

Spring Raptor Migration Summary 2000

By Jennifer Ottinger and Keith L. Bildstein

Five watchsites reported counts for spring 2000 (Tables 1 and 2). Counts were conducted for from 84 to 253 hours at each site for a grand total of 890 hours of observation. A total of 6,446 raptors representing 17 species was reported. A new watchsite, White Deer Ridge, in Lycoming County, reported numbers for the first time. Highlights include a Rough-legged Hawk (*Buteo lagopus*) at Tussey Mountain, and a Mississippi Kite (*Ictinia mississippiensis*) at Rose Tree Park.

Count efforts (hours of observation) for all watchsites increased considerably over those in 1998 (there was no published summary for spring 1999). Overall, this year's effort was more than twice that of 1998 (890 hours versus 348 hours). Three watchsites (Allegheny Front, Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, and Rose Tree Park) logged more than 200 hours of effort in spring 2000. Tussey Mountain and White Deer Ridge each had fewer than 100 hours of observation (Table 1).

Composition of the Flight

As expected, at 43% of the overall flight, Broad-winged Hawks (*Buteo platypterus*) made up the largest percentage of the flight at all but two watchsites (Tussey Mountain and White Deer Ridge). The broadwing flight ranged from 0% of the total at Tussey Mountain, which counted only in February and March, to 63% of the flight at Rose Tree Park (Table 2).

At 15% of the overall flight, Red-tailed Hawks (*Buteo jamaicensis*) were the second most numerous migrants. At 10% and 7% of the overall flight, respectively, Turkey Vultures (*Cathartes aura*) and Sharp-shinned Hawks (*Accipiter striatus*) were the next most common migrants. Redtails ranged from 4% of the total at Rose Tree Park, to 54% at Tussey Mountain. This species made up at least 15% of the flight at three of the five watchsites (Allegheny Front, Tussey Mountain, and White Deer Ridge). Turkey Vultures ranged from <1% of the flight at Hawk Mountain, to 32% of the flight at White Deer Ridge. Sharp-shinned Hawks made up no more than

6% of the flight at each watchsite, except for Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, where this small accipiter made up 12% of the flight. Ospreys (*Pandion haliaetus*), which made up 6.6% of the overall flight, ranged from none at Tussey Mountain, to 9% of the flight at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary (Table 2).

Each of the remaining 11 regular migrants made up less than 5% of the overall and individual flights, except Golden Eagles (*Aquila chrysaetos*), which made up 13% of the flight at Tussey Mountain (Table 2).

Seasonal Highlights

Allegheny Front Bedford County

Dean Jobe reported that the flight more than doubled from the previous year's migration, even though effort remained similar (759 individuals in 216 hours in 1999 versus 1,878 individuals in 239 hours in 2000). This watchsite reported a record year both for Ospreys (165) and Golden Eagles (77). The Osprey count was the watchsite's highest count ever, spring or autumn. The Golden Eagle count was the highest for any watchsite this spring.

Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Berks County

This was the third consecutive year of consistent spring counts at the watchsite. As was true in 1998 and 1999, the count was conducted almost entirely by Sanctuary interns. This year's count was the highest of the three. Broad-winged Hawks nearly doubled from the previous year (642 in 2000 versus 338 in 1999), and there were substantial increases for Ospreys, Sharp-shinned Hawks, and Red-tailed Hawks. In addition, seven Merlins (*Falco columbarius*) were seen at the watchsite.

Rose Tree Park Delaware County

This is the first year of reporting since 1997 for this watchsite at a park in Media, west of Philadelphia. A Mississippi Kite was seen on May 1st.

Compiler Jim Lockyer noted that the count of 2,010 birds exceeded the 1999 count. This was a record year for all species at the site except Broad-winged Hawks and Red-shouldered Hawks (*Buteo lineatus*). Broad-winged Hawks made up a larger percentage of the flight (64%) than at any other watchsite.

