



STRATEGIC PLAN

2024-2027

Counting, Conserving, and Caring



MISSION

To advance scientific knowledge of raptor populations and raptor migration, promote raptor conservation, and inspire all communities to study and celebrate raptor migration.

VISION

HMA uses the spectacle of raptor migration to educate and motivate people throughout the Americas to conserve and appreciate migratory raptors. HMA coordinates and supports a large network of community scientists at strategic sites across all migration corridors and seeks to expand coverage to enhance monitoring and conservation of raptors throughout the hemisphere. HMA is the leader in collecting, managing, and sharing raptor migration and winter survey data with scientists and the general public and actively collaborates with partners to facilitate analysis to understand raptor population trends and status. Counting, conserving, and caring about raptor populations through monitoring and educating is what we do.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2024 - 2027

Raptor migration study, monitoring, conservation and appreciation is HMA's principal focus. HawkCount.org serves as the premiere storehouse for raptor migration data for its network of sites. Migration data is compiled and analyzed with our partnering organizations for population trends that are then shared on the joint website, the Raptor Population Index. Expanding education, increasing support and geographic coverage of watch sites, ensuring data utility and integrity, and the continued long-term conservation of raptors and their migrations are major priorities within our plan.

Monitoring

Data is our primary product and all other initiatives center around its accuracy, robustness, and continuity.

The Hawk Migration Association (HMA) oversees a data archive of hourly and daily migration count data for more than 200 sites across the hemisphere with some datasets spanning more than 50 years. These data are critically important for discerning long-term and short-term trends in raptor populations and in developing raptor conservation plans.

Continuing and preserving the migration data archive is a primary responsibility for HMA as well as expanding the geographic coverage of sites within the network. We seek to ensure migration data recorded by sites has the highest integrity and utility for long-term monitoring and research. HMA will continue to support sites sharing their data with the Raptor Population Index, a hemispheric wide conservation partnership providing scientific population trend assessments (rpi-project.org). We work to ensure all sites are supported as they enter data following standard protocols. HMA reviews data accuracy for all sites using a network of regional reviewers and offers consultation to hawk sites to improve data entry into HawkCount.org via phones, tablet, and home computers. HMA will develop a data entry app for use with HawkCount.org to facilitate timely data entry for sites. New hawk sites will be encouraged to enter their data into HawkCount.org and we will recruit new sites in key geographic regions to improve monitoring data utility for discerning population trends.

In the past decade, HMA members have expanded our understanding of raptor migration and movements by implementing HMA's community science monitoring protocol and data archive system, HMA's Winter Raptor Survey. HMA recognizes the importance of multiple monitoring schemes to fully understand conservation status of raptor populations. As such, we seek to expand the geographic extent of the Winter Raptor Survey across the Americas and expand the awareness and use of these data by researchers, conservationists, and wildlife management agencies.

Education

Raptors are apex predators that play a vital role in ecosystem health and function. Because of their long migrations, often crossing many countries, raptors are highly vulnerable to conservation threats. Education about raptors and their migrations is a key step in effective conservation of raptors.

HMA sites are key to connecting the general public to the magic and importance of migratory raptors. Each visitor to a hawkwatch is a potential raptor conservation advocate. HMA seeks to empower hawkwatchers and hawk sites in their efforts to share raptor migration and raptor conservation priorities with the public.

HMA provides hawk sites with hawk identification materials and Junior Hawkwatcher booklets and is currently updating the Junior Hawkwatcher Program with curricula and lesson plans for use in classrooms and in informal learning environments. Adult learners will continue to connect with raptors through HMA's Lunch and Learn talks that bring awareness of raptors and their migrations. HMA will continue these monthly Lunch and Learn presentations as an important way to engage with constituents and gain new members and community science partners in conservation. HMA Conferences and regional meetings provide additional opportunities for hawkwatchers to share and learn. HMA's Migration Site Director and board members will provide regular programs for general use on raptors, their identification, and population trends.

HMA has taken a leadership role in highlighting key threats to migratory raptors through website education and outreach, talks, and partnerships. HMA will expand these programs with well researched conservation letters written for the general public and focused on anthropogenic threats to migratory raptors and how people can make a difference.

Research and small site grant awards will be continued and expanded to provide support for site-based education outreach and public engagement. HMA will also expand its outreach on migration and raptors to underserved groups or new constituents including youth and IDEA communities.

HMA will maintain and expand its Tour program as a mechanism for sharing raptor migrations globally with its constituent groups. This may also help HMA's network that is now expanding into Central and South America. Spanish language flight guides will be further developed and shared and education materials improved to expand outreach across the hemisphere where Spanish is the native language. Materials already in use at existing sites will be recruited to provide a centralized archive of educational materials on migration and raptors.

Conservation

HMA has a unique opportunity to connect the general public with key conservation issues facing migratory raptors.

HMA is essentially an association of hawkwatch sites working across the Americas to monitor and conserve raptors. Although it is a small organization, it has tremendous breadth and capability to connect people to raptors and their threats. HMA's conservation outreach work is often done behind the scenes, working with partnering organizations that share our interests and goals. HMA will continue to collaborate with other conservation groups in opposing key threats to migratory raptors and seeks to establish and share position statements on specific threats to raptors (rodenticides, electrocution, lead ammunition and tackle, illegal hunting, etc.) as well as general issues such as climate change and habitat loss. These position statements will be shared widely through the HMA website and social media.

HMA's support of the Raptor Population Index and the Raptors at Risk list helps highlight how migratory raptors may be declining and where declines occur. In this plan, we seek to do more to share population trends and their possible causes through talks, social media, posters and other avenues. HMA will continue to encourage sites to share their data. HMA will also continue to support the RPI analyses with data management, while expanding the geographic extent of the site network to better monitor raptors in the future.

HMA is generating excitement for migratory raptors and the study of migration through the use of social media. As the public engages with raptors, they will develop an understanding and care about their own conservation practices and how they affect raptors. In this plan, HMA seeks to expand sharing of the excitement of migration and raptors with well-timed and designed social media output and greater support of site's conservation needs.

HMA Governance

In 2024, HMA celebrated its 50th year of monitoring raptors and supporting the hawkwatch site network. Although HMA's work is mostly conducted by a volunteer Board and Committees, up to two full-time Staff have led work in past years as well. In this plan we seek to expand HMA support and membership to better reach long-term goals and priorities.

HMA recognizes the vital need for growth in the organization in order to meet key programmatic goals. We seek to expand financial support for programs, staff, and other critical work to support the growing network of sites and hawkwatchers in North and South America and the other key goals within the Plan by increasing income from Annual Fund, Membership, Raptorthon, Tours, and HawkCount sponsorships by 10% per year.

Individual donors or sponsors for key events or awards will be sought, including sponsors for Conference and Research Awards, gifts for endowment, and other major gift support. Grants for education or other core activities will be pursued.

Board and committee diversity and input will be expanded where possible to widen the representative communities providing input into HMA.

The need for additional staff will be evaluated and a plan for fundraising to support staff developed.