website of Chiltern Area of Natural Beauty says they were "Spanish" birds.) By 1994 another 93 Swedish birds had been released at various locations and the first successful breeding among the introduced populations had started. After 1995 Red Kites primarily from Spain and Germany were released in various location, including a forested area of Northamptonshire, south-west Scotland and north-west England, locations in Scotland, and more recently in Northern Ireland. Some birds from the Chilterns and from Wales have also been released elsewhere in Britain.

I first became aware of the reintroduction program from newspaper stories about Red Kites using the thermals along major highways, such as the M40 motorway. The first British Red Kite that my wife and I saw was in 2005 at Reading, where my sister lives. In addition, we often visit a friend who lives in the Chilterns about 30 miles north of Reading, close to the original release site, and so we have seen the numbers increase during the course of our visits. In May 2018 we saw a kettle of seven Red Kites over the University of Reading for our first multiple-sighting in Reading, and during our trip throughout

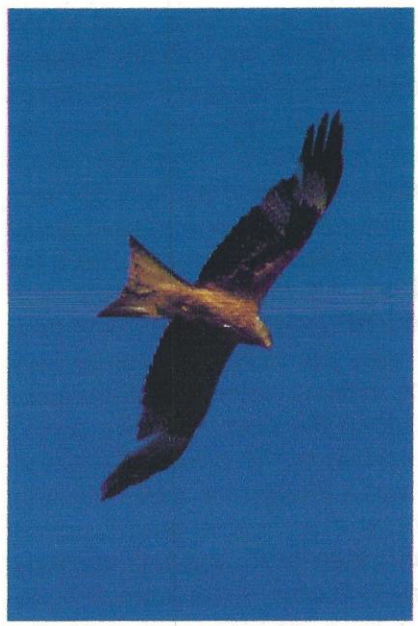
Britain we saw some much more widely distributed than on earlier visits.

The Red Kites of Britain do not migrate out of Britain and many remain on breeding grounds, but distribution maps show some birds wintering near the coast of East Anglia, the south coast from Kent to Dorset, the Bristol Channel and southern Wales. Germany, Spain and France (in that order) account for 75 per cent of the world population, and birds of northern Europe do generally migrate to Spain or the Mediterranean (e.g. eastern Turkey). *Birds of Africa (Volume 1)* [BoA] reports a population in north-west Africa and some migration at Gibraltar, through Sicily and across the Bosphorus.[1] BoA also noted reports of migrants in East Africa, although guides for countries in East Africa do not include Red Kites. Small numbers of migrants in both spring and fall have been reported from the Suez area of Egypt.[2]

One special place to visit is the Red Kite Feeding Program at Gigrin Farm near Rhayader in Powys County in central Wales. Each day at 2:00 p.m. GMT (3:00 summer time) they put out scraps of meat from local butchers in a fenced-off area to prevent spread of disease. The family-operated farm with upland sheep comprises 200 acres. They



Massed Red Kites at Gigrin Farm *Sandy Darling*



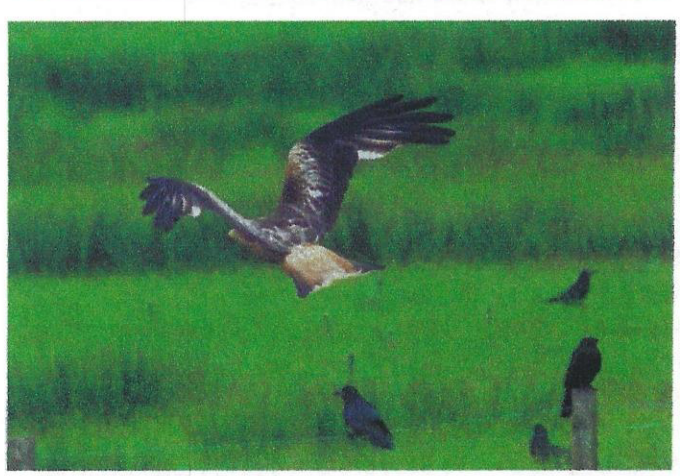
Photos:

Red Kite over Reading (top)

Kites feeding at Gigrin Farm with Rooks on the ground (middle and bottom)

Sandy Darling





[1] Leslie H. Brown et al *Birds of Africa (Volume 1)* Academic Press 1982 p. 311.

[2] Steven M. Goodman et al (eds) *The Birds of Egypt* Oxford University Press 1989 p 173.

had started to feed kites in the 1980s, and in the winter of 1992-03 it became an official feeding station at the request of the RSPB, and it also serves as a rehabilitation center. In 1992 there were six breeding pairs close the farm, and the main purposes in establishing the feeding was to help young birds survive winter and to draw people away from nesting sites. There are 4 hides and more for specialist photographers. Up to 400 birds feed each day now, but any one bird does not come every day. One of the photos shows the mass of birds in May 2018. At feeding time various members of the crow family come first and then the kites move in, taking care to avoid the sharp bills of the crows. Common Buzzards also show up, although we saw only one on the day we were there. It is mesmerizing to watch the kites swoop in and then twist and turn as they exit, to avoid the crows and other kites that will try to snatch food away.

The sources for this article were websites of the RSPB, Wikipedia, Chiltern Area of Natural Beauty and the Gigrin Farm Red Kite Feeding Program, and I encourage you to visit them for more information. More excitingly, pay a visit to the Gigrin Farm – you will not be disappointed!

REMEMBERING GEORGE MEYERS

Bob Curry

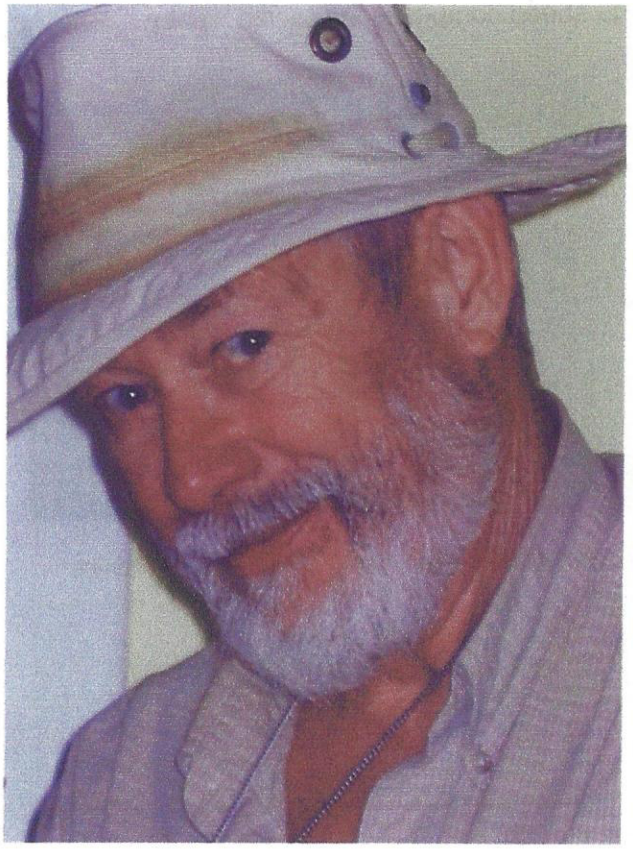
[This article first appeared in the Wood Duck and is reprinted with the permission of the editor and of the author. One paragraph about Beamer has been added.]

George and I met in the winter of 1954-55. That winter and the following spring, four of us - George, his brother Glenn, Brock Atkinson and I - roamed the old fields and woodlots of King's Forest in East Hamilton. Unlike most teens, all of us were intensely devoted to natural history. I still remember in spring 1955 our "gang" watching kettles of hawks migrating over the Red Hill Valley, a precursor to the years and events at Grimsby. Not long after, the Meyers family moved to Grimsby Beach and, in fall 1955, Brock was killed in a terrible accident.

On April 1, 1956, the Meyers boys and I walked from Grimsby Beach up the escarpment and to the south. I saw my first Carolina Wren and heard its rollicking song, that day; next Christmas I got a beautiful oil pastel drawing of a Carolina Wren drawn by George, as a Christmas card from George and Glenn. The following Christmas, the first after a three-toed woodpecker invasion into southern Ontario, I received a lovely Black-backed Woodpecker card, again drawn by George. I dearly wish that I still had these cards.

George grew up in Grimsby, married Anita and they settled into married life on Bedford Park Drive. Dave Copeland put Beamer Point on the map, but George was seeing hawks and eagles migrating west along the Lake Ontario Plain and over his house for years before that.

George was not a world travelling naturalist. However, he did sally into the eastern United States on numerous occasions to study the forests and collect seeds and seedlings for his garden. And what a garden it was! Professional botanists and gardeners made Bedford Park a destination. Often George would take them on a tour of some of the Niagara Peninsula botanical rarities, plants and trees many of which were his personal discoveries. Later they would retreat to his garden for a thorough tour that involved the identification and



status of all his plants as well as the biogeography of Eastern North America. He wrote one paper in a peer-reviewed journal on the identification and distribution of a species of his favourite taxon, Quercus, the oaks. Would that he had shared more of his knowledge and understanding of our natural history.

I was privileged to have a personal tour of George's garden on numerous occasions over the years. George never raked the leaves. Rather they were left to decay in situ. The consequence was a thick soft leaf duff over rich soil; the perfect place for many trees and shrubs that just reach their northern limits in the peninsula or along the Lake Erie plain. George always carried pruning shears on his belt. He knew the biology of all his trees and pruned them with surgical precision. Most neighbours cringed at the "untidiness" of it all, not realizing what a treasure they had in their midst. His daughters Teresa and Tanya knew – for one birthday they gave him a chrome-plated garden spade of which he was immensely proud.

George never referred to our area as the Carolinian Zone. In fact, he abhorred the term. True, there were southern affinities in flora and fauna, but the Carolinas were far to the south with their own distinct plants and animals. He detested even more so the plantings of exotic trees in Grimsby and most other cities. "Botanical rats", he called the rows of Norway Maples and Norway Spruces. Being passionate and knowledgeable, he was often at loggerheads with local authorities. They in turn retaliated by enforcing a by-law that required him to remove native plants and shrubs from his front yard and replace them with grass. Naturally, George kept his grass much longer than the neighbours liked as he knew that longer grass shaded out the weeds and so he didn't need herbicides.

Although George did not travel widely he had a huge library of natural history books from across the world. Moreover, he read them. Consequently, he could converse knowledgably about almost any place and its biological riches. But there was much more to George than a love of nature for he collected books on art and philosophy, too. He was a true polymath. He wrote Haiku poetry about matters both personal and about hawks. Another example. About 25 years ago I became interested in opera. Feeling a little chuffed about acquiring such an intellectual pursuit, I mentioned it to George only to learn that he had been for many years listening to the MET live from New York on Saturday afternoons. I should have known this, as the house was always awash in classical music when I visited.

George knew all the birds but did not consider himself to be a mere birder. Perhaps his greatest claim to birding fame was when he, Glenn and Eric Bastin picked up a Wilson's Storm-Petrel dead on the shore at Long Beach the day after Hurricane Connie struck a glancing blow at southern Ontario. Although he was a complete naturalist, many birders knew George as a colourful fixture for decades at the Niagara Peninsula Hawk Watch above the town of Grimsby. One spring at Beamer, George passed around "Love them Hawks" buttons. Apparently they were for supporters of the Wilfrid Laurier University Golden Hawks football team but George thought they had a much better use. Long before Peter Dunne's marvelous Hawks in Flight was published, George knew and taught Beamer habitués the finer points of shape and flight behavior that could be used to identify all diurnal raptors with confidence.

George was not everyone's cup of tea. He was never short of an opinion and certainly did not suffer fools. Even at HNC meetings he could not sit quietly when he knew something that the speaker said was incorrect. This afforded some awkward moments. However, it was on long afternoons at Beamer that George was at his combative best. We discussed much more than hawk identification. George could and did expound not only about "them hawks" but on politics, religion and other matters of the day. Usually his opinions were punctuated with roars of laughter. His possessed an immense intelligence. Sadly, his inquisitiveness and introspection did not always serve him well in terms of health over the years. Especially over the last 10 years, he suffered from ill health.

Whether I arrived at Beamer after George or he arrived after me, he would always shout "BOB CURRY" in a manner that always made me feel wanted. I don't go to Beamer so much anymore. Perhaps it's because George has not been there nor in his garden, down below the escarpment.

I will miss George's prodigious intellect, his irrepressible nature and his incisive opinions. So, will the entire naturalists' community.

