

2021 Greene Valley Hawkwatch



Thanks to Stan Zatarski for capturing these spectacular cranes as they flew by on 11/19

You're probably asking yourself: Why are Whooping Cranes this year's featured photo? Well, the close and cooperative approach and flyby of these four Whoopers got at least one vote as the #1 2021 highlight! How would you vote? Because 2021 proved to be another "average" raptor year on the hill (see yearly totals excluding Broadwings in the table below). In this 16th year of the GVHW, only one new high species count was set – 41 Red-shouldered Hawks. We also registered one all time low, with not a single Northern Goshawk recorded. The only good news about this number – we don't have to worry about setting an even lower low.

It also was a "slow" Broadwing year—98 BWs, the 4th lowest count in our 16-year history. Turkey Vultures, Sharpies and Redtails made up over 75 percent of Greene Valley's total count, as usual; Redtails continued their apparent slow decline in numbers, but Sharpies up ticked a bit from 2020.

Only 4 of the last 15 days of November provided favorable winds for migration; 11/30 was a blue dome day with a high of 50°F. Our single day high raptor count was 362 (239 TVs and 79 Sharpies dominated the list) on 10/15.

A look at the Numbers in our 16th Season on the Hill

Species	Turkey Vulture	Osprey	Bald Eagle	N. Harrier	Sharp-shinned Hawk	Cooper's Hawk	N. Goshawk	Red-shouldered Hawk	accipiters total	
2021	935	48	90	48	404	74	0	41	478	
2020	963	46	101	42	353	62	1	37	416	
2019	1021	79	112	58	444	57	2	24	503	
2018	935	70	86	48	331	69	1	27	401	
2017	841	36	69	32	313	91	3	23	407	
2016	546	47	91	47	593	102	2	21	697	
2015	658	43	52	64	340	94	3	29	437	
2014	605	44	100	64	472	82	2	22	556	
2013	1078	30	57	40	563	90	4	37	657	HIGH
2012	763	65	60	75	463	146	3	16	612	COUNTS
2011	512	44	35	52	646	117	5	22	768	IN
2010	306	36	22	69	486	94	6	14	586	GREEN
2009	650	17	21	45	574	124	5	24	703	LOW
2008	510	39	22	50	328	103	2	20	433	COUNTS
2007	471	17	12	60	682	164	10	13	856	IN
2006	185	16	12	45	236	113	2	7	351	RED
16 year total	10979	677	942	839	7228	1582	51	377	8861	
16 year avg.	686	42	59	52	452	99	3	24	554	
										Total minus Broadwings
Species	Broad-winged Hawk	Red-tailed Hawk	Rough-legged Hawk	Golden Eagle	Am. Kestrel	Merlin	Peregrine Falcon	Unknown raptor	TOTAL	
2021	98	472	10	3	16	42	39	50	2373	2275
2020	1868	547	14	2	9	40	31	69	4187	2319
2019	4993	433	10	10	5	46	61	72	7431	2438
2018	423	449	11	4	12	45	46	64	2625	2202
2017	56	656	17	3	8	38	45	63	2286	2230
2016	4271	651	12	5	17	71	70	82	6632	2361
2015	240	559	11	11	5	45	60	47	2261	2021
2014	1596	682	27	7	12	50	28	44	3837	2241
2013	36	986	16	8	8	66	46	54	3119	3083
2012	4432	848	7	5	15	40	19	51	7008	2576
2011	716	836	17	5	22	54	37	42	3162	2446
2010	48	643	31	11	14	31	30	48	1889	1841
2009	73	893	10	3	22	29	40	41	2571	2498
2008	1745	788	17	10	14	31	16	40	3735	1990
2007	687	838	14	3	25	33	32	38	3099	2412
2006	786	318	2	6	5	26	8	27	1794	1008
16 year total	22068	10599	226	96	209	687	608	832	58009	35941
16 year avg.	1379	662	14	6	13	43	38	52	3626	2246

Just two rare/vagrant raptor species were seen this year – a **Swainson's Hawk** and a **Snowy Owl**. Here's the GVHW rarity history: Mississippi Kite: 10/3/08, 10/11/11, 9/9/12, 9/20/12, 9/3/17, 9/17/17, 9/13/19 (2) and 9/17/19; Swainson's Hawk: 1 in 2012; 2 in 2013; 3 in 2014; 1 on 9/18/17; 1 on 9/14/18; 1 on 10/9/19; 1 on **10/12/21**; Snowy Owl: 11/14/07; **11/27/21**; Ferruginous Hawk: 10/15/10 and 9/25/12; Prairie Falcon: 9/21/14 and 10/17/17; Gyr Falcon 11/6/16.

