

## Brown Thrashers Raptorthon Summary

Julie Brown



On May 4, my family's *Brown Thrashers* team completed our 16<sup>th</sup> Raptorthon for the Hawk Migration Association (HMA). Wow, how time flies! It's hard not to get emotional when I think back to our kids' first Raptorthon events... wrapping them up in a sling for a hike out to the marshes of the CT River or pushing the stroller along the 5-mile hike at Pondicherry Wildlife Refuge. Our kids are such troopers and are always game for following us on birding adventures; however, at ages 10 and 13, their enthusiasm for birding isn't as strong as it once was. They know our annual Raptorthon event is a family day filled with exploring and searching for spring birds, and they rally for it. Although they're quite capable of

appreciating and identifying many birds, Alden is more interested in finding snakes, and Laurel in reading as many books as she can get her hands on. Often during family birding days, we will find them sketching in their sketch pads or making up games to play. That's ok with us. Although they may not share that "Look at this bird, Daddy!!!" toddler enthusiasm we once knew, we're glad they have a deep appreciation of nature and birds, and they value spending time in wild, beautiful places with us. And that's what it's all about.

For this year's Raptorthon, our family attended the Herrick's Cove Wildlife Festival in Bellow's Falls, VT and



counted bird species fairly casually throughout the day. We set up a table with my colleague, Kat Lauer and spent the day engaging with visitors, talking about migration, and birding the area. HMA typically attends research-based events and conferences so branching out to family-centered festivals was different for us. We talked with so many families, many of whom were new to our organization and the work we do, and heard from so many who appreciate the local Putney Mountain Hawkwatch.

This festival takes place right on the lush banks of the Connecticut River amidst giant oak and cottonwood trees that were dripping with spring migrants! Even while sitting at our table, we could scan the trees above and pick out loads of migrants such as **Baltimore Oriole, American Redstart, Northern Parula, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Northern Waterthrush, and Yellow-rumped Warblers.**

My kids explored throughout the day learning how to catch and monitor turtles, finding a few birds with us, and attending an impressive live wildlife demonstration (thanks to this, now my daughter wants two pet rats!).

Toward the end of the day, some light rain moved in which may have slowed festival goers but still made for excellent birding. Five species of swallows were very active (**Barn, Tree, Bank, Cliff, and Northern Rough-winged Swallows**),





**Eastern Kingbirds** caught insects over the water and an **Osprey** caught a fish and ate it in front of attendees. Raptors were tough overall. In addition to the Osprey, we saw Merlin, Northern Harrier and Turkey Vulture, but we made up for it with all the other bird diversity.



By the end of the day, **the Brown Thrashers had seen/heard 68 species of birds** (including several of our namesake bird) during our Raptorthon. **Thank you for supporting our event! You helped us raise \$900 for raptor monitoring and conservation!** Your support will help sustain the HawkCount database, the Raptor Population Index, the Junior Hawkwatch Program and our Lunch & Learn series. Additionally, 25% of what's raised directly funds Hawk Watch Fund grants for the monitoring network, which will benefit even more raptor conservation and education efforts!

Where will next year's Raptorthon take us? The sky's the limit!

Avianly,

the Brown Thrashers (Julie, Phil, Laurel and Alden)

### **Bird List for Brown Thrasher's Raptorthon Event 68 species/344 individuals**

**1. [Canada Goose](#)**

Number observed: 3

**2. [Mallard](#)**

Number observed: 1

**3. [Green-winged Teal](#)**

Number observed: 25

**Details**

Single flock

**4. [Chimney Swift](#)**

Number observed: 20

**5. [Ruby-throated Hummingbird](#)**

Number observed: 1

**6. [Spotted Sandpiper](#)**

Number observed: 1

**7. [Solitary Sandpiper](#)**

Number observed: 1

**8. [Ring-billed Gull](#)**

Number observed: 5

**9. [Common Loon](#)**

Number observed: 1

**10. [Double-crested Cormorant](#)**

Number observed: 9

**11. [Green Heron](#)**

Number observed: 2

**12. [Great Blue Heron](#)**

Number observed: 1

**13. [Turkey Vulture](#)**

Number observed: 1

**14. [Osprey](#)**

Number observed: 1

**15. [Northern Harrier](#)**

Number observed: 1

**16. [Belted Kingfisher](#)**

Number observed: 2

**17. [Red-bellied Woodpecker](#)**

Number observed: 1

**18. [Downy Woodpecker](#)**

Number observed: 2

**19. [Northern Flicker](#)**

Number observed: 1

**20. [Merlin](#)**

Number observed: 1

**21. [Least Flycatcher](#)**

Number observed: 1

**22. [Eastern Phoebe](#)**

Number observed: 1

**23. [Eastern Kingbird](#)**

Number observed: 6

**24. [Warbling Vireo](#)**

Number observed: 8

**25. [American Crow](#)**

Number observed: 2

**26. [Black-capped Chickadee](#)**

Number observed: 4

**27. [Tufted Titmouse](#)**

Number observed: 2

**28. [Bank Swallow](#)**

Number observed: 3

**29. [Tree Swallow](#)**

Number observed: 40

**30. [Northern Rough-winged Swallow](#)**

Number observed: 4

**31. [Barn Swallow](#)**

Number observed: 10

**32. [Cliff Swallow](#)**

Number observed: 1

**33. [Northern House Wren](#)**

Number observed: 2

**34. [Marsh Wren](#)**

Number observed: 2

**35. [Carolina Wren](#)**

Number observed: 1

**36. [Gray Catbird](#)**

Number observed: 25

**37. [Brown Thrasher](#)**

Number observed: 3

**38. [Wood Thrush](#)**

Number observed: 1

**39. [American Robin](#)**

Number observed: 10

**40. [Cedar Waxwing](#)**

Number observed: 2

**41. [Pine Siskin](#)**

Number observed: 1

**42. [American Goldfinch](#)**

Number observed: 2

**43. [Chipping Sparrow](#)**

Number observed: 2

**44. [Field Sparrow](#)**

Number observed: 2

**45. [White-throated Sparrow](#)**

Number observed: 6

**46. [Savannah Sparrow](#)**

Number observed: 2

**47. [Song Sparrow](#)**

Number observed: 8

**48. [Swamp Sparrow](#)**

Number observed: 2

**49. [Baltimore Oriole](#)**

Number observed: 10

**50. [Red-winged Blackbird](#)**

Number observed: 16

**51. [Brown-headed Cowbird](#)**

Number observed: 2

**52. [Rusty Blackbird](#)**

Number observed: 1

**53. [Common Grackle](#)**

Number observed: 4

**54. [Ovenbird](#)**

Number observed: 1

**55. [Northern Waterthrush](#)**

Number observed: 1

**56. [Black-and-white Warbler](#)**

Number observed: 2

**57. [Nashville Warbler](#)**

Number observed: 1

**58. [Common Yellowthroat](#)**

Number observed: 2

**59. [American Redstart](#)**

Number observed: 7

**60. [Northern Parula](#)**

Number observed: 1

**61. [Blackburnian Warbler](#)**

Number observed: 1

**62. [Yellow Warbler](#)**

Number observed: 4

**63. [Chestnut-sided Warbler](#)**

Number observed: 1

**64. [Palm Warbler \(Yellow\)](#)**

Number observed: 3

**65. [Yellow-rumped Warbler](#)**

Number observed: 50

**66. [Canada Warbler](#)**

Number observed: 1

**Details**

Singing

**67. [Northern Cardinal](#)**

Number observed: 1

**68. [Rose-breasted Grosbeak](#)**