2018 MIGRATION SUMMARY

John Stevens

This year's data are provided in Tables 2-5 for the four months when some counting was done. Table 1 provides a summary of the annual counts for each species for the last twenty-one years, the period since the tower was installed.
As always our thanks goes to the designated counters, who this year consisted of Phil Waggett, Tom Thomas, Mike Street, John Stevens, Rob Spaul, George Naylor, Brian Mishell, Matt Mills, Gord Kozak, Tim Foran, Chris Escott, Sandy Darling and John Barker.

The Season

This year temperatures in February averaged more than four degrees above normal in Grimsby. So warm that after the middle of the month the temperature was seldom below zero. The last week in particular brought double digit highs with the result that raptors were on the move. Partial counts were obtained for the last three days, 45 birds of five species, providing a head start to our season.

In March, reality returned along with more normal temperatures. There were six days in February that were warmer than any day in March and in fact, aside from April 12th, were warmer than any day until April 21st. It wasn't cold in March as the low temperatures were slightly above normal and the mean temperature was actually marginally above normal: there just weren't any warm days. The result was we had no good flights and experienced the third lowest March total (2,014) ever and lowest since 1994.

As mentioned there was only one warm day in the first three weeks of April and no days all month when the temperature reached 20˚C. The result was a daily mean temperature that was 2.5 degrees below normal. Six of the days were wiped out by inclement weather and a seventh lacked a counter so we had seven shutouts for the month, about double what we normally see in April. The monthly count of 8,562 was only slightly below average but disappointing considering the low March total.

May started well with warm temperatures but after the first two days, no significant counts were made despite a normal amount of effort. Just two days lacked counters and on one of those there was some rain. The monthly count of 550 birds was typical of recent years.

In all, the seasonal total of 11,184 was well under our long-term average of more than 14,000. While coverage improved over 2017, there were still five days without a counter and the hours of effort at 449.4 was more than ten per cent below what we normally manage.

Individual Species

Certainly it was a vulture year with more Black Vulture sightings than ever before and a near record number of Turkey Vultures counted. There was considerable debate among watchers as to how many different Black Vultures were actually passing. This was partly attributed to the fact that a Black Vulture had been roosting during the late winter at a site south of Smithville, only fourteen kilometers by air from Beamer. The two locations are certainly within easy reach of a foraging raptor.

The Turkey Vulture count of 7,684, was just below the all-time high of 7,730 set in 2014. Your reporter was fortunate to be the counter on the three largest TV counts this year and on two of those days, the vultures were cruising along right at the edge of the escarpment. Many of these were not visible from the ground below the tower but of course many more were likely passing just out of sight from the tower, below the edge. So it would appear that the rise in vulture numbers has not abated as yet despite our having gone four years without a new record high count. Turkey Vultures have become the most commonly counted raptor at Beamer since counting began in 1975, their total having finally passed that of Broad-winged Hawks.

The picture is not nearly so rosy for hawks, in fact not rosy at all. It was such a poor count this year that I almost don't know where to start to describe it. Consider Northern Harriers (NH), our only harrier species and an irregular migrant that often passes the watch going in unconventional directions, i.e. not westerly. We had set a record low count of 63 NH in 2014 but this year only counted 45, almost 30% below the former record and about a third of our long-term average.

Of the three accipiter species we see, the Northern Goshawk has become a very rare sighting. We had one this year, seen by quite a few watchers on April 2nd, which is about what we've come to expect in recent years. Other watch sites in the Great Lakes area are also finding this species in lower numbers than in the past. For example Derby Hill at the eastern end of Lake Ontario has had less than ten in three of the last four years after never before having that few since they began to count in 1979. Braddock Bay near Rochester saw only one this year as well, their previous low count for a full season being 3 in 1998.

We barely managed to exceed our record low count for Sharp-shinned Hawks, 835 in 2014, with this year's total of 845. This represents 30% of the long-term average and 67% of the recent five-year average. Long gone are the days when we could count over a thousand of these in a single day as happened on a few occasions, one as recently as April 15, 1994. Ripley, south of Lake Erie, had their lowest sharpie count ever and Braddock Bay had their record lowest count for a complete season. Declining numbers of this species in migration have been noted for over twenty years. One explanation was short-stopping in which birds didn't move so far because of the ability to overwinter where bird feeders supplied food for prey species. With continued declines, I suspect that it more likely reflects decreased populations of the passerines that sharpies use to feed their young.

Cooper's Hawks (CH) have historically always been much less common than sharpies with most watches seeing ratios of on the order of one to ten. In the past, they were generally seen only in migration in our area but CH are now found throughout the year in southern Ontario. Our counts for CH were quite stable for the first thirty years or so despite there being a great increase in breeding birds in the area. This year however, we had the lowest count of CH since we started full season coverage, just 83 birds. This is 67% of the five-year average and only 46% of the long-term average. Like sharpies, I suspect this decline in migrant numbers may be related to passerine populations declining.

A relatively brighter result was this year's Osprey flight. Osprey were seen on nineteen days including one-day counts of nine and eight, and totaled 53 birds. This is just above the recent five-year average and the seventh highest ever at Beamer. Our numbers should be put in perspective though. At Derby Hill they counted 63 Osprey on May 1st alone, part of a total flight of 367 for the season, which is about normal for that site.

The count of 16 Merlins is slightly above the recent five-year average of 14.4 while the Peregrine Falcon count of nine ties the third highest count for that species. However we had only 37 American Kestrels (AK), which represents the second lowest count ever (30 in 2014 being the nadir). By contrast Derby Hill had a normal AK count of 342, Braddock Bay was relatively low at 200 and Ripley was above normal at 301 birds. The count at Holiday Beach heading south last fall was below average as well.

With Bald Eagles now nesting at several locations along the Lake Ontario shore, we are beginning to encounter non-migratory birds that are seen heading east and south as well as the general migration route of west. While this complicates our efforts to monitor the migration, it certainly nice to be able to show visitors an eagle whether we count it or not. This year's count of 54 migrants was about what we've been seeing in recent years.

Golden Eagles were a bit of a bust in 2018 with only four recorded. The record low count is three and while this species has never been common at Beamer, we normally average about twice this year's total. It seems that this species took a more easterly route this year as Ripley had none at all, Braddock Bay had a low count of 17

Table 6 Buteo Records

Species	High (year)	Low (year)	2018	5-year Avg.	39-year Avg.
Red-shouldered	1,419 (1994)	275 (2016)	209	479	686
Broad-winged	8,613 (2011)	1,484 (2013)	1,055	2,301	3,314
Red-tailed	3,861 (1992)	1,131 (2014)	1,016	1,595	2,503
Rough-legged	204 (2004)	22 (2002)	17	35	67

but Derby Hill at the other end of Lake Ontario had their fourth best total ever of 76.

Now for the really bad news, all four of our regular buteos had record low counts this year as shown in Table 6 above.

Three of them broke records that had been set in the last five years. At other watches the results were mixed. Derby Hill for example had an excellent flight of Broad-winged Hawks, a fairly typical flight of Red-shouldered Hawks but the second lowest ever counts of Red-tailed and Rough-legged Hawks. Last fall, Holiday Beach had a record low number of broad-wings, a low number of tails but typical numbers of shoulders and rough-legs. Ripley had low counts of all four buteos but no record lows.

An earlier summary (2014) had described the decline in non-vulture raptors that has occurred since we began monitoring at Beamer. Well, this year we set a new low of just 3,503, breaking the 2014 record of 4,339. It is not a pretty picture.

N.P.H EXECUTIVE

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Table 2 – February 2018

	26	27	28	Totals
Black Vulture				0
Turkey Vulture	5	7	4	16
Osprey				0
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite				0
Mississippi Kite				0
Bald Eagle			4	4
Northern Harrier				0
Sharp-shinned Hawk				0
Cooper's Hawk				0
Northern Goshawk				0
Red-shouldered Hawk	1		1	2
Broad-winged Hawk				0
Swainson's Hawk				0
Red-tailed Hawk	8	11	2	21
Ferruginous Hawk				0
Rough-legged Hawk		1	1	2
Golden Eagle				0
American Kestrel				0
Merlin				0
Peregrine Falcon				0
Gyrfalcon				0
Prairie Falcon				0
Unid. Accipiter				0
Unid. Buteo				0
Unid. Falcon				0
Unid. Eagle				0
Unid. Raptor				0
Total Raptors	14	19	12	45
Hours Counted	*3.25*	*4.25*	*1.00*	8.5
Precipitation				

TABLE 1

Annual Summaries 1998-2018

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	**2018**	2013-2017 5-yr Avg	1980-2018 Average
Black Vulture			1				1				1		2	1	5		2			4	**7**	1.2	0.4
Turkey Vulture	3277	3384	2971	3532	4065	5026	4623	5158	5934	5385	6107	6091	6732	7,125	5,986	6,698	7,330	7,730	4,862	5,995	**7,684**	6,523.0	3,301.9
Osprey	42	42	46	71	48	59	51	47	64	50	52	39	53	41	64	52	57	42	45	47	**53**	48.6	42.6
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite																						0.0	0.03
Mississippi Kite						1									1							0.0	0.08
Bald Eagle	32	30	25	30	54	66	62	71	85	54	65	76	64	60	57	62	43	80	35	50	**54**	54.0	34.0
Northern Harrier	85	91	125	108	115	98	223	128	96	115	173	121	109	104	83	77	63	68	84	73	**45**	73.0	124.8
Sharp-shinned Hawk	2822	2002	2467	2541	3173	2350	2310	1756	1753	1551	2652	1721	2339	1,700	1,848	1,335	835	1,253	1,039	1,144	**845**	1,121.2	2,820.0
Cooper's Hawk	179	241	181	169	244	220	252	183	202	207	123	136	125	101	145	86	122	153	119	105	**83**	117.0	178.6
Northern Goshawk	14	6	3	14	9	6	11	12	6	8	5	6	8	2	7	5	0	1	2	2	**1**	2.0	17.8
Red-shouldered Hawk	553	675	508	458	566	455	524	641	679	641	658	730	513	581	592	437	392	698	275	306	**209**	421.6	685.9
Broad-winged Hawk	3886	1833	2368	5229	3668	3327	2532	5537	2026	2413	2971	5497	2922	8,613	3,473	1,484	1,508	2,898	2,142	3,330	**1,055**	2,272.4	3,313.8
Swainson's Hawk	3		1		1						1						1	1		1		0.6	0.5
Red-tailed Hawk	2159	2218	2617	2351	2031	2258	2513	2693	3099	2209	2457	2852	2156	1,857	2,002	1,750	1,131	1,778	1,312	1,279	**1,016**	1,450.0	2,503.2
Ferruginous Hawk	1				1																	0.0	0.08
Rough-legged Hawk	33	69	50	74	22	40	204	120	100	75	59	92	29	59	35	38	28	46	26	23	**17**	32.2	67.5
Golden Eagle	6	10	13	6	8	8	8	8	13	7	15	12	8	8	12	8	5	14	4	9	**4**	8.0	7.8
American Kestrel	77	69	95	77	99	102	87	45	63	77	120	69	55	44	55	92	30	40	56	63	**37**	56.2	86.6
Merlin	15	10	22	6	19	11	21	15	13	18	10	13	22	17	18	12	12	9	21	15	**16**	13.8	11.1
Peregrine Falcon	4	1	7	3	6	7	5	5	9	2	7	8	12	10	5	5	8	6	4	5	**9**	5.6	4.1
Gyrfalcon									1													0.0	0.03
Prairie Falcon																						0.0	0.03
Unid. Raptors	227	345	165	282	737	327	234	183	178	134	96	114	26	45	44	68	104	52	40	69	**49**	66.6	415.1
Total Raptors	13415	11026	11665	14951	14866	14361	13661	16602	14321	12946	15572	17577	15175	20,368	14,432	12,209	11,671	14,869	10,066	12,520	**11,184**	12,267.0	14,372.3
Hours Counted	499.0	502.8	527.4	545.0	556.3	532.0	495.5	495.2	534.5	507.1	552.6	520.3	518.4	495.2	488.5	492.2	520.2	537.6	524.8	439.8	**449.4**	502.9	537.51
Birds per Hour	26.9	21.9	22.1	27.4	26.7	27.0	27.6	33.5	26.8	25.5	28.2	33.8	29.3	41.1	29.5	24.8	22.4	27.7	19.2	28.5	**24.9**	24.4	26.9