190 SPECIES—Greene Valley Hawkwatch 2006-2021

(3 new to list in 2021 underlined and in green)

Gr. White-fronted Goose	Red-tailed Hawk	Downy Woodpecker	Common Yellowthroat
Snow Goose	Ferruginous Hawk	Hairy Woodpecker	Magnolia Warbler
Cackling Goose	Rough-legged Hawk	Northern Flicker	Blackpoll Warbler
Canada Goose	Yellow Rail	Pileated Woodpecker	Palm Warbler
Mute Swan	Sandhill Crane	American Kestrel	Am. Redstart
Trumpeter Swan	Whooping Crane	Merlin	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Tundra Swan	Black-necked Stilt	Gyr Falcon	Wilson's Warbler
Wood Duck	Black-bellied Plover	Peregrine Falcon	Eastern Towhee
Gadwall	Am Golden-Plover	Prairie Falcon	American Tree Sparrow
American Wigeon	Semipalmated Plover	Olive-sided Flycatcher	Grasshopper sparrow
American Black Duck	Killdeer	Eastern Wood-Pewee	Chipping Sparrow
Mallard	Spotted Sandpiper	Eastern Phoebe	Clay-colored Sparrow
Blue-winged Teal	Solitary Sandpiper	Say's Phoebe	Field Sparrow
Northern Shoveler	Greater Yellowlegs	Eastern Kingbird	Vesper Sparrow
Green-winged Teal	Lesser Yellowlegs	Northern Shrike	Lark Sparrow
Northern Pintail	Upland Sandpiper	<u>Red-eyed Vireo</u>	Savannah Sparrow
Ring-necked Duck	Hudsonian Godwit	Warbling Vireo	Henslow's Sparrow
Greater Scaup	Buff-br Sandpiper	<u>Yellow-throated Vireo</u>	Le Conte's Sparrow
Black Scoter	Dunlin	Blue Jay	Fox Sparrow
Common Goldeneye	Least Sandpiper	American Crow	Song Sparrow
Hooded Merganser	Pectoral Sandpiper	Horned Lark	Lincoln's Sparrow
Common Merganser	Wilson's Snipe	N. Rough-winged Swallow	Swamp Sparrow
Red-br Merganser	American Woodcock	Purple Martin	White-throated Sparrow
Red-throated Loon	Bonaparte's Gull	Tree Swallow	White-crowned Sparrow
Common Loon	Franklin's Gull	Bank Swallow	Dark-eyed Junco
Horned Grebe	Ring-billed Gull	Barn Swallow	Northern Cardinal
Double-cr Cormorant	Herring Gull	Cliff Swallow	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Anhinga	Iceland Gull	Cave Swallow	Indigo Bunting
Am. White Pelican	L Black-backed Gull	<u>Tufted Titmouse</u> - heard	Dickcissel
American Bittern	Great Black-backed Gull	Black-cap Chickadee	Bobolink
Least Bittern	Caspian Tern	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Red-winged Blackbird
Great Blue Heron	Black Tern	White-br Nuthatch	Eastern Meadowlark
Great Egret	Rock Pigeon	House Wren	Western Meadowlark
Cattle Egret	Eurasian Collared-Dove	Winter Wren	Yellow-headed Blackbird
Green Heron	Mourning Dove	Sedge Wren	Rusty Blackbird
plegadis Ibis sp.	Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Marsh Wren	Brewer's Blackbird
Turkey Vulture	Great Horned Owl	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Common Grackle
Osprey	Snowy Owl	Eastern Bluebird	Brown-headed Cowbird
Golden Eagle	Barred Owl	American Robin	House Finch
Mississippi Kite	Short-eared Owl	Gray Catbird	Purple Finch
Northern Harrier	Common Nighthawk	European Starling	Red Crossbill
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Eastern Whip-poor-will	American Pipit	Common Redpoll
Cooper's Hawk	Chimney Swift	Sprague's Pipit	Pine Siskin
Northern Goshawk	Ruby-thr Hummingbird	Cedar Waxwing	American Goldfinch
Bald Eagle	Belted Kingfisher	Lapland Longspur	Evening Grosbeak
Red-shouldered Hawk	Red-head Woodpecker	Smith's Longspur	House Sparrow
Broad-winged Hawk	Red-bellied Woodpecker	Snow Bunting	
Swainson's Hawk	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Nashville Warbler	