Tussey Mountain Centre County

A Rough-legged Hawk was seen on February 28th. This was sixth year of counts at this part-time watchsite (no count was made in 1999), and counts were only conducted in February and March. Red-tailed Hawks increased during the month of March over the 1998 count (190 in 2000 versus 154 in 1998). This year also brought the third highest Golden Eagle count for the watchsite (40 in March). The highest count for this species at the watchsite was 88 in March 1998.

White Deer Ridge Lycoming County

This is the first year of observation at this watchsite, atop White Deer Ridge, 2.5 miles south of Williamsport, in Armstrong Township. Turkey Vultures were the most numerous migrant (275 individuals; 32% of the overall flight). The site also reported 25 Golden Eagles during six days of counts in early March, and nine Northern Harriers (*Circus cyaneus*) on April 1st. A white (albino?) Red-tailed Hawk was seen on March 25th.

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Table 2. PENNSYLVANIA'S SPRING 2000 HAWK MIGRATION SUMMARIES

ALLEGHENY FRONT (Bedford)
Dean Jobe, compiler

Month	Days	Hours	BLVU	TUVU	OSPR	BAEA	NOHA	SSHA	COHA	NOGO	RSHA	BWHA	RTHA	RLHA	GOEA	AMKE	MERL	PEFA	Unid	Total
February	6	34	0	13	0	1	0	3	1	0	4	0	41	0	24	0	0	0	0	87
March	21	94	0	181	0	6	3	13	19	8	43	0	133	0	24	7	1	3	19	460
April	19	102	3	69	159	6	16	94	19	7	2	650	198	0	29	15	2	9	20	1298
May	2	9	0	0	6	0	0	3	2	1	0	3	15	0	0	1	1	0	1	33
Total	48	239	3	263	165	13	19	113	41	16	49	653	387	0	77	23	4	12	40	1878
Total per hr			0.01	1.10	0.69	0.05	0.08	0.47	0.17	0.07	0.21	2.73	1.62	0.00	0.32	0.10	0.02	0.05	0.17	7.86
% of flight			0.2	14.0	8.8	0.7	1.0	6.0	2.2	0.9	2.6	34.8	20.6	0.0	4.1	1.2	0.2	0.6	2.1	100.0

HAWK MOUNTAIN SANTUARY (Berks) 2000
Laurie Goodrich, compiler

Month	Days	Hours	BLVU	TUVU	OSPR	BAEA	NOHA	SSHA	COHA	NOGO	RSHA	BWHA	RTHA	RLHA	GOEA	AMKE	MERL	PEFA	Unid	Total
March	2	10	3	3	0	1	2	14	3	0	6	0	30	0	0	12	0	0	23	97
April	24	123	1	2	110	0	25	126	18	0	4	595	86	0	1	33	7	2	82	1,092
May	15	91	0	0	10	3	7	26	4	0	0	47	36	0	0	2	0	1	9	145
Total	41	224	4	5	120	4	34	166	25	0	10	642	152	0	1	47	7	3	114	1334
Total per hr			0.02	0.02	0.54	0.02	0.15	0.74	0.11	0.00	0.04	2.87	0.68	0.00	0.00	0.21	0.03	0.01	0.51	5.96
% of flight			0.3	0.4	9.0	0.3	2.5	12.4	1.9	0.0	0.7	48.1	11.4	0.0	0.1	3.5	0.5	0.2	8.5	100.0

ROSE TREE PARK (Delaware) 2000
Jim Lockyer, compiler

Month	Days	Hours	BLVU	TUVU	OSPR	BAEA	NOHA	SSHA	COHA	NOGO	RSHA	BWHA	RTHA	RLHA	GOEA	AMKE	MERL	PEFA	Unid	Total*
March	22	105	4	85	15	3	11	35	13	1	5	0	53	0	0	35	0	0	11	271
April	26	146	25	13	99	6	48	91	32	3	1	1275	27	0	1	68	3	2	40	1734
May	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Total	49	253	29	98	115	9	59	127	45	4	6	1277	80	0	1	103	3	2	51	2010
Total per hr			0.11	0.39	0.45	0.04	0.23	0.50	0.18	0.02	0.02	5.05	0.32	0.00	0.00	0.41	0.01	0.01	0.20	7.94
% of flight			1.4	4.9	5.7	0.4	2.9	6.3	2.2	0.2	0.3	63.5	4.0	0.0	0.0	5.1	0.1	0.1	2.5	100.0

* includes 1 Mississippi Kite seen on 1 May.

