
Western Station Reports

Beaverhill Bird Observatory: Interpretation and Education.

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The Beaverhill Bird Observatory (BBO) is a non-profit charitable organization that works within the Beaverhill Lake Natural Area and around the province on projects based on research and education. The primary focus of BBO is migration monitoring of songbirds during the spring and fall in the Beaverhill Lake Natural Area as part of the Canadian Migration Monitoring