

The 21st annual hawk count on top of Cadillac Mountain began on August 18th and concluded on November 15th. A total of 67 days received coverage for a total of 292.75 hours of observation. The average number of hours covered per day was 4.4. A total of 10 days of coverage were completely lost due to fog and/or rain with an additional 12 days of coverage impacted significantly by fog and/or rain (significantly defined as visibility reduced to 5km or less for at least half the counting period, or 3 hours of coverage with visibility 5km or less). There was one inclement stretch of weather from September 29th-30th.

A total of 2,755 raptors were seen from the standardized hawk site on top of Cadillac Mountain comprised of: Turkey Vulture-79, Osprey-150, Bald Eagle-27, Northern Harrier-137, Sharp-shinned Hawk-1,127, Cooper's Hawk-25, Northern Goshawk-5, Red-shouldered Hawk-3, Broad-winged Hawk-360, Red-tailed Hawk-15, Swainson's Hawk-1, American Kestrel-613, Merlin-96, and Peregrine Falcon-18. Additional unidentified raptors were comprised of: unknown accipiter-17, unknown falcon-32, and unknown raptor-50.

The 2015 seasonal raptor total is 6.1% below the 20 year seasonal average of 2,932 raptors and 18.7% below the 10 year average of 3,390 raptors. The 9.41 raptors observed per hour this year is 27.3% below the 20 year average of 12.95 raptors observed per hour and 28.8% below the 10 year average of 13.21 raptors observed per hour.

A total of 33 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were tallied this season, with a peak of 6 on September 1st.

At the lower lookout, there were a total of 12 days of coverage with 54.25 hours of observation. The average number of hours covered per day at the lower lookout was 4.5. A total of 571 raptors were seen comprised of: Turkey Vulture-81, Osprey-4, Bald Eagle-26, Northern Harrier-73, Sharp-shinned Hawk-232, Cooper's Hawk-7, Northern Goshawk-5, Red-shouldered Hawk-2, Broad-winged Hawk-5, Red-tailed Hawk-18, American Kestrel-84, Merlin-14, Peregrine Falcon-4, and Golden Eagle-1. Additional unidentified raptors were comprised of: unknown falcon-3, and unknown raptor-12.

A total of 15 days of coverage were shared between the lead hawk counter and park interpreters. A total of 24 days received coverage with official volunteers. A total of 8 days received coverage with both park interpreters and official volunteers.

A total of 1,919 visitors attended the hawk watch this season, at the top of Cadillac. Peak weeks of visitation were between August 30th and September 5th and between September 15th and September 21st. Forty-six percent of the total visitation, or 885 visitors, occurred between these two weeks.

Species Accounts

Turkey Vulture

First Date Observed: 8-28

Last Date Observed: 10-24

Peak Date/Number: 56 on October 15th

Osprey

First Date Observed: 8-26
Last Date Observed: 10-19
Peak Date/Number: 26 on September 1st

Bald Eagle

First Date Observed: 8-28
Last Date Observed: 11-4
Peak Date/Number: 4 on September 1st

Northern Harrier

First Date Observed: 8-30
Last Date Observed: 11-8
Peak Date/Number: 12 on September 3rd, 4th, and 21st

Sharp-shinned Hawk

First Date Observed: 8-23
Last Date Observed: 11-7
Peak Date/Number: 284 on September 16th

Cooper's Hawk

First Date Observed: 8-23
Last Date Observed: 10-26
Peak Date/Number: 3 on September 21st

Northern Goshawk

First Date Observed: 10-8
Last Date Observed: 10-26
Peak Date/Number: 2 on October 21st

Red-shouldered Hawk

First Date Observed: 10-23
Last Date Observed: 11-8
Peak Date/Number: 1 on October 23rd, November 4th, and November 8th

Broad-winged Hawk

First Date Observed: 8-26
Last Date Observed: 10-21
Peak Date/Number: 279 on September 24th

Red-tailed Hawk

First Date Observed: 9-1
Last Date Observed: 10-30

Peak Date/Number: 3 on September 1st

Rough-legged Hawk

No Rough-legged Hawks observed this season.

Swainson's Hawk

First Date Observed: 10-30

Last Date Observed: 10-30

Peak Date/Number: 1 on October 30th

Golden Eagle

No Golden Eagles were observed from the standard hawk watching location atop Cadillac but a single bird was observed on October 21st from the lower lookout.

American Kestrel

First Date Observed: 8-30

Last Date Observed: 10-26

Peak Date/Number: 190 on September 16th

Merlin

First Date Observed: 9-1

Last Date Observed: 10-21

Peak Date/Number: 20 on September 16th

Peregrine Falcon

First Date Observed: 8-26

Last Date Observed: 10-10

Peak Date/Number: 3 on September 21st and September 24th

Ruby-throated Hummingbird

First Date Observed: 8-23

Last Date Observed: 9-17

Peak Date/Number: 5 on September 4th.

Recommendations

- Conduct hawk count from lower lookout for entire season

- Have interpretation from at least 1 ranger everyday, but preferably 2 (or 1 ranger and 1 raptor intern)