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Table 3- March 2018

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	March Species Totals
Black Vulture																	1					2	3		1							7
Turkey Vulture	6		6	3	2	9		3		3	49		17		42	5	91	44	38	43	33	245	150	75	63	110		143		23	122	1,325
Osprey																																0
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite																																0
Mississippi Kite																																0
Bald Eagle	2		1		2	1											6	1	1	3				2	2			1			4	26
Northern Harrier					1																	1										2
Sharp-shinned Hawk																	2	4		1		2			3	2		1		1	8	24
Cooper's Hawk			1					1					1				1	1	5	1	1		1	1	1	1		4		4	1	25
Northern Goshawk																																0
Red-shouldered Hawk																		2	12	4		4	20	23	17	39		3		2	21	147
Broad-winged Hawk																																0
Swainson's Hawk																																0
Red-tailed Hawk	12		7	5	5	5	1	4			8		2		7	2	25	15	45	11	5	20	26	31	32	105		13		10	54	450
Ferruginous Hawk																																0
Rough-legged Hawk						1											1														1	3
Golden Eagle																	1		1													2
American Kestrel																1						2								1	1	5
Merlin																		1				1										2
Peregrine Falcon				1																		1			1							3
Gyrfalcon																																0
Prairie Falcon																																0
Unid. Accipiter																																0
Unid. Buteo				1															2							3						6
Unid. Falcon																																0
Unid. Eagle																																0
Unid. Raptor																																0
Total Raptors	20	0	15	10	10	16	1	8	0	3	57	0	20	0	49	8	128	68	104	63	39	278	200	132	120	260	0	165	0	41	212	2,027
Hours Counted	*4.00*	*0.00*	*6.00*	*8.00*	*6.50*	*6.50*	*5.00*	*6.25*	*4.50*	*4.50*	*8.50*	*4.67*	*4.50*	*0.00*	*7.50*	*6.50*	*8.00*	*8.25*	*8.00*	*7.00*	*8.00*	*8.25*	*8.50*	*8.00*	*8.75*	*8.00*	*5.00*	*8.00*	*0.00*	*7.00*	*8.00*	*191.67*
Precipitation		*, S					S,R		S	S		S	S	*														R		F,R			

* indicates no counter

Table 4 - April 2018

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	April Species Totals
Black Vulture																															0
Turkey Vulture	790	1,381		39	73		381	622	1,272	200	118	133	78				31	21	153	323	197	68	21	18		21	19		81	54	6094
Osprey		3					3	1	4		5	8	1				3	1	2		2	9	1	1							44
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite																															0
Mississippi Kite																															0
Bald Eagle								2	1	2	1	1								1	2	2	1			2				1	16
Northern Harrier		1							4	1		3	4						3		4	8	3								31
Sharp-shinned Hawk	5	17			1		5	7	9	18	30	123	34				16	15	14	5	114	77	141	15		12	32		12	7	709
Cooper's Hawk	3	8						5	4		3	5					1	3	3		3	3	3			4			1	2	51
Northern Goshawk		1																													1
Red-shouldered Hawk	16	8					4	1	25		1									1			2	1			1				60
Broad-winged Hawk												1	2					1		5	204	162	422	39		51	27		30	15	959
Swainson's Hawk																															0
Red-tailed Hawk	40	31			3		12	15	110	24	11	14	43				10	2	21	28	49	31	17	2		20	5		14	2	504
Ferruginous Hawk																															0
Rough-legged Hawk		1							1			1	3						1		3		1						1		12
Golden Eagle																															0
American Kestrel		1							4			3	1						1	1	4	4	5	1			1				26
Merlin	1	1					1				1	1							1	1		1		1		2					11
Peregrine Falcon		1							1			3															1				6
Gyrfalcon																															0
Prairie Falcon																															0
Unid. Accipiter		2																					1						2		5
Unid. Buteo	8	1																	1				3			3					16
Unid. Falcon																															0
Unid. Eagle																					1										1
Unid. Raptor	1								1											4				1			7			2	16
Total Raptors	864	1,457	0	39	77	0	406	653	1,436	245	170	296	166	0	0	0	61	43	200	369	583	365	621	79	0	115	93	0	141	83	8,562
Hours Counted	*6.50*	*8.25*	*0.00*	*8.00*	*5.50*	*0.00*	*7.50*	*8.50*	*9.00*	*6.00*	*7.00*	*5.00*	*4.50*	*0.00*	*0.00*	*0.10*	*7.00*	*8.00*	*8.00*	*9.00*	*8.00*	*9.25*	*8.00*	*3.50*	*2.00*	*8.25*	*5.00*	*0.00*	*8.17*	*8.50*	*168.52*
Precipitation			R			*						R		S,R	S	R	S								R			R			

* Indicates no counter

Table 5 - May 2018

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	May Species Totals
Black Vulture																0
Turkey Vulture	44	10		13	27	8	31	22	22	4	3		10	50	5	249
Osprey	1	5					1	1	1							9
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite																0
Mississippi Kite																0
Bald Eagle		1			2		2		2	1						8
Northern Harrier	5	2						1	1	1				2		12
Sharp-shinned Hawk	57	9		4	29	1	4	1	1	4	1			1		112
Cooper's Hawk	3	2			2											7
Northern Goshawk																0
Red-shouldered Hawk																0
Broad-winged Hawk	62	22				1	4		1	1				5		96
Swainson's Hawk																0
Red-tailed Hawk	12	2			1	1	14	3		4				4		41
Ferruginous Hawk																0
Rough-legged Hawk																0
Golden Eagle										2						2
American Kestrel	3	2												1		6
Merlin		1				1	1									3
Peregrine Falcon																0
Gyrfalcon																0
Prairie Falcon																0
Unid. Accipiter																0
Unid. Buteo																0
Unid. Falcon											1					1
Unid. Eagle																0
Unid. Raptor		1						1						2		4
Total Raptors	187	57	0	17	61	12	57	29	28	17	5	0	10	65	5	550
Hours Counted	*8.00*	*6.25*	*0.00*	*4.00*	*8.00*	*4.00*	*8.50*	*6.50*	*8.00*	*5.75*	*2.00*	*0.00*	*8.00*	*9.25*	*2.50*	*80.75*
Precipitation			*, R									*			R	

* indicates no counter

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch

Newsletter

January 2019 Newsletter # 58

DECADES OF OBSERVATION

In recent months I have read two books that I recommend to you: *The Bird Detective* by Bridget Stutchbury and *Cuckoo: Cheating by Nature* by Nick Davies. Both Stutchbury and Davies are professors of ornithology, and both have spent days and hours of observation in patches close to where they live. The hours have been spent in close study of specific species, formulating hypotheses, setting up experiments, and recording. As a result they have been able to expand our knowledge of the secret lives of birds (Stutchbury) and the "arms race" between parasitic birds and the hosts of their eggs (Davies).

The work of the counters at the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch (NPH) has been similar in terms of long hours of observation, learning the behavior and appearance of migrating raptors, and keeping detailed records. The longitudinal data from many years has enabled scientists and others to examine long-term trends such as the recovery from the impact of DDT on the eggs of raptors and more recently the decline in numbers of American Kestrels in the east.

When the Hawkwatch started, birders did not have access to e-mails and social media, and so they probably spent more time observing than waiting for posts so that they could scurry to see the latest rarity. Locations like the count-site at Beamer was a place to talk to other birders to find out what was around and to exchange information. I believe that more time was spent observing than looking, and the number of hawk-watchers has decreased as the interests of birders with access to social media have differed from those who spend time in observation of specific species at selected sites.

The data provided by NPH counters are extremely valuable and the time-series should be extended. In the letter accompanying this newsletter you will find that the current executive as it stands cannot sustain the organization. If we are to continue to collect data about the migration of raptors, renewal and/ or reorganization is needed. We need people who are prepared to spend the time observing in the way that Stutchbury and Davies have done. Their fieldwork has been supplemented by laboratory testing, but the fieldwork of observation and organizing have been crucial to the success of their work Our pastime has been in this tradition and, if observation is to continue, we need personnel to organize and conduct the counts. Over to you!

Sandy Darling
Editor

ADAPTATION OF SNAIL KITES IN FLORIDA

Sandy Darling

[This article draws on information in Wikipedia, ABA Birding Vol. 50 – 4, Nature Ecology and Evolution journal, and the University of Florida website.]

The Snail Kite, *Rostrhamus socialitis*, ranges from Florida to Brazil and it is generally sedentary except in the southern part of its range. The principal source of food is the apple snail, which is found in

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IMPORTANT NOTICE

FUTURE DIRECTION OF THE NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH

Dear Members

The Executive Committee of the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch intends to call a meeting of members and other interested parties in April to discuss the future organization of the Hawkwatch. We shall be contacting nature clubs and other organizations that we feel have an interest in our activities

In recent years we have called for renewal of the Executive Committee, but have not received names of volunteers and our efforts to ask members directly to take on specific functions have similarly not yielded results. As things stand the current members of the executive will not be able to continue to run the Hawkwatch in the same manner as we have. The Hawkwatch has provided one of the longest continuous site records on raptor migration in North America and we believe that efforts should be made carry on this important work.

For 2019 we shall direct our efforts to our core activity by ensuring that this year's count is conducted, that submissions are audited and that records are maintained. We shall not ask for payment of dues before the meeting we plan for April, nor shall we organize the Open House or the Annual Banquet. We shall ask the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority if it wishes to continue to run the Open House. If the Authority wishes to do so, we shall assist their staff.

What are we asking of you now?

- **Assist us by counting in the 2019 season.**
- **Consider being more active in the running of the organization.**
- **Provide suggestions on how our counting activities might continue in future years.**
- **Attend the meeting in April to discuss the future direction of the Hawkwatch and bring proposals.**

Everyone receiving this letter will be notified of the meeting. If you have questions or suggestions, please contact Mike Street (mikestreet1@gmail.com) or Sandy Darling (darlinga@cogeco.ca).

If the efforts to reorganize are not successful, then we shall regrettably have to recommend folding the organization.

Glenn Barnett (Secretary)
Sandy Darling (Newsletter Editor)
Matt Mills (Member at large)
John Stevens (Statistics)
Mike Street (Treasurer)

marshy and damp habitat, and the kite has a deeply hooked bill to extract the snail from its shell.

The population of the Florida sub-species, *plumbeus*, dropped from 3,500 in a decade to around 700 in the period 2003-7. The reason appeared to be a loss of food as a result of draining lands for agriculture and rising water-levels in Florida.

Around this time a new variety of apple snail from Central and South America appeared and it was two to five times the size of the native apple snail of Florida. In 2007 Philip D. Darby, David J. Melville and Miranda L. Watford reported in *Florida Field Naturalist* that the kites were having difficulty in getting food from the larger snails and were dropping almost half of the large snails. A later study reported in 2010 in *Biological Conservation* that the daily energy balances in adults feeding on the native and invasive snails were comparable, but the balances of juveniles were deficient if they were feeding on the invaders.

A paper in 2016 in *Ecological Applications* by Christopher E. Cattau, Robert J. Fletcher, Brian E. Reichert and Wiley M. Kitchens, however, reported that juvenile survivals rates had not declined, but rather they had increased by about 50% for those feeding on the invasive, larger snails. The group continued their research and in November 2017 a paper by Cattau, Fletcher, Rebecca T. Kimball, Christine W. Miller and Kitchens appeared in the on-line journal *Nature Ecology and Evolution* with an explanation. The beak lengths and body mass of juveniles in Florida are increasing, and so the increased beak lengths enable the birds to deal more effectively with the larger snails, and the increased weight is a result of the larger snails providing more meat. In addition, the authors reported that kites with larger beaks are more likely to survive the first year of life and this has enabled an increase in the Florida population of Snail Kites, which is now estimated to be 2,600.

The change has occurred surprisingly quickly and the researchers interpret the results to be an example of phenotypic plasticity. In lay terms *ABA Birding* defines this as "the ability of organisms to respond to environmental conditions without underlying genetic changes". This is similar to the increase in height and weight of humans as a result of better food.

NEW WORLD VULTURES AND CONDORS

Sandy Darling

The 2018 season saw an increase in Black Vultures with a total of six in the period March 20 to 23 as the species expands its range, just as the Turkey Vulture has done over the past forty years. This means that hawk-watchers in our area need to pay attention to big, dark birds rather than assuming that they are all Turkey Vultures. The name "vulture" was given because these birds are similar to old world vultures because of convergent evolution, and the two groups occupy the same ecological niche. They perform a useful function by clearing up carrion. New and old-world vultures, however, are not closely related; the new world vultures and condors are in the family *cathartidae* in the order *Accipitriformes*. Some suggest that all members of the family be called condors to emphasize the difference from old-world vultures.

How does one separate the two species? On March 22 when a group of ten vultures flew directly towards me, one appeared different to the naked eye even before I could see the white flashes that confirm Black Vulture. One of the ten was shining black, its wings were flatter and the bird was smaller. A binocular view confirmed that the different bird was a Black Vulture. What are the differences one should look for?

