

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 Cheriére 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

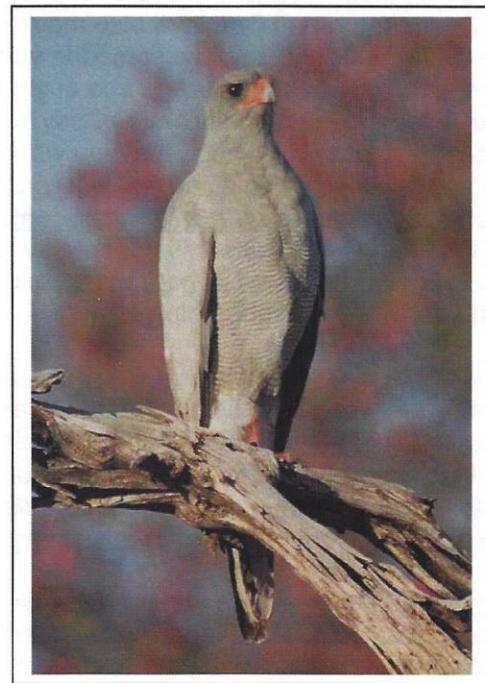
The fall edition of Hawk Migration Studies (Volume 37, No 1) included an article by Ernesto Ruelas Inzunza entitled *The Raptor Population Index Project (RPI): Its Present and Future*. The article covers what RPI is, recent developments, the project's future and future opportunities, and it serves to 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

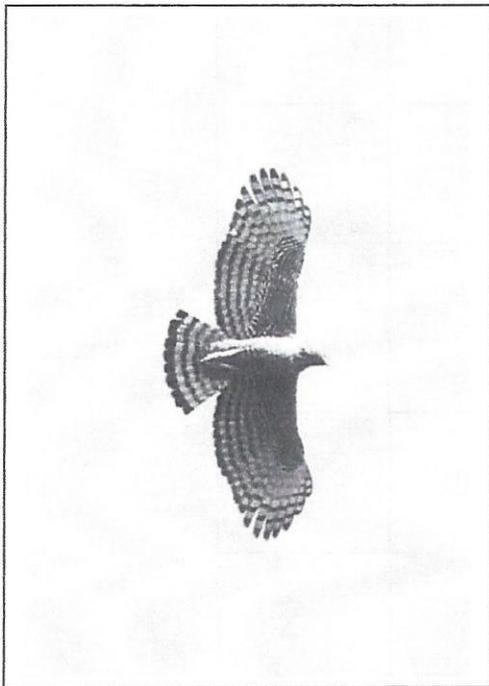
© Sandy Darling

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



Mountain Hawk-Eagle

© Sandy Darling

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.

N.P.H. EXECUTIVE

President	vacant
Past President	John Stevens (905) 685 6734 jrstevens@cogeco.ca
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

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:

- 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.
- 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>	19 1 BV/10	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	2	3	4	5	6	7
1 BV/04	8 GE/09 2,021 TV/09		1 BV/92	1 BV/04 50 CH/93		1 BV/08
8 OS><RS	9	10 BW>	11	12	13	14
				16 OS/92	1 FH/92	
15 BW> SW>	16 <BE	17	18	19	20	21
1 SK/94			35 NH/96 1,556 SS/76	1 PF/95**	1 GY/77	6,007 BW/85
22	23	24 <OS	25 <TV	26	27	28
	1 FH/98*	1 FH/02*	6 ML/96		3 PF/10	
29	30 <RL <CH					
2 SW/98*						

largest # in month: 15,012 April 1984; largest # in one day: 7,007 April 21, 1985

MAY

1	2	3	4 <RT	5 <SW	6 <PF	7
	2 SW/97*					
8	9	10	11	12 <NH <AK	13 <CH <BE	14 <SS
			1 MK/97*			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	<i>BW & RT continue after May 31</i>			

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