

The Mile High Raptors - 2025 Raptorthon Report



The 3rd annual Mile High Raptors' Raptorthon on Saturday, April 12, 2025 was a great success! We had a fantastic day on and around beautiful Dinosaur Ridge Hawk Watch at Dakota Ridge in Jefferson County, Colorado.

Counting began at 8:15AM and ended at 8:15PM. This year we created a birding circle around Dinosaur Ridge and invited birders in our organization to participate in our species count, making it our most successful count yet!

We totaled **64** bird species with a total of **14** raptor species which included a Great Horned Owl and their owlets.

What a great day we had with skies turning clear and sunny, temperatures starting in the 60's in the morning, and topping out almost at 90 degrees by mid-afternoon! Our Raptorthon team on the ridge was made up of our official counters, Emma Riley and Audrey



Anderson, official observer Laura Campbell, and our high school intern Haley Caron, alongside our volunteer observers Ajit Antony, Archer Silverman, Pam Moore, Natalie Uschner-Arroyo, and Janet Peters.

Our birding circle participants included: Cynthia Madsen, Larry Wilson, Pam Moore, Natalie Uschner-Arroyo, Kenneth Arroyo, Archer Silverman, Janet Peters, Adrielle Knight and Martha

Eubanks. Cynthia and Larry started Raptorthon strong, making observations just below the famous Red Rocks Amphitheatre in a valley between foothills of the Rockies. They were so excited to see our only Broad-winged Hawk of the day, and made other sightings including:



White-throated Swift, American White Pelican, Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, Northern Flicker, Say's Phoebe, Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay, Black-billed Magpie, American Crow, Common Raven, Black-capped Chickadee, Canyon Wren, American Robin, House Finch, Song Sparrow, and Spotted Towhee.

Martha Eubanks, Pam Moore and Adrielle Knight did a morning walk through Bear Creek Greenbelt, a suburban park below the Denver foothills. This park features Bear Creek, a local stream flowing from the mountains which forms pools and ponds that attract waterbirds. Here a pair of Blue Jays were spotted building a nest. Adding to our species count, they observed species that included: Cackling

Goose, Canada Goose, Gadwall, Mallard, Double-crested Cormorant, Cooper's Hawk, Downy Woodpecker, Barn Swallow, European Starling, Red-winged Blackbird, and Common Grackle.

Archer Silverman, accompanied by Janet Peters, made a fantastic contribution to our Raptorthon species count by birding in a grand total of 12 locations in our birding circle. Archer had the largest single-species tally of the day, counting 150 individual American Coots. Another highlight of his birdwatching activity was spotting a nesting Bald Eagle pair with a chick near Marston Reservoir. The pair was actively tending to their nest, which housed a visible chick, offering a rewarding glimpse into the early stages of raptor development.

Natalie Uschner-Arroyo and Kenneth Arroyo made the final birding circle outing of the day at dusk, revisiting Bear Creek Greenbelt and being rewarded by spotting two adult Great Horned Owls with their two fuzzy fledglings hanging around the cottonwood trees.

Not to be outdone, our team stationed at Dinosaur Ridge Hawk Watch made some amazing observations during Raptorthon! The first Swainson's Hawk of the season made a flyby and a bold Osprey stole the show by pausing to consume a fish on top of the pole just north of the Dinosaur Ridge viewing platform.



Their day also featured seeing large flocks of regional favorites, including Sandhill Cranes, American White Pelicans and a distant group of 125 Snow Geese. The flock of Snow Geese were spotted high in the sky, reorganizing into a large ball that almost resembled a murmuration before spreading out into a classic V formation and continuing on their way. Finally, a pair of Black-Capped Chickadees kept everyone entertained as they spent the day excavating a hole in a nearby tree.

A heartfelt thank you to all our visitors, volunteers, and supporters who made the 2025 Raptorthon a success! A total of 64 species were observed by our counters, observers and volunteers, an impressive showing thanks to their keen eyes and enthusiasm. We are especially grateful to our amazing Dinosaur Ridge Hawk Watch community. Your support truly makes a difference. Because of you, we raised a total of \$1975 in support of our hawk monitoring and conservation efforts in coordination with HMA.

Thanks again for being part of something meaningful, we couldn't have done it without you!



The Mile High Raptors Species List

Great Horned Owl	4	Common Grackle	1
Cackling Goose	4	Northern Shoveler	14
Canada Goose	4	Green-winged Teal	1
Gadwall	2	Bufflehead	4
Mallard	12	Ring-billed Gull	1
Downy Woodpecker	1	Pied-billed Grebe	2
European Starling	9	Belted Kingfisher	1

Snow Goose	125	Killdeer	1
Rock Pigeon	2	California Gull	1
Mourning Dove	2	Horned Grebe	2
Sandhill Crane	23	Steller's Jay	1
Double-crested Cormorant	3	White-throated Swift	23
Osprey	11	American White Pelican	3
Golden Eagle	1	Turkey Vulture	4
Sharp-shinned Hawk	15	Bald Eagle	1
Cooper's Hawk	27	Broad-winged Hawk	1
American Goshawk	1	Red-tailed Hawk	6
Northern Harrier	3	Northern Flicker	1
Swainson's Hawk	1	Say's Phoebe	5
American Kestrel	42	Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay	4
Peregrine Falcon	1	Black-billed Magpie	32
Blue Jay	1	American Crow	6
Tree Swallow	7	Common Raven	5
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	1	Black-capped Chickadee	4
Barn Swallow	1	Canyon Wren	1
Bushtit	4	American Robin	2
White-breasted Nuthatch	1	House Finch	9
Western Bluebird	2	Song Sparrow	1
American Goldfinch	4	Spotted Towhee	10
Dark-eyed Junco	4	Lesser Scaup	1
Western Meadowlark	2		
Red-winged Blackbird	1		
Common Merganser	1		
American Coot	150		