- Turkey Vultures fly with wings raised in a dihedral and they wobble, whereas Black Vultures fly with wings flat and are more stable.
- The back of a Turkey Vulture is brown, whereas that of a Black Vulture is black.
- The Black Vulture is smaller and the short tail, when flared, appears to be almost an extension of the wings.
- An adult Turkey Vulture has red, bare skin on the head with an ivory-colored beak, whereas a Black Vulture has a black head, although a juvenile TV also has a dark head.
- The coverts of a Turkey Vulture are dark and the flight feathers are silver, whereas the

underwing of a Black Vulture is dark except for the white at the ends of the wings. If one examines photos, the white on the Black Vulture is most apparent on the spines of the upper wings and the primaries under the wing as the second photo shows.

- Black Vultures flap more showing white flashes at the ends of their wings, whereas Turkey Vultures glide and make more subtle wing adjustments. In a group Black Vultures will stand out, because of intervals of flapping.



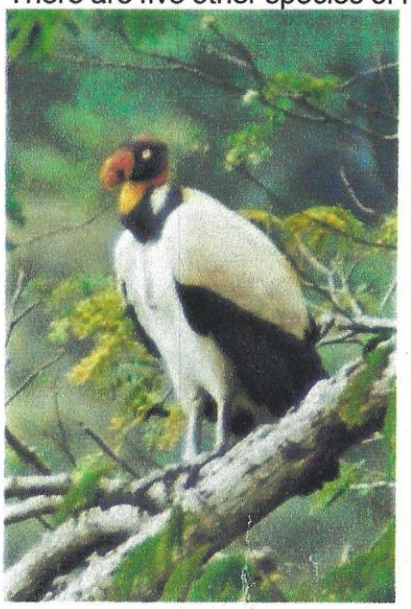
Turkey Vulture *Photo: Sandy Darling*



Black Vulture *Photo: Sandy Darling*

The ranges of the two birds are different. Turkey Vultures range into Northern Ontario and in the south into the cone of South America. The Black Vulture has just recently come into our region and in the south the range extends just beyond Brazil. Turkey Vultures migrate significant distances, whereas Black Vultures tend to remain close to the same place throughout the year. Turkey Vultures have a sense of smell, an ability shared with kiwis, shearwaters and other pelagic species like Storm-Petrels, but this has not been reported for Black Vultures.

There are five other species of new-world vultures or condors. Most vultures are dark, but one that does not fit the mold is the King Vulture. One rarely sees the bird perched as the one seen in Guyana was (left). When viewed from below, the King Vulture has a white body and under-wing coverts with black flight feathers and tail – a very striking bird.



The largest of the group are the California and Andean Condors with their ten-foot wing-spans. The California Condors are part of a recovery program and not self-sustaining, so they are not "countable". Nevertheless, in my view it is worth the trip to the north rim of the Grand Canyon to see them. Andean Condors can be seen from Colombia to Argentina, and one of my best birding experiences was having lunch in Argentina and seeing twenty Andean Condors fly over us and beyond a ridge to consume some dead animal.



Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture *Photo: Sandy Darling*



Two new world vultures are the Greater Yellow-headed Vulture (GYVU) of South America (left) and the Lesser Yellow-headed Vultures (LYVU) of Central and South America (photo on previous page). They appear similar to Turkey Vultures, but the GYVU is a bird of the forest, and so generally is not in the range of the Lesser Yellow-headed and Turkey Vultures, which are birds of open country and may be found together. The latter two are best separated by head color, but they also have different flight patterns. LYVU tend to swoop down more steeply and come closer to the ground so, if one sees a vulture doing this, it is worth paying close attention.

(I thank Ron Pittaway for constructive comments on an early draft of this note.)

BINOCULAR TECHNIQUE

Tim Foran

On April 2nd 2018, I was fortunate enough to be helping out at our NPH tower at Beamer and John Stevens was counting. Besides a very large flow of Turkey Vultures, there were generous numbers and twelve other species to count.

The middle part of the afternoon gave us calm winds and to our southwest during a lull we noticed a blur that was a juvenile Northern Goshawk flying fast. The bird flew very low en route to the trees parallel to the road into the park. As I got my binoculars on the bird I could see that it was a juvenile, before it was totally obscured by the scrub foliage as it blasted through the bush.

The total viewing time of this rare visitor to Beamer was at most, seven seconds. Acquiring that Goshawk in our binoculars meant finding the bird, then unconsciously bringing them to a precise focus, so that our eyes could provide brains the visual data to enable an informed identification. And, of course, it was worth the effort! A low Northern Goshawk contributes to a splendid day at any hawk watch.

A few years ago I was the counter on a day when over 1600 birds passed Beamer on a brilliant, warm Saturday afternoon. There were quite a few Broad-winged Hawks migrating and mostly all birds were not kind enough to be flying low. Broad-wings can be a bit of a chore to count accurately as they tend to form kettles, lingering and then mixing with previous arrivals and incoming groups of birds in a busy April sky. When the Broad-wings move in numbers, the conditions are often quite favorable for other diurnal raptors. Therefore, each kettle must be vetted carefully for other species of migrants.

Fortunately there was help on that day on the tower; I had four veterans, long time counters and two of them were experienced in identifying stratospheric birds. That is the day it occurred to me that all four were experts at raising their binoculars, finding the bird, instantaneously and precisely focusing their binoculars allowing them to look at the bird. It was a busy day and this skill would be required scores of times that afternoon.

But how does one take something that is instinctive and autonomic, and find some way to articulate the process into small steps? What follows is a brief chat on the matter of binocular technique for hawk-watching.

Adjusting Your Binoculars Diopter

We need to calibrate our binoculars using both the general focus and the diopter adjustment so that on whatever we focus, the image can be as razor sharp as possible. Each barrel must be set separately so they work together. The method of adjusting can vary according to make, so that one should read the manual. One of the barrels, as defined by the manufacturer, must be focused on a distant object using the general focusing wheel, and then the diopter adjustment should be used to focus the other barrel. This second adjustment may be on the front ring of one eyepiece or by using a second wheel in the center depending on the make of the binoculars; in the latter case there may be a lock-in provision. If

the diopter is even slightly off proper adjustment, we will not be able to obtain the sharpest focus. Less focus means less detail and information.

To make these adjustments take your binoculars and focus on something with a lot of detail. Printed word or electrical gridlines are both ideal. From the tower at Beamer Conservation Area, one could use the written signs just before the path to the Bruce Trail or the willow tree to the south. Get the sharpest image focus on the sign overall with both barrels of the binoculars by following the manufacturer's directions. Check the result with both eyes open, and repeat if the image is not sharp. Now when you put your glasses on a hawk in the sky, it can be sharp and allow you to see the details of the bird.

You may need to repeat this diopter adjustment regularly during your day, if you do not have a lock-in provision, as your binoculars will likely get bumped and knocked about as they are raised and lowered many times.

Now that we are capable of a sharp focus. What about focusing on small distant objects in the sky?

Trap Focus

As hawk-watchers our binocular techniques are quite different from most other types of birding. The birds fly overhead and we gaze up in hope of seeing them in a blank sky that has no other features to focus on. This means that our binoculars are usually set to focus at a much greater distance than say, a tall tree with a Great Horned Owl nest in it. We are mainly working in range that is several hundred meters more distant.

For long-range focus, even with super-fast auto-focus lenses available today, wildlife photographers employ a technique called "Trap Focus". After the camera is set up, the telephoto lens is pre-focused to a distance where the desired animal is expected to appear. Suppose we want to photograph a cougar that will appear where the pathway leading to the Bruce Trail leaves the circle at Beamer. We would pre-focus the lens to the same park sign that we used to check our diopter. When the beast arrives, it will likely be near where the sign is, and we would be already very close to perfect focus. At worst, only minor adjustments to focus should be necessary for sharp focus as the animal moves about. With this technique we should not be frustrated and forever focusing because our subject is 1,500 meters away and our binoculars are set for butterflies six feet away.

We can guess the average distance and set our Trap Focus for hawks in the air, or we can use passing aircraft. Any aircraft will do. If we focus on it, we should be very nearly in the same range of the birds as they place themselves in the sky. To ensure good focus always, repeat this process several times during busy times. Aircraft are also useful when we want to set or reset our diopter.

When a bird appears, often at a distance we should be near perfect focus and make minor adjustments as necessary, as the bird first approaches, and then, passes overhead. The distance from the viewer to the bird becomes shorter, and then longer again.

If you look at the technique of those hawk-watchers who find the birds, you will note that they are always scanning the sky . . .

. . . Keep Looking up and scanning!.

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NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH CALENDAR FOR BEAMER MEMORIAL CONSERVATION AREA

NOTES:

1. (<Species code) indicates the start of the normal migration period at Beamer for that species. (Species code>) indicates the end of the period. The same in bold type indicates the start or end of the prime period for that species. The box in which this combination is located indicates the day and month the period is likely to start or end.
2. A number followed by species initial, followed by a slash (/) and a two-digit number: In this combination the largest number of that species ever seen in one day is given first, and the year it occurred second. The box where the combination is located indicates the day and month of the event. Example: 655 RS/94 in March 23 indicates that the highest number of Red-shouldered Hawks recorded in one day occurred on March 23, 1994.

TV – Turkey Vulture
BV – Black Vulture
OS – Osprey
SK – Swallow-tailed Kite
MK – Mississippi Kite
BE – Bald Eagle
GE - Golden Eagle
NH – Northern Harrier
SS – Sharp-shinned Hawk
CH – Cooper's Hawk
NG – Northern Goshawk
RS – Red-shouldered Hawk
RT – Red-tailed Hawk
SW – Swainson's Hawk
RL – Rough-legged Hawk
FH – Ferruginous Hawk
AK – American Kestrel
ML – Merlin
PF – Peregrine Falcon
PR – Prairie Falcon
GY – Gyrfalcon
BW – Broad-winged Hawk

The following information, based on 44 years of data, shows significant events up to January 2019.

The largest number of raptors in a season was 20,368 in 2011.

TV, BE, NH, SS, CH, RT, RL, and AK can begin about mid -February.

MARCH

1 <RT <NG <TV	2 <GE	3	4 <RS	5	6	7 <NH
8	9	10 **<RT**	11 **<RL** **<TV**	12 <AK	13 **<CH** **<RS**	14 **44 AK/90**
15 <BV	16 <SS **744 RT/96**	17 **1 GY/06**	18 **<BE**	19	20 <ML <PF	21
22	23 **<NH** **3 BV/18** **655 RS/94**	24 **11 NG/84** **19 BE/03**	25	26 <OS	27	28
29 **46 RL/04**	30	31				

Largest count for month: 6,389 in 2011; largest count in one day: 2,080 March 26, 1988

APRIL

1 **<SS**	2 **7 GE/09** **2,021 TV/09**	3	4	5 **50 CH/93**	6	7
8 **<OS**	9 **RS>**	10 **RL>**	11 <BW	12 **16 OS/92**	13 **1 FH/92**	14
15 <SW **BE>** **1 SK/94**	16 **CH>**	17	18 **<BW** **35 NH/96** **1,556 SS/76**	19 **1 PR/95****	20 **1 GY/77**	21 **6,007** **BW/85**
22	23 **1 FH/98***	24 **OS>** **1 FH/02***	25 **6 ML/96**	26 **3 PF/15**	27 **3 PF/10**	28 BV>
29 **2 SW/98***	30 **RT>** **TV>** RL>					

Largest count for month: 15,012 in 1984; largest count in one day: 7,007 April 21, 1985

MAY

1 RS>	2 **2 SW/97***	3	4	5 SW> **BW>**	6 PF> CH>	7
8	9	10 **SS>**	11 **1 MK/97***	12 **NH>** **AK>**	13	14 **1 MK/03***
15 BE> ML> **1 MK/12***	16 OS>	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31 <NH <SS<NG<AK <GE	*BW, TV & RT may continue after May 31*			

Largest count for month: 2,685 in 1980: largest count in one day 1,492 May 4, 1989

* Sighting not reviewed/ accepted by Ontario Bird Records Committee
** First accepted Prairie Falcon record in Ontario

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch

Newsletter

August 2019 **Newsletter #59**

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Keith Dieroff

After a lengthy sabbatical from the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Executive, I am resuming my role as President with the objective of rejuvenating the membership and bringing the NPH into the 21st century.

First, let's talk about rejuvenating the membership. I have given a lot of thought to the question, "why are we doing this?" and how it relates to the NPH. Are we a scientific organization? Are we a club? What are we raising money for? In answer to these questions, I have the following thoughts...

We are not a purely scientific organization – our methods for gathering data are not rigorous enough. In addition, even a casual hawkwatcher can identify some or all of the trends we have noted in the past 30 years: an increase in Turkey Vultures, Bald Eagles and Peregrine Falcons, as well as a decrease in Accipiters and Buteos.

