

2012 ECAS GREEN RIDGE RAPTOR MIGRATION SITE SUMMARY

The 2012 ECAS Green Ridge fall raptor migration was a cooperative effort this fall between the East Cascades Audubon Society (ECAS) and the High Desert Museum. In past years, ECAS has scheduled the last two weekends of September and the first two weekends of October as count days plus a day or two extra thrown in. This year John Goodell from the High Desert Museum offered to have Museum personnel man an additional 18 days in early September and on weekdays throughout the survey period. We ended up with 22 days with people counting at the site for 1 hour or more.

We advertised the project on OBOL, COBOL, ECAS website, High desert Museum Newsletters and Websites, and word of mouth. With that, we had a total of 55 different people making 116 visits spending at least an hour on the site helping to spot and count raptors. The site was manned for an average of 6 hours per day for a total of 559 observation hours and we ended up with count of 11.5 birds per count hour.

The weather during observation days seemed much nicer this year compared to past years. There was a high pressure system that lingered over the northwest for much of our season that resulted in warm temperatures with low speed winds out of the east. There was very low raptor movement over the site on these days. The birds were either not migrating or using another route. When the weather changed and winds came out of the west, the migration numbers picked up and we had some busy days.

We counted 1538 raptors which included 1 Red-shouldered Hawk and 2 Broad-winged Hawks which caused a lot of excitement. The overall number seemed low for the number of days we manned the site and there were not any species numbers that varied greatly from the average numbers counted over the years. Here is what we saw:

Turkey Vulture - 358; Osprey - 13; Bald eagle - 134; Northern Harrier - 8;
Sharp-shinned Hawk - 570; Cooper's Hawk - 157; Northern Goshawk - 12;
red-tailed Hawk - 163; Broad-winged Hawk - 2; Red-shouldered Hawk - 1; Golden
Eagle - 29; American Kestrel - 7; Merlin - 25; Peregrine Falcon - 10; Unidentified
Raptor Species - 56.

The experience on or traveling to Green Ridge also included fantastic views of the surrounding mountains, encounters with Black Bears, Elk, Mule Deer, Turkeys, Grouse, and a large number of passerine species both hanging out or migrating. I also want to thank the Sisters Ranger District for having their roads in such good shape making it an easy trip to the site. We also had to deal with the Pole Creek Forest Fire. The biggest problem with the fire was driving between Bend and Sisters through the dense smoke. There were only a couple of days were the smoke was uncomfortable on the site but there was limited visibility several days to the east and north.

We are looking forward to repeating the project next fall and hope that everyone that participated can come back next fall.

Kim Boddie
Green Ridge Project Leader