- 89 species were tallied (plus 1 heard only) from the hilltop during the 2021 season.
- Monarch butterflies were seen in small numbers well into November.
- Horned Larks, American Pipits, Lapland Longspurs (another “early arrival”? on 9/21) and Snow Buntings (first seen on 10/22) as always kept us company, the longspurs and buntings on a daily basis in good numbers later in the season.
- We recorded our last Chimney Swift on 10/20, 4 days later than in 2020.
- About 14,800 Sandhill Cranes flew over during the season; on our biggest day, most of them were traveling far to the east. This total was down slightly from 2020, perhaps attributable to the mild weather for most of the season – Sandies were still migrating well into December.
- No November swallows this year; Barns and Tree were last seen on 10/21.

- 67% of our winds this season had a mostly southerly component. 55% (97 hrs) of the 171 hours we spent on the hill in November had that S component. We only had to hide behind the cars on a couple of occasions – it was mostly balmy – winter never arrived!

Some of us will not soon forget our Osage orange bocce ball tournament; Dick Young provided the equipment and Katherine Howard rolled to victory! No raptors to count – we'll just play bocce! So, with apologies to songwriter Harold Arlen, here's a GVHW theme song for your consideration:

Don't know why...there's no hawks up in the sky...balmy weather

Though our hawks and us ain't together

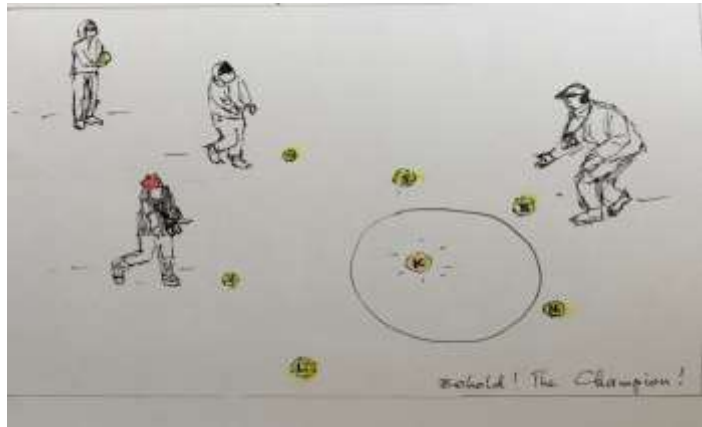
We keep scanning all the time!

Sometimes life is sweet, raptors everywhere,

And balmy weather;

We get our poor old eyes together

and keep watchin' all the time!



Osage Bocce Ball Winner Katherine H. Sketch by Lai L.

That's what keeps us coming back...the birds, the friendships, but perhaps most of all, the genuine feeling of peaceful detachment from that busy world 200 feet below us.



Osprey traversing the moon! Photo by Katherine H.



Snowy Owl. Photo by Margie B.



One or more of our dedicated volunteer counters/observers were on the hill for 634 hours during 2021 – a new record. Thanks especially to the indefatigable Jeff Smith, who pretty much carried the 2021 GVHW on his shoulders – up there daily, scanning, counting, then logging/entering data every evening. He was ably supported by the other counters and observers who weren't able to put in quite as much time, but who all helped greatly in spotting and counting on many occasions. We were on the hill an aggregated 1883 hours, another record high for our dedicated count team!

As always, thanks to our dedicated team of volunteers, the DuPage County Forest Preserve District, and Waste Management for their support of our count!