TUSSEY MOUNTAIN (Centre) 2000
Dan Ombaski, compiler

Month	Days	Hours	BLVU	TUVU	OSPR	BAEA	NOHA	SSHA	COHA	NOGO	RSHA	BWHA	RTHA	RLHA	GOEA	AMKE	MERL	PEFA	Unid	Total
February	8	20	3	8	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	11	1	10	0	0	0	1	37
March	20	70	16	18	0	2	3	19	13	1	16	0	190	0	40	9	1	1	9	338
Total	28	90	19	26	0	4	3	20	13	1	16	0	201	1	50	9	1	1	10	375
Total per hr			0.21	0.29	0.00	0.04	0.03	0.22	0.14	0.01	0.18	0.00	2.23	0.01	0.56	0.10	0.01	0.01	0.11	4.17
% of flight			5.1	6.9	0.0	1.1	0.8	5.3	3.5	0.3	4.3	0.0	53.6	0.3	13.3	2.4	0.3	0.3	2.7	100.0

WHITE DEER RIDGE (Lycoming) 2000
Joe Yoder, compiler

Month	Days	Hours	BLVU	TUVU	OSPR	BAEA	NOHA	SSHA	COHA	NOGO	RSHA	BWHA	RTHA	RLHA	GOEA	AMKE	MERL	PEFA	Unid	Total
March	11	46	0	149	0	2	5	22	3	1	43	0	99	0	25	17	0	0	6	372
April	8	38	0	126	26	4	13	22	10	3	0	185	64	0	0	7	0	0	17	477
Total	19	84	0	275	26	6	18	44	13	4	43	185	163	0	25	24	0	0	23	849
Total per hr			0.00	3.27	0.31	0.07	0.21	0.52	0.15	0.05	0.51	2.20	1.94	0.00	0.30	0.29	0.00	0.00	0.27	10.11
% of flight			0.0	32.4	3.1	0.7	2.1	5.2	1.5	0.5	5.1	21.8	19.2	0.0	2.9	2.8	0.0	0.0	2.7	100.0

TOTAL FOR ALL WATCHSITES 2000

Month	Days	Hours	BLVU	TUVU	OSPR	BAEA	NOHA	SSHA	COHA	NOGO	RSHA	BWHA	RTHA	RLHA	GOEA	AMKE	MERL	PEFA	Unid	Total
February	14	54	3	21	0	3	0	4	1	0	4	0	52	1	34	0	0	0	1	124
March	76	325	23	436	15	14	24	103	51	11	113	0	505	0	89	80	2	4	68	1538
April	77	409	29	210	394	16	102	333	79	13	7	2705	375	0	31	123	12	13	159	4601
May	18	102	0	0	17	3	7	30	6	1	0	52	51	0	3	3	1	1	10	183
Total	185	890	55	667	426	36	133	470	137	25	124	2,757	983	1	154	206	15	18	238	6,446
Total per hr			0.06	0.75	0.48	0.04	0.15	0.53	0.15	0.03	0.14	3.10	1.10	0.00	0.17	0.23	0.02	0.02	0.27	7.24
% of flight			0.9	10.3	6.6	0.6	2.1	7.3	2.1	0.4	1.9	42.8	15.2	0.0	2.4	3.2	0.2	0.3	3.7	100.0

Table 1. Watchsites reporting counts for spring 2000.

Watchsite	County	Hours of Observation
Allegheny Front	Bedford	239
Hawk Mountain	Berks	224
Rose Tree Park	Delaware	253
Tussey Mountain	Centre	90
White Deer Ridge	Lycoming	84