We are not a 'club', even though we are made up of people with similar interests – there are no regular meetings or social gatherings like a car club would have.

My conclusion – we are unique. We are a group of people who share a similar interest, who gather informally to participate in a shared activity and in the process collect data that is used, in part, for scientific purposes. So again, I come back to the question of why are we doing this? I believe the answer is simple – it has become a tradition. And you know what? It's a great tradition that deserves to continue. Here's why:

- It's enjoyable (most days, except maybe in early March).
- The data are useful, even if they aren't 'perfect'.
- There is always the chance of seeing something extraordinary (the Swallow-tailed Kite in April '94 comes to mind).
- We have an opportunity to educate others and raise awareness.
- There is an element of comradery and friendship.

So, let's keep things going. I'm not asking for you to join the executive – we've got that covered for now with a recent injection of new blood and fresh ideas. However, **we do need counters**. If you can commit to a day or two per season (or a day per week), we'd like to hear from you. If you're counting two days per season now, can you do three or four? If yes, then we'd also like to hear from you. If the count days are covered, the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch will continue to live on indefinitely.

Now let's talk about bringing the NPH into the 21st century – that means going 'digital'. Here are a few things I'd like to do, starting in the 2020 count season:

1. E-mail our newsletter to as many members as possible, to reduce paper and save on postage.

Continued on page 2...

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2. Post / share your photos on Instragram (yes, the NPH has an Instragram account). I see many of you with cameras at Beamer. Please, please, please send the photos you're willing to share. They don't have to be perfect. You can send them by email to kdieroff@yahoo.ca or by text to 289-339-7463. We want to see what you're seeing at Beamer!

3. Provide real-time information about the daily hawk 'flight'. This will be done through Twitter. If you follow us on Twitter and there is a good flight happening, you will know about it almost as soon as it happens.

I am excited about the future of the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch. The organization was at a crossroads in 2019 and I believe things are back on track. As we prepare for the 2020 season, you may be hearing from us a bit more via email, as we get some of these initiatives up and running. Until then, I look forward to seeing you in the spring of 2020 at Beamer.

A final word: I'd like to extend a **huge thank you** to outgoing NPH Executive members: **Mike Street, John Stevens** and **Glenn Barnett**. Their contributions have been immeasurable. I can't thank them enough for their hard work, guidance and expertise over the years. You will all be missed!

UPDATE ON ACTIVITIES

Sandy Darling

In January 2019, an important note was included with the newsletter, giving notice that there was a need for revitalization of the executive committee, if the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch was to continue. The concerns were also made known to other birders through e-mail groups and at meetings. I am pleased to say that there was an excellent response, and this update provides information on what has transpired since the last newsletter.

The previous executive committee said that its main focus would be on making sure that the 2019 count was conducted. This was done and some of our counters picked up more days and we also had some new counters. What was more encouraging for the future was that a number of people asked to learn how to count, and they were paired with experienced counters. Some of these people should be ready to count on their own in 2020. We need to make sure that training of new counters remains a priority, so that younger people are ready to take over as some have to drop out. As a counter, I have to say that additional eyes are always a help.

For the Open House, we approached the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) to see if their staff would organize the Open House on Good Friday, and they agreed to do so, on condition that NPH would provide speakers on migration and continue our other educational activities. Unfortunately, Good Friday turned out to be cold, rainy and misty, but some of the exhibitors and spectators showed up, despite the weather. For 2020, we shall need to have further talks with NPCA about who runs an Open House. The NPCA staff that I talked to were undaunted and are looking forward to better weather in 2020.

The Annual Banquet and General Meeting did not take place; the event was replaced by a special meeting on April 27 that also served as the annual general meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the future of the NPH, and most of the time was spent in receiving comments and suggestions. Many of the suggestions related to improved publicity in order to attract people to the count, providing training opportunities both for beginners and those wishing to count, and mentorship of those who come. Some reported that newcomers do not experience a welcoming atmosphere when they first come to Beamer, and I know that this was my experience in the 1990s. All of us have a role in welcoming visitors and explaining how to tell what to look for to identify a species – don't leave it all to the counter! The meeting concluded with the election of a new executive committee, who are the following:

- **Keith Dieroff**, President, Treasurer, & Membership
- **Sandy Darling**, Newsletter Editor and Count Coordinator for 2020
- **Rob Spaul**, Statistics and Season Report (with assistance from John Stevens in 2019)
- **Michael MacLeod**, Website
- **Matt Mills**, Training
- **Mike Street**, Data Auditor
- **Catherine Manschot**, Secretary

The new executive met in June to arrange for the exchange of information and to follow up suggestions made at the April 27 meeting. More about plans will be forthcoming, but two things have been agreed:

- Dues for 2019 will not be collected, but you are free to make a donation.
- We'd like to move to more electronic communication and would like your views about the newsletter being distributed electronically.

MORE THAN 50% OF THE WORLD'S RAPTORS DECLINING

Sandy Darling

A recent study by Christopher J.W. McClure of the Peregrine Fund and 13 other authors living on four continents have published a study of the state of the world's raptors[1]. The authors noted that there is no systematic global synthesis of conservation status of the world's 557 raptor species. They reviewed the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List for all raptors. The findings were that raptors, especially old-world vultures, are more threatened than birds in general. Eighteen per cent of raptor species are threatened with extinction and 52% have declining populations; in the study "threatened" includes the categories of critically endangered, endangered and vulnerable as used in the Red List.

Indonesia has both the highest number of raptor species (119) and of those in decline (63). Raptor species that require forest area are most likely to be either threatened or in decline. Agriculture and logging are identified as the most frequently encountered threats; both involve clearing forests. Old-world vultures, primarily in Africa and the Indian sub-continent, have experienced the most severe declines in population, although there are some signs that populations in India are now stabilizing. The major cause has been poisoning, much of which has been the toxicity of drugs used in veterinary medicine.

For the study raptors were divided into five groups: hawks and eagles; old-world vultures; new-world vultures or condors; falcons; and owls.

Chi-square tests were then used to identify differences among the five groups. The writers calculated species richness by country and also by region, such as North America, and also examined habitats to assign species to habitats that are used or required. Of the five groups old-world vultures are the most at risk and have declined the most. In fact, the decline in counts of old-world vultures exceeds most other bird families. Falcons appear to be least affected.

The paper describes the range of threats, most of which are familiar to birders.

In examining findings, one needs to look at both the proportion of species in a category that are threatened and at the decline in the population. Some of the more detailed findings are summarized below:

- 52% of raptor species are declining and only 9% are increasing. The comparable numbers for all bird species are 44% in decline and 13% threatened. Even among those raptors of least concern, 38% are declining.
- Kenya and Sudan have the most threatened species. The savannah grasslands of East Africa have the highest number of raptor species (98) and the highest number of threatened species.
- The paramo of the North Andes has the highest number of declining species (47).
- 341 of 557 species (61%) require a specific habitat. 473 **use** forest and 258 **require** forest, so that forest is used 1.65 times as much as grasslands.
- Species that **require** forest are more likely to be threatened or in decline, and those in tropical forest are more likely to be so than species in non-tropical forests.
- Roughly a quarter of raptor species migrate, and fewer of the species that use or require forest migrate, especially those in tropical forests. Species that do not migrate are more likely to be threatened or in decline.
- Threatened species appear to be concentrated in East Africa, the Indian sub-continent and Indonesia. Declines in populations occur also in these regions, and there are also significant declines in South America.

[1] Christopher J.W. McClure et al "State of the World's Raptors: Distribution, Threats and Conservation Recommendations" Biological Conservation 227, September 2018.

The paper discusses the threats and also actions that may or should be taken. These vary both by region and by habitat, so that a single approach world-wide is not appropriate.

In the concluding section, the writers propose priorities for action, research and monitoring. The highest priority for action is land and water protection; this is hardly surprising insofar as agriculture and logging are two of the biggest threats, and forest raptors are under greater threat. This is closely followed by education; this has been a big factor in stemming the decline of vultures in India, where one of the veterinary medicines has now been banned, although it is now being used in some European countries. The main priority for research is populations trends, and in the area of monitoring population is the primary need. Although the raptors we count are not under major threat, our counting and the time series we have are in line with the priorities for research and monitoring.

The researchers conclude that, although the outlook is "dire, there is hope for optimism." They note that some species have been brought back from near extinction, that translocations are restoring some populations, and technology (such as that at wind farms) is improving. There is, however, a continuing need for more information.

The paper described is long and contains a lot of information, so that an article like this cannot do justice to the work of the researchers. I encourage you, therefore, to take the time to search out and read the original article.

2019 NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH MIGRATION REPORT

Robert Spaul

Season Overview

The 2019 Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch (NPH) migration season proved another valuable year of data collection for Ontario's longest running spring raptor migration site. Overall, seasonal temperatures were average, though wet weather was pervasive throughout the season, with above average precipitation for all count months.

This included multiple significant poor weather systems, mostly in April and May, which suppressed raptor movement and stymied survey efforts altogether for 9 days. Rain, snow and fog hindered survey efforts substantially on 13 other days, where counters either began late, ended early, or heartily endured poor weather conditions with little to no raptor flight (Tables 2-4 on pages 11-13). In 2019, official counters, with the help of numerous skilled observers (see complete list at end of article), surveyed for a total of 468.7 hours (Table 1 on page 10). Poor weather resulted in observation effort slightly below the 5-year average (494.4 hours; 2014-2018), and well below the long-term average (532.5 hours; 1981-2018). In total, 12,828 migrating raptors were counted in 2019, slightly above the 5-year average (12,062 raptors), though below the long-term average (14,121; Table 6 on page 15). Season passage rates (27.4 raptors/hour) were above the 5-year trend (24.53) and similar to the long-term average (26.6); however, due to the changing species composition seen at Beamer Conservation Area (CA) over the years, these results should be interpreted cautiously.

Weather Overview

Though occasionally counters begin the season in earnest in late February, no count days occurred in February of 2019, largely due to persistent winter and rainy weather towards the end of the month. February precipitation was 161% of the annual average, but with typical total monthly snowfall, much of that fell as rain.

March weather was only slightly wetter (109%) overall than normal, despite higher than average (142%) snowfall, and weather was generally favorable for survey efforts. Only one day (March 30) was cancelled outright owing to weather. March totals (4066 raptors) and passage rates (19.6 raptors/hr.) were slightly above the 5-year average (3405 raptors and 17.5 raptors/ hr.), and comparable to long-term trends (4073 raptors, and 20.2 raptors/hr.; Tables 1 and 2, pages 10 and 11).

April saw wetter (148%) than normal weather compared to long-term trends, but none fell as snow in the month. Persistent rainy weather precluded counting on five days, and led to two other partial weather days. April migrant totals (7,983) were comparable to the 5-year trend (8,014.6) and below the

long-term average (8,940.8), while passage rates (43.2 raptors/hr.) were above the 5-year trend (40.1), and the long-term average (41.6; Tables 1 and 3 on pages 10 and 12).

Wet, spring-like weather persisted through the first half of May, and counts were shut down for three days owing to rain, and hampered substantially by fog for two other days. May totals (779 raptors) were above the 5-year average (614.8 raptors), but well below the long-term average (1074.4 raptors). May passage rates (10.2 raptors/hr.) were well above the 5-year trend (6.8 raptors/hr.), and on par with the long-term average (9.8 raptors/hr.; Tables 1 and 4 on pages 10 and 13).

INDIVIDUAL SPECIES

Black Vulture: As the species' range has pushed further north in recent years, Black Vultures have become a "regular rarity" spring migrant along the Niagara Escarpment and some are even overwintering as close as Queenston Heights, along the Niagara River. This year's numbers continued that trend with 5 Black Vultures counted, well above the 5-year and long-term averages of 2.6 and 0.66, respectively. The Niagara Escarpment itself, just below Beamer Conservation Area, hosted 1 apparently stalled migrant Black Vulture, an uncounted bird on March 17th, which hung out south of the hawkwatch for much of the day, only to do a U-turn in front of the tower and return down and south again. Similarly, a single Black Vulture was stalled for most of March 24th below Lookout Point, with a sizeable Turkey Vulture flock, before the whole flock finally got enough lift to migrate in the afternoon. Generally speaking, Black Vultures are known to wander well from their typical range, so it will be interesting to see where these classic southern vultures first begin breeding in Ontario!

