

Brown Thrashers Raptorthon Summary Derby Hill Bird Observatory, NY Monday, April 25, 2022

This spring was my 12th Raptorthon with HMANA, and it is one I will never forget! Usually, my events are filled with some fun birding, a few raptor species and a nice array of spring warblers, but never have we timed it so perfectly with a huge migration day.

Days before our Raptorthon, my family and I were at Braddock Bay's Bird of Prey Days in NY along Lake Ontario. We set up a HMANA table at the festival and spent the weekend connecting with hawkwatchers and selling



merchandise. During that time, the migration was decent but nothing spectacular. Little did I realize that just to the east, Derby Hill was having a record day of 20,000 Broad-winged Hawks - just a day before our event there. Ouch! Luckily, the migration stars aligned for us for Monday, and there were still a few birds left to come through!

Driving along the lake east to the Derby Hill Hawkwatch early Monday morning, we grew more and more excited as we approached. Broad-winged Hawks were getting lift all over the landscape, rising up over pasture, vineyards and apple orchards. Small kettles of 10, 20 and 30 were forming all over the sky – a hint of the good day that was in store.

Arriving at Derby, you could tell right away that migration was ON. Broad-winged Hawks were kettling all over the sky (or “boiling” as the Derby crowd calls it). Even more spectacular were the Sharp-shinned Hawks darting by at eye level everywhere we looked! The sound of the clicker was music to our ears as counter, Brandon Brogle worked to track all the birds he could with help from his observers and many in the crowd on this big day.



Bald Eagles were also numerous, as were Osprey and Turkey Vultures. We spent hours enjoying the endless migration and helping pick out falcons here and there. My top highlights of the day were watching a beautiful Rough-legged Hawk floating low at tree level and a gorgeous adult Golden Eagle with golden hackles so low that binoculars were not even a thought.

Alden and Laurel joined us for some birding but also filled their day with drawing birds, making games with spruce cones, and reading books, as well as spending time with site coordinator, David Fitch's, sweet golden retriever, Reggie.

We managed to pull ourselves away from the hawks and walk some of the beautiful trails on the sanctuary land and spending some time scanning over Lake Ontario. A few non-raptor highlights among the 60 species we tallied that day included Purple Martin, Caspian Tern, Long-tailed Duck, and a few early warblers.

We said our goodbyes around 4pm with a long five-hour drive back to NH ahead of us. It was incredibly hard to leave because the birds were still coming strong. We ended our day with 60 species of birds, including 11 species of raptor. The official tally from the day was an amazing 10,609 raptors! Thank you to site coordinator, David Fitch and the whole crew of volunteers for welcoming us to Derby Hill and spending time with us. What a day!

Thanks to your donation, the Brown Thrashers raised \$1,000 for raptor conservation! Your support supports our community science database, HawkCount.org, which is the foundation of the Raptor Population Index allowing us to gauge raptor populations across the continent. Your support also makes grants possible for hawk watch sites to purchase optics for kids, train new volunteers or build interpretive signs. YOU are making HMANA's work possible...to advance the scientific knowledge and promote the conservation of raptor populations through the study, enjoyment, and appreciation of raptor migration. **Thank you so much for your support!**

Avianly,

Julie, Phil, Laurel and Alden (Brown Thrashers)



David Fitch, Brandon Brogle and Julie Brown

Raptorthon Species List for April 25, 2022

4 Canada Goose	5 Ruby-crowned Kinglet
3 Wood Duck	3 Golden-crowned Kinglet
2 Long-tailed Duck	1 Brown Creeper
X Red-breasted Merganser	1 Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
2 Mourning Dove	1 House Wren
1 Chimney Swift	2 European Starling
X Ring-billed Gull	2 Eastern Bluebird
X Herring Gull	4 American Robin
X Caspian Tern	X House Sparrow
5 Common Loon	X House Finch
X Double-crested Cormorant	7 Purple Finch
1 Great Blue Heron	X American Goldfinch
X Turkey Vulture	X Chipping Sparrow
X Osprey	6 White-throated Sparrow
X Northern Harrier	1 Savannah Sparrow
X Sharp-shinned Hawk	3 Song Sparrow
X Bald Eagle	X Red-winged Blackbird
1 Red-shouldered Hawk	X Brown-headed Cowbird
X Broad-winged Hawk	X Common Grackle
10 Red-tailed Hawk	1 Yellow Warbler
2 Rough-legged Hawk	5 Palm Warbler
1 Belted Kingfisher	X Yellow-rumped Warbler
2 Red-bellied Woodpecker	
2 Downy Woodpecker	
1 Hairy Woodpecker	
1 Pileated Woodpecker	
3 Northern Flicker	
5 American Kestrel	
2 Peregrine Falcon	
30 Blue Jay	
4 American Crow	
4 Black-capped Chickadee	
1 Tufted Titmouse	
2 Northern Rough-winged Swallow	
1 Purple Martin	
X Tree Swallow	
X Barn Swallow	
1 Cliff Swallow	