

Greene Valley Hawkwatch (GVHW) Results

By Bob Fisher

It was another successful year at the Greene Valley Hawkwatch! One or more of our dedicated volunteer counters/observers were on the hill for a record 640 hours during 2025; thanks especially to the indefatigable Jeff Smith, who personally logged 575 hours—up almost daily, scanning, counting, then logging/entering data in real time, providing eBird checklists of our nonraptor flybys. He was ably supported by the other counters and observers who weren't able to put in quite as much time but helped greatly in spotting and counting on many occasions. Our GVHW hawkwatching team registered an aggregated 1651 hours—a new record!



Juvenile Male Harrier. Photo by Jeff Smith

Viewing conditions were tough this fall—many blue dome days, many days with easterly winds, especially during the Broad-winged Hawk migration time window. We counted 1,779 raptors in 640 hours on the hill. Our 2025 total was 600+ higher than 2024's all-time low but well below GVHW's long-term running average.



Photo by Stan Zatarski

Excluding the variable year-to-year Broad-winged Hawk numbers, 2025's 2.72 raptors/hr rate is 42 percent below the 20-year average of 4.66/hr. One new species high count was set in our 20th year of the GVHW, 114 Bald Eagles, two more than in 2019, our previous high. One all-time low: 202 Red-tailed Hawks! Even Turkey Vultures were less abundant than normal, almost 50 percent below their long-term average. Fortunately, inclement weather caused count cancellations on just one day (snowed out on 11/29).

On our snow-capped last day of the Count, two of us were rewarded for navigating the drifts and getting to the top of the hill: a mixed flock (300-500) of longspurs, buntings (lots of distinctive juveniles) and a few larks PLUS 7,000+ cranes (including 6 Whooping Cranes, 5 together in one small chain), and two Golden Eagles, both eagles loosely associating with the Sandhill flocks.



Photo by Stan Zatarski

The annual Greene Valley Hawkwatch is now up to 196 species recorded over our 20-year history, with two new species this year—Tennessee Warbler and American Coot. It also shows you that you can see a lot of birds just sitting in one place!

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

For a deep dive on the raptors, check out the following analysis of sightings over the last 20 years. Red highlighting shows low counts, while green shows high counts.

Species	Turkey Vulture	Osprey	Bald Eagle	N. Harrier	Sharp-shinned Hawk	Cooper's Hawk	N. Goshawk	Red-shouldered Hawk	accipiters total	
2025	749	37	114	31	393	54	0	31	447	
2024	375	27	74	23	137	5	0	25	142	
2023	728	39	70	57	442	56	1	31	499	
2022	695	41	88	60	230	48	0	39	278	
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
20 yr total	13526	821	1288	1010	8430	1745	52	508	10227	
20 yr avg.	676	41	64	51	422	87	3	25	511	
Species	Broad-winged Hawk	Red-tailed Hawk	Rough-legged Hawk	Golden Eagle	Am. Kestrel	Merlin	Peregrine Falcon	Unknown raptor	TOTAL	Total minus Broadwings
2025	41	202	13	7	18	35	22	30	1779	1738
2024	26	321	10	3	17	16	14	27	1128	1102
2023	604	291	11	3	18	35	23	50	2462	1858
2022	3544	299	14	3	17	32	17	46	5174	1630
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
20 yr total	26283	11712	274	112	279	805	684	985	68552	42269
20 yr avg.	1314	586	14	6	14	40	34	49	3428	2113

Here are a few other fun facts:

- Monarchs were seen in small numbers well into November, but no big dragonfly swarm. Green Darners and Black Saddlebags did go by in generally small numbers.
- Our faithful “winter bird companions” were back—Horned Larks, American Pipits, Lapland Longspurs, Snow Buntings; both the latter species kept us company daily in late November.
- 17,600 Sandies flew over during the season, 7,000 plus on 11/30, our last day. Six Whooping Cranes were also a last-day highlight, as were two Golden Eagles.
- Both accipiter species, Coops and Sharpies, bounced back after a very low numbers in '24.

As always, thanks to our dedicated team of volunteers, the DuPage County Forest Preserve District, and Waste Management, for their support of our Count! See you in 2026! Let's put our eyes on the sky once again!