Turkey Vulture: Turkey Vulture flights at Beamer are a rather impressive sight and due in part to their conspicuousness and regularity, represent a valuable outreach opportunity with the public. Their sustained northward range expansion in recent decades spurs many conversations with visitors that have personally seen them become more common in their lifetimes. The season total of 6,309 Turkey Vultures was slightly below the 5-year average (6720.2), but well above the long-term average (3,773.5), suggesting that range expansion and associated population growth in southern Ontario may have leveled off. Peak movement occurred on April 3, with 568 migrants, part of a sustained peak of 5,170 counted from March 19 - April 9.

Sharp-shinned Hawk: Sharp-shinned hawk migration at NPH has dropped substantially since monitoring began, and this year's count continued that trend. The season total of 1,113, the 4th lowest count year since 1976, was well below the long-term average (2778.2), and slightly above, but comparable, to the 5-year average (1,023). These data echo those of spring and fall migration sites across eastern North America, and support recent Raptor Population Index results, showing significant annual declines of the species migrating each year at many migration sites (Crewe et al. 2016). For the NPH site specifically, those reports estimated 7.63% annual declines from 2006 to 2016, a decade preceded by even steeper annual declines. Spring count data of the species at NPH, and our contribution to range-wide count efforts coordinated by HMANA, clearly show the sustained value of collecting long-term data and likely support enhanced management of the species in years to come.

Cooper's Hawk: Cooper's Hawk migration numbers through the Niagara Escarpment appear to be declining in recent years. This year's count of 104, was below the 5-year average (116.4), and well below the long-term average (183.1) and supports data showing a modest long-term decline. However, as many have noted, the species is likely changing its overwintering strategy in many parts of its range, including southern Ontario, where they are now a regular winter bird in many urban, sub-urban and rural wooded habitats. Beamer Conservation Area continued to host at least one territorial pair this season, and displaying adults were a common sighting all spring.

Northern Goshawk: Northern Goshawk passage through NPH continues to be extremely low, with only one counted in 2019. Sadly, this is comparable to annual passage rates across eastern North America, where the species continues to be rare, localized or extirpated in much of its former range. Management of this highly sensitive species is difficult in many areas, as

the birds require large, relatively intact forests, and are quite susceptible to human disturbance. Current efforts at improved protection and management of Ontario's boreal forests are likely the best hope for the species' continued persistence in the province.

Osprey: Osprey numbers appear to be relatively stable in recent decades, and while this year's movement was a little lower than the 5-year trend (48.8/season), and the long-term trend (45.8/season), there is no reason to think their current regional populations are of concern. Breeding sites along Lake Ontario are regular, and breeding in northern lakes is thought to be quite stable too (de Solla et al. 2003).

Northern Harrier: In 2019, disappointing Northern Harrier flights continued. Just 55 were counted, below the 5-year average (66.6) and well below the long-term average (128.3). Between 1981 and 2019, this is the 2nd lowest count ever recorded for the species, following only last season's count of 45. Changes in the availability and health of contiguous grasslands are likely associated with these declines, which are occurring across much of the eastern US and Canadian portion of the harrier's range.

Peregrine Falcon: The 2019 Peregrine Falcon flight, at 11, nearly doubled the 5-year average, and was even higher relative to the long-term trend (4.6/season). 2019 was the 2nd highest season total, after 2010. March tied the highest monthly total ever recorded, with 7 also counted in March of 2010. As Peregrine Falcons continue to reestablish populations across their range, following recovery from DDT-era population crashes, we will likely continue to see good flights of these impressive birds.

Merlin: This season's Merlin count (14) was comparable to the 5-year average (14.6/season), and slightly above the long-term average (12.42). Merlin counts at Beamer, similar to most migration sites, have never been very high, but the site documented marked increase in passage in the early to mid-1990s, and have largely had similar annual numbers since then. This is interesting compared to nearby Braddock Bay, NY, where significant declines have occurred in recent spring counts, as have fall counts at Hawk Cliff (2006-2016; Crewe et al. 2016). However, both nearby sites had banner-year Merlin counts in their most recent seasons, with 153 at Hawk Cliff in Fall 2018, and Braddock Bay counting 56 this spring, all while NPH numbers stayed relatively consistent. Across much of eastern North America, the species is doing variably, but many of the same changes in winter prey abundance and movement patterns seen in Cooper's Hawks and Sharp-shinned Hawks, are likely occurring in Merlins as well. Ultimately, more focus on breeding birds may be required to estimate and monitor Ontario Merlin populations effectively.

American Kestrel: American Kestrels are experiencing sustained, though regionally variable, declines in eastern North American, as reflected at migration sites (Crewe et al. 2016) and through long-term breeding studies (McClure et al. 2017). Sadly, at just 28 migrants in 2019 we counted the lowest number of kestrels since standardized season counts began, and the lowest ever since 1975, when monitoring first began at Grimsby. 2019 was well below the 5-year average (45.2/season) and just 31.8% of the long-term average (88.1).

Understanding Kestrel population dynamics is proving complex; it is likely associated with declines in large contiguous grasslands (Smallwood et al. 2009), climate change induced variation in migration and nesting phenology (Heath et al. 2012), and modified agricultural practices (Smith et al. 2016), all while recognizing that nest box monitoring programs may actually make population estimation more difficult (McClure et al. 2016). In concert, these factors have all contributed to variable and localized trends in American Kestrel populations and migration patterns, such that regional populations are of concern in both the eastern US and Canada.

Bald Eagle: Bald Eagle populations have largely recovered from DDT-era crashes, with migration counts generally increasing steadily from the 1980s to the 2000s. Beginning around 2002, counts have stabilized at Beamer CA, as they have done at many migration sites across their range. It's a good thing too, because visitors really get excited about Bald Eagles, and they offer a great raptor management success story for every counter to pass along to the public. The 2019 Bald Eagle count (69) was above, but comparable to, the 5-year average (52.4/season), and nearly double the long-term

average. Currently, there is every reason to believe counts at Beamer CA have likely levelled off for the foreseeable future. Similarly to recent years, many apparent resident or wintering Bald Eagles were seen at Beamer moving along non-migratory flight lines, and local breeding pairs occur near 16-mile Creek and Cootes Paradise.

Golden Eagle: There are many gaps in our knowledge regarding the modest population of Golden Eagles that breed sparsely across northern Ontario and Quebec. Fortunately, Beamer is part of a network of eastern migration sites that are collectively able to census the species as it moves through the Great Lakes and Appalachian Mountains. Many visitors are surprised to hear NPH counts them at all, many having only seen them in western North America, if at all. Having monitored, captured and banded this species across their range, I was personally delighted to see my first Ontario Golden Eagle at Beamer CA in 2018. With nine Golden Eagles counted at Beamer in 2019, we slightly exceeded the 5-year average, and were comparable to the long-term average (8.2/season). Hopefully, continued efforts to monitor passage through the Great Lakes, and especially at NPH, will assist in long-term goals to understand eastern Golden Eagle populations and the phenology of their movements.

Red-tailed Hawk: Red-tailed Hawk numbers in 2019 (1036) remained below the 5-year average (1303.2) for the 3rd year in a row, and continued nine years of counts below the long-term average (2,523.2, Figure 1).

Indeed, this year's count was the second lowest ever recorded, only slightly higher than the 2018 count. This trend is unfortunately similar to those seen at spring and fall counts around the Great Lakes and eastern North America. While generally regarded as a common raptor across much of their range, long-term migration monitoring and breeding studies are really the best gauge of populations for this generalist species. Since moving to Ontario in 2016, I have generally been surprised at the scarcity of these Buteos in southern Ontario, and I believe stable populations are taken for granted here. With urban breeders becoming more common every year, it may be easy to miss that rural residents and migrants may be ill-equipped to handle the modified landscape across southern Canada.

Rough-legged Hawk: Rough-legged Hawk populations and migratory patterns have long been poorly understood, but current telemetry work being conducted across much of their North American range will hopefully improve that soon. Until then, long-term migration datasets contribute some of the only information, allowing for modest insights into the species' current status and annual movements. That's especially important to researchers, as Rough-legged Hawks may be responding to the effects of climate change by adjusting their wintering ranges northward (Paprocki et al. 2014). This year's Rough-legged Hawk count (25) was comparable to the 5-year average (28), but only 36.6% of the long-term average (68.2), suggesting these types of annual numbers may become the normal in the near future (Figure 2).

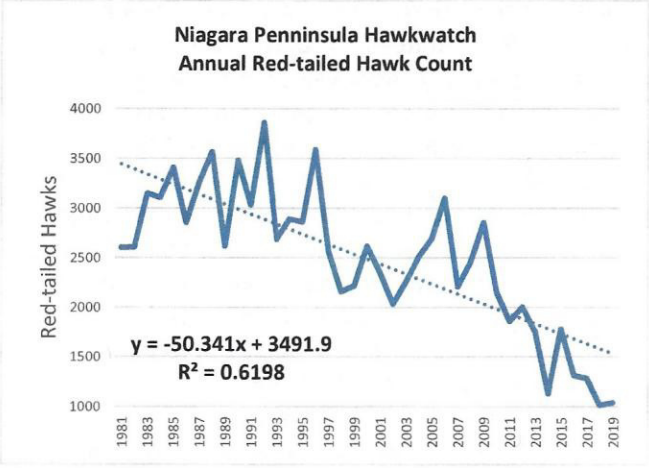


Figure 1. *Long-term trend of Red-tailed Hawk migration counts.*

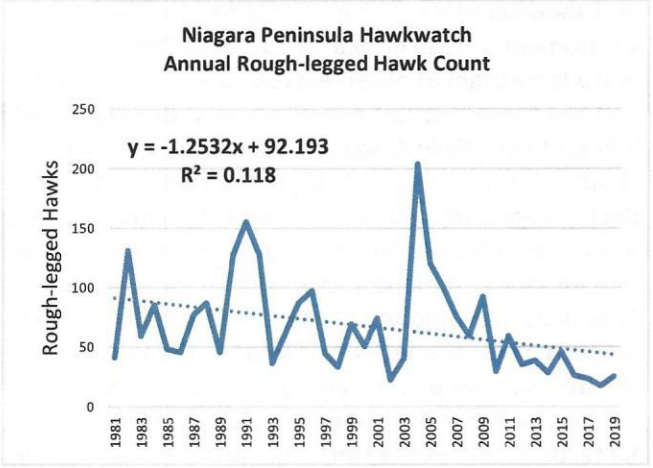


Figure 2. *Long-term trend of Rough-legged Hawk migration counts.*

The species is often considered to have irruption years, on roughly decadal cycles, and indeed this was seen for some time at NPH. Historic data from Beamer CA shows big years in 1982, 1991, and a huge year in 2004, but observers in the mid-2010s waited patiently for such a banner year, and one has yet to come. As our understanding of the species improves, it will be interesting to see how future NPH counts fit into the broader picture.

Red-shouldered Hawk: This season's Red-shouldered Hawk count (415) was comparable to the 5-year average (376), though still well below the long-term average (688.7). Sadly, long-term declines in this species' count at NPH (Figure 3) are a regular topic of conversation on the tower each year.

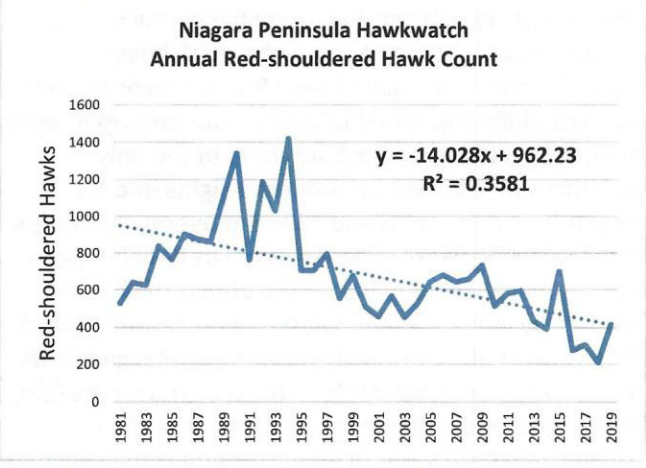


Figure 3. *Long-term trend of Red-shouldered Hawk migration counts.*

Red-shouldered Hawk migration along the Niagara Escarpment peaked on March 19, when Tom Thomas and a large team of observers counted 175 in one day, and had the 2nd highest overall count of the season with 775 raptors! While it was the highest count for Red-shouldered Hawks since 2015, the overall trend of decline regionally within the species is concerning. Here in southern Ontario, we are really at the northern edge of their range. A modest local population exists, but it is broken up into disjointed areas of suitable habitat, with limited habitat connectivity. Owing to the location of the NPH site, we are at a very good spot to essentially census the Ontario breeding population of these fantastic Buteos as they enter the province each spring; as such, this is one of the most valuable datasets collected at Beamer CA.

Broad-winged Hawk: This season's Broad-winged Hawk count of 3,514, was a welcome sight for many observers. It was the highest count since 2011, well above the 5-year average (2186.6), and slightly higher than the long-term average (3,356.2/season). Our data show high variations in annual count numbers of this species (Figure 4), likely due to localized weather and variable migration conditions across the Great Lakes.

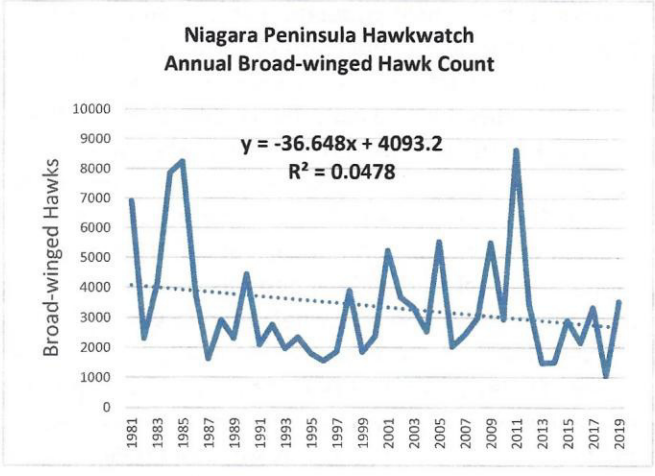


Figure 4. *Long-term trend of Broad-winged Hawk migration counts.*

Peak Broad-winged Hawk migration fell on April 25, when Sandy Darling and company had a "glorious day for Broad-winged Hawks", counting 839 in one hour, and 1,243 on the day! Hopefully this encouraging trend continues into 2020.

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Year	February			March			April			May			Year Total		
	# Birds	Hours	#/Hr	# Birds	Hours	#/Hr	# Birds	Hours	#/Hr	# Birds	Hours	#/Hr	# Birds	Hours	#/Hr
1975	0	0	0.0	565	19	29.7	1,925	53.25	36.2	239	5	47.8	2,729	77.25	35.3
1976	0	0	0.0	1,482	30.5	48.6	4,690	56.33	83.3	186	8	23.3	6,358	94.83	67.0
1977	0	0	0.0	1,896	91.42	20.7	5,839	174.25	33.5	888	32.5	27.3	8,623	298.17	28.9
1978	0	0	0.0	2,459	101.08	24.3	2,751	145.42	18.9	1,914	47.17	40.6	7,124	293.67	24.3
1979	0	0	0.0	2,267	71.25	31.8	8,875	201.25	44.1	1,744	38.02	45.9	12,886	310	41.6
1980	0	0	0.0	2,688	156.77	17.1	9,167	189.9	48.3	2,696	179.2	15.0	14,551	529	27.5
1981	22	4.5	4.9	2,957	181.9	16.3	11,185	202.5	55.2	1,758	173.7	10.1	15,922	562.6	28.3
1982	40	8	5.0	2,699	179	15.1	7,259	223.7	32.4	1,970	172.4	11.4	11,968	583.1	20.5
1983	49	10.3	4.8	2,301	164.8	14.0	8,991	210	42.8	2,369	179.9	13.2	13,710	565	24.3
1984	258	10.4	24.8	1,674	151	11.1	15,012	232.8	64.5	1,358	170.4	8.0	18,302	564.6	32.4
1985	0	0	0.0	4,059	202	20.1	14,818	242.2	61.2	398	164.3	2.4	19,275	608.5	31.7
1986	19	8	2.4	5,361	210.3	25.5	7,894	207.4	38.1	783	150.5	5.2	14,057	576.2	24.4
1987	81	23	3.5	3,943	213.4	18.5	4,719	233	20.3	1,765	212.1	8.3	10,508	681.5	15.4
1988	6	2	3.0	5,670	216.9	26.1	6,344	205.4	30.9	2,114	183.9	11.5	14,134	608.2	23.2
1989	0	0	0.0	2,951	179.25	16.5	6,699	241.8	27.7	2,558	78.25	32.7	12,208	499.3	24.5
1990	0	0	0.0	5,065	220	23.0	12,801	234.5	54.6	1,377	120	11.5	19,243	574.5	33.5
1991	0	0	0.0	4,308	215.8	20.0	9,291	223.2	41.6	1,352	109.5	12.3	14,951	548.5	27.3
1992	0	0	0.0	3,480	193.5	18.0	9,710	236	41.1	1,488	112	13.3	14,678	541.5	27.1
1993	0	0	0.0	2,014	176	11.4	8,836	227	38.9	1,257	135.5	9.3	12,107	538.5	22.5
1994	0	0	0.0	5,194	201.8	25.7	10,149	233.4	43.5	634	95.8	6.6	15,977	531.0	30.1
1995	0	0	0.0	4,231	214.6	19.7	5,801	230.75	25.1	776	110.3	7.0	10,808	555.7	19.5
1996	0	0	0.0	3,378	182	18.6	8,650	187.1	46.2	1,075	85.4	12.6	13,103	454.5	28.8
1997	0	0	0.0	4,304	181.85	23.7	6,712	221.25	30.3	1,089	105.25	10.3	12,105	508.4	23.8
1998	80	8	10.0	4,432	167	26.5	6,847	223	30.7	2,128	101.0	21.1	13,487	499.0	27.0
1999	0	0	0.0	4,190	200	21.0	6,538	206	31.7	267	96.0	2.8	10,995	502.0	21.9
2000	256	5	51.2	4,302	216	19.9	6,068	195	31.1	1,039	112.0	9.3	11,665	528.0	22.1
2001	49	25	1.9	2,576	181	14.2	11,620	243	47.8	588	96	6.1	14,833	545.0	27.2
2002	23	28	0.8	5,030	223	22.6	8,885	213	41.7	939	93	10.1	14,877	556.3	26.7
2003	4	4	1.0	5,632	214	26.3	7,769	209	37.2	955	105.5	9.1	14,360	532.0	27.0
2004	18	14.17	1.3	3,962	181.83	21.8	8,554	212.9	40.2	1,127	86.58	13.0	13,661	495.5	27.6
2005	33	5.5	6.0	3,129	197.5	15.8	11,829	193.08	61.3	1,610	95.58	16.8	16,601	495.17	33.5
2006	5	5.33	0.9	5,362	222.35	24.1	8,502	211.67	40.2	452	95.17	4.7	14,321	534.52	26.8
2007	6	3	2.0	5,241	202.33	25.9	6,584	201.58	32.7	1,115	100.17	11.1	12,946	507.08	25.5
2008	2	3	0.7	4,401	222.58	19.8	10,624	229.58	46.3	547	96.42	5.7	15,574	551.58	28.2
2009	0	0	0	5,548	225.92	24.6	11,646	204.92	56.8	383	89.42	4.3	17,577	520.25	33.8
2010	3	4.25	0.7	3,925	206.92	19.0	10,736	229.92	46.7	511	77.33	6.6	15,175	518.42	29.3
2011	0	0	0.0	6,389	209.53	30.5	13,667	210.67	64.9	318	75	4.2	20,374	495.2	41.1
2012	5	5.5	0.9	5,849	222	26.3	7,298	207.75	35.1	1280	53.25	24.0	14,432	488.5	29.5
2013	0	3	0.0	4,193	212.85	19.7	7,641	185.58	41.2	375	90.75	4.1	12,209	492.18	24.8
2014	0	0	0.0	2,658	214.25	12.4	8,427	213.91	39.4	586	87.5	6.7	11,671	520.17	22.4
2015	0	0	0.0	4,687	220	21.3	9,654	219.5	44.0	528	99.08	5.3	14,869	537.58	27.7
2016	12	5	2.4	4,590	188.25	24.4	4,500	228.67	19.7	964	102.92	9.4	10,066	524.83	19.2
2017	81	12.25	6.6	3,063	160.58	19.1	8,930	191.25	46.7	446	75.67	5.9	12,520	439.8	28.5
2018	45	8.5	5.3	2,027	191.67	10.6	8,562	168.52	50.8	550	80.75	6.8	11,184	449.4	24.9
2019	0	0	0.0	4066	207.83	19.6	7,983	184.75	43.2	779	76.08	10.2	12,828	468.66	27.4
AVERAGE 2014-2018				3405.0	195.0	17.5	8014.6	204.4	40.1	614.8	89.2	6.8	12062.0	494.4	24.5
AVERAGE 1981-2018				4073.0	199.0	20.2	8940.8	215.5	41.6	1074.4	112.3	9.8	14117.2	532.5	26.6

Table 1. *Count of raptors per hour at Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch for each month 1975-2019*

March 2019

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	March Total
Black Vulture																							2	1	1							4
Turkey Vulture	10			1			2	3	1	1	1	3	6		43	24	75	35	432	132	389	95	216	179	150	168	300	123	447		35	2,871
Osprey																																0
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite																																0
Mississippi Kite																																0
Bald Eagle	1		1				1			1		1					2	3	7	6	1		2				5	1				32
Northern Harrier												1					1		1	3	3				3	1	2	2			2	19
Sharp-shinned Hawk				1													2	3	19	4	3		3	2	1		5	4	10		3	60
Cooper's Hawk												3				1	4	1	3	4		4	4	2	1	1	2	1	4			35
Northern Goshawk																																0
Red-shouldered Hawk															1	2	28	16	175	60	41	1	9	3	27	6	2		12			383
Broad-winged Hawk																																0
Swainson's Hawk																																0
Red-tailed Hawk	6		2	3		4		2	4		1	1	1		9	8	49	23	138	56	34	7	15	1	45	65	65	7	59			605
Ferruginous Hawk																																0
Rough-legged Hawk				1				1	2								1				4						3	1	1		1	15
Golden Eagle																	3				1						1					5
American Kestrel													1		1			1					2			1						6
Merlin															2									1								3
Peregrine Falcon															1	1	2								2				1			7
Gyrfalcon																																0
Prairie Falcon																																0
Unid. Accipiter																				1												1
Unid. Buteo																	1	1		12					2			1				17
Unid. Falcon																												1				1
Unid. Eagle																																0
Unid. Raptor																		1							1							2
Total Raptors	17	0	3	6	0	4	3	6	7	2	2	9	8	0	57	36	168	84	775	278	476	107	253	189	233	242	385	141	534	0	41	4,066
Hours Counted	6.00	8.25	8.00	6.33	1.75	5.50	6.00	7.00	6.00	6.50	6.50	7.50	7.00	5.00	7.00	6.50	8.25	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00	6.00	7.50	8.75	8.00	8.00	8.50	7.50	7.00	0.00	5.50	207.83
Precipitation		S		S	S					R						S													R	R	S	

* indicates no counter, S = Snow, R = Rain, F= Fog

Table 2. *March 2019 Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch daily counts, observation effort, and weather summary*

April 2019

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	April Total
Black Vulture									1																						1
Turkey Vulture	302	72	568	443		259	331	247	282	74	1	54	160		52	85	78	29			21	69	32	69	4			38	47	12	3329
Osprey						2		2	3			2				1	5	3			1	4	2	4	3			2		1	35
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite																															0
Mississippi Kite																															0
Bald Eagle	3						1		1				4				1	1				4	1					2	4		22
Northern Harrier	1	1		2		2	5	2	1			3	3			1	1	3			1	3		2							31
Sharp-shinned Hawk	7	7	4	4		18	84	57	21	5	1	106	88		1	7	52	122			76	102	70	9	37			31	8	1	918
Cooper's Hawk		3	1			1		4	13			2	1		1	2	1	3			3	2	2	16	3				1		59
Northern Goshawk			1																												1
Red-shouldered Hawk		1		15		6	2					1									5	1			1						32
Broad-winged Hawk													2			5	88	67			588	517	50	290	1,243			138	66	6	3060
Swainson's Hawk																															0
Red-tailed Hawk	7	2	3	59		21	10	19	21	16	1	21	34		1	5	35	14			3	23	4	40	24			20	9	6	398
Ferruginous Hawk																															0
Rough-legged Hawk		2	2							1		3	1																		9
Golden Eagle																						2							2		4
American Kestrel	1					1	2	2					2				1	2				5			2						18
Merlin				2		1		1													1		1	1							7
Peregrine Falcon								1	2												1										4
Gyrfalcon																															0
Prairie Falcon																															0
Unid. Accipiter									7									1													8
Unid. Buteo	1	4						1										1			1			16	2			2	1	2	31
Unid. Falcon																															0
Unid. Eagle	1																														1
Unid. Raptor		3						1	1															9	1						15
Total Raptors	323	95	579	525	0	311	435	337	353	96	3	192	295	0	55	106	262	246	0	0	701	732	162	456	1,320	0	0	233	138	28	7,983
Hours Counted	*8.00*	*8.00*	*8.25*	*8.00*	*0.00*	*7.50*	*8.00*	*8.25*	*6.75*	*8.00*	*3.00*	*5.00*	*7.00*	*0.00*	*7.00*	*6.50*	*8.00*	*6.25*	*0.00*	*0.00*	*8.00*	*9.00*	*6.50*	*9.25*	*8.25*	*0.00*	*7.50*	*8.00*	*7.25*	*7.50*	*184.75*
Precipitation					R						R,S			R	R				R	R							R				

* indicates no counter, S = Snow, R = Rain, F= Fog

Table 3. *April 2019 Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch daily counts, observation effort, and weather summary*

May 2019																
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	May Total
Black Vulture																0
Turkey Vulture		6			32	13		31		10	11	2		4		109
Osprey						1		1								2
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite																0
Mississippi Kite																0
Bald Eagle		4			1	4		6								15
Northern Harrier		1			2	1				1						5
Sharp-shinned Hawk		91			23	17		3							1	135
Cooper's Hawk		2			4	1				1					2	10
Northern Goshawk																0
Red-shouldered Hawk																0
Broad-winged Hawk		330			105	10		9								454
Swainson's Hawk																0
Red-tailed Hawk		1			13	9		5				1			4	33
Ferruginous Hawk																0
Rough-legged Hawk								1								1
Golden Eagle																0
American Kestrel		2			1					1						4
Merlin		2				1				1						4
Peregrine Falcon																0
Gyrfalcon																0
Prairie Falcon																0
Unid. Accipiter					1			1								2
Unid. Buteo					1	1		2								4
Unid. Falcon																0
Unid. Eagle																0
Unid. Raptor						1										1
Total Raptors	**0**	**439**	**0**	**0**	**183**	**59**	**0**	**59**	**0**	**14**	**11**	**3**	**0**	**4**	**7**	**779**
Hours Counted	*0.00*	*5.00*	*0.00*	*7.50*	*7.50*	*9.08*	*6.00*	*9.00*	*1.75*	*5.50*	*3.25*	*7.00*	*0.00*	*8.00*	*6.50*	*76.08*
Precipitation	R	F	R	F			R						R			

* indicates no counter, S = Snow, R = Rain, F= Fog

Table 4. *May 2019 Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch daily counts, observation effort, and weather summary*

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH																							
Annual Summaries																							
	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	**1981-2018**
Black Vulture																		1					**0.66**
Turkey Vulture	45	71	341	301	292	620	671	521	895	616	948	837	977	2331	1406	1463	1793	1990	1853	3189	2154	2963	**3773.53**
Osprey	7	7	9	7	18	24	19	27	20	38	36	33	30	41	36	40	47	64	44	69	47	56	**45.79**
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite																				1			**0.03**
Mississippi Kite																							**0.08**
Bald Eagle	1	2	2	1	2	8	1	7	7	5	10	14	7	16	17	15	17	22	15	39	24	33	**37.47**
Northern Harrier	20	39	65	54	57	72	102	131	125	127	113	143	217	162	175	194	218	209	127	176	177	171	**128.24**
Sharp-shinned Hawk	827	3697	4150	1859	4018	4614	4095	4880	3931	4683	4480	3549	2831	3108	3576	7004	3783	3418	3474	4851	2136	3291	**2778.26**
Cooper's Hawk	30	45	91	78	62	135	179	121	160	190	152	196	199	229	180	311	221	199	209	263	256	295	**183.08**
Northern Goshawk	9	9	11	3	2	3	8	51	73	67	25	21	31	27	14	24	20	34	28	72	15	25	**17.87**
Red-shouldered Hawk	170	426	581	322	630	684	528	638	624	838	764	901	876	861	1102	1341	763	1187	1030	1419	705	706	**688.68**
Broad-winged Hawk	585	754	1407	1111	5145	4914	6904	2305	4118	7844	8239	3823	1628	2910	2304	4428	2085	2761	1963	2335	1779	1549	**3356.21**
Swainson's Hawk											1			1	1				2	2		1	**0.50**
Red-tailed Hawk	909	927	1664	2620	2408	2848	2604	2607	3150	3105	3410	2852	3265	3567	2615	3482	3030	3861	2684	2890	2861	3589	**2523.18**
Ferruginous Hawk																		1					**0.08**
Rough-legged Hawk	41	15	42	86	75	37	41	131	59	85	48	45	77	87	45	127	155	128	36	62	87	97	**68.24**
Golden Eagle		1		3	2	3	4	4	8	6	12	7	6	3	7	10	8	12	6	10	4	12	**8.18**
American Kestrel	26	47	85	57	40	101	114	102	71	56	150	126	85	148	132	207	180	92	93	122	70	62	**88.05**
Merlin	2		2	1	1	1	2	5	2	2	5	5	12	5	4	9	12	12	9	23	14	22	**12.42**
Peregrine Falcon		1		1	1	1	3	3			2	1	1	4	2	6	5	6	2	5	1	2	**4.55**
Gyrfalcon			1																				**0.03**
Prairie Falcon																					1		**0.03**
Unid. Raptors	57	307	172	620	133	509	647	435	467	640	880	1504	266	634	592	582	2682	681	534	442	480	249	**405.89**
Total Raptors	**2729**	**6348**	**8623**	**7124**	**12886**	**14574**	**15922**	**11968**	**13710**	**18302**	**19275**	**14057**	**10508**	**14134**	**12208**	**19243**	**15019**	**14678**	**12109**	**15970**	**10811**	**13123**	**14121.05**
Hours Counted	77.25	94.8	298.2	293.7	310.5	529	562.6	583.1	565	564.6	608.5	576.2	681.5	608.2	499.3	574.5	548.5	541.5	538.5	531.0	555.7	454.5	**532.51**
Birds per Hour	35.3	67.0	28.9	24.3	41.5	27.6	28.3	20.5	24.3	32.4	31.7	24.4	15.4	23.2	24.5	33.5	27.4	27.1	22.5	30.1	19.5	28.9	**26.64**

Table 5. *Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch annual summaries from 1975-1996.*

NIAGARA PENINSULA HAWKWATCH Annual Summaries																									
	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	**2019**	**2014-2018**	**1981-2018**
Black Vulture				1				1				1		2	1	5		2			4	7	**5**	**2.60**	**0.66**
Turkey Vulture	3092	3277	3384	2971	3532	4065	5026	4623	5158	5934	5385	6107	6091	6732	7,125	5,986	6,698	7,330	7,730	4,862	5,995	7,684	**6,309**	**6720.20**	**3773.53**
Osprey	28	42	42	46	71	48	59	51	47	64	50	52	39	53	41	64	52	57	42	45	47	53	**37**	**48.80**	**45.79**
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite																								**0.00**	**0.03**
Mississippi Kite	1						1									1								**0.00**	**0.08**
Bald Eagle	20	32	30	25	30	54	66	62	71	85	54	65	76	64	60	57	62	43	80	35	50	54	**69**	**52.40**	**37.47**
Northern Harrier	122	85	91	125	108	115	98	223	128	96	115	173	121	109	104	83	77	63	68	84	73	45	**55**	**66.60**	**128.24**
Sharp-shinned Hawk	3048	2822	2002	2467	2541	3173	2350	2310	1756	1753	1551	2652	1721	2339	1,700	1,848	1,335	835	1,253	1,039	1,144	845	**1,113**	**1023.20**	**2778.26**
Cooper's Hawk	221	179	241	181	169	244	220	252	183	202	207	123	136	125	101	145	86	122	153	119	105	83	**104**	**116.40**	**183.08**
Northern Goshawk	16	14	6	3	14	9	6	11	12	6	8	5	6	8	2	7	5	0	1	2	2	1	**1**	**1.20**	**17.87**
Red-shouldered Hawk	796	553	675	508	458	566	455	524	641	679	641	658	730	513	581	592	437	392	698	275	306	209	**415**	**376.00**	**688.68**
Broad-winged Hawk	1849	3886	1833	2368	5229	3668	3327	2532	5537	2026	2413	2971	5497	2922	8,613	3,473	1,484	1,508	2,898	2,142	3,330	1,055	**3,514**	**2186.60**	**3356.21**
Swainson's Hawk	2	3		1		1						1						1	1		1			**0.60**	**0.50**
Red-tailed Hawk	2571	2159	2218	2617	2351	2031	2258	2513	2693	3099	2209	2457	2852	2156	1,857	2,002	1,750	1,131	1,778	1,312	1,279	1,016	**1,036**	**1303.20**	**2523.18**
Ferruginous Hawk		1				1																		**0.00**	**0.08**
Rough-legged Hawk	44	33	69	50	74	22	40	204	120	100	75	59	92	29	59	35	38	28	46	26	23	17	**25**	**28.00**	**68.24**
Golden Eagle	6	6	10	13	6	8	8	8	8	13	7	15	12	8	8	12	8	5	14	4	9	4	**9**	**7.20**	**8.18**
American Kestrel	84	77	69	95	77	99	102	87	45	63	77	120	69	55	44	55	92	30	40	56	63	37	**28**	**45.20**	**88.05**
Merlin	14	15	10	22	6	19	11	21	15	13	18	10	13	22	17	18	12	12	9	21	15	16	**14**	**14.60**	**12.42**
Peregrine Falcon	2	4	1	7	3	6	7	5	5	9	2	7	8	12	10	5	5	8	6	4	5	9	**11**	**6.40**	**4.55**
Gyrfalcon										1														**0.00**	**0.03**
Prairie Falcon																								**0.00**	**0.03**
Unid. Raptors	190	227	345	165	282	737	327	234	183	178	134	96	114	26	45	44	68	104	52	40	69	49	**83**	**62.80**	**405.89**
Total Raptors	**12106**	**13415**	**11026**	**11665**	**14951**	**14866**	**14361**	**13661**	**16602**	**14321**	**12946**	**15572**	**17577**	**15175**	**20368**	**14432**	**12209**	**11671**	**14869**	**10066**	**12520**	**11184**	**12828**	**12062.00**	**14121.05**
Hours Counted	508.4	499.0	502.8	527.4	545.0	556.3	532.0	495.5	495.2	534.5	507.1	552.6	520.3	518.4	495.2	488.5	492.2	520.2	537.6	524.8	439.8	449.4	**468.7**	**494.36**	**532.51**
Birds per Hour	23.8	26.9	21.9	22.1	27.4	26.7	27.0	27.6	33.5	26.8	25.5	28.2	33.8	29.3	41.1	29.5	24.8	22.4	27.7	19.2	28.5	24.9	**27.4**	**24.53**	**26.64**

Table 6. *Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch annual summaries from 1997-2019.*

	Highest Number Single Day	Date	Highest Count One Month	Month	Highest Count One Year	Year
Black Vulture	3	March 23 2018	7	March 2018	7	2018
Turkey Vulture	2,021	April 2, 2009	6,094	April 2018	7,730	2015
Osprey	16	April 12, 1992	67	April 2001	71	2001
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite	1	April 15, 1994	1	April 1994	1	1994
Mississippi Kite	1	May 11/97, May 14/03, May 15/12	1	3 times	1	1997, 2003, 2012
Bald Eagle	19	March 24, 2003	68	March 2006	85	2006
Northern Harrier	35	April 18, 1996	147	April 1991	223	2004
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1,556	April 18, 1976	5,698	April 1990	7,004	1990
Cooper's Hawk	50	April 5, 1993	204	April 1990	295	1996
Northern Goshawk	11	March 24, 1984	41	April 1994	73	1983
Red-shouldered Hawk	655	March 23, 1994	1,246	March 1994	1,419	1994
Broad-winged Hawk	6,007	April 21, 1985	8,598	April 2011	8,613	2011
Swainson's Hawk	2	May 2, 1997	3	April 1998	3	1998
Red-tailed Hawk	744	March 16, 1996	2,455	March 1985	3,861	1992
Ferruginous Hawk	1	April 13, 1992	1	April 1992	1	1992, 1998, 2002
Rough-legged Hawk	46	March 29, 2004	110	April 2004	204	2004
Golden Eagle	7	April 2, 2009	9	April 2006	15	2008
American Kestrel	44	March 14, 1990	99	April 1990, 1991	207	1990
Merlin	6	April 25, 1996	20	April 1994	23	1994
Peregrine Falcon	3	April 26, 2015 & April 27, 2010	**7**	March 2010, **March 2019**	12	2010
Gyrfalcon	1	April 20, 1977, March 17, 2006	1	April 1977, March 2006	1	1977, 2006
Prairie Falcon	1	April 19, 1995	1	April 1995	1	1995

Table 7. *Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch day, month and year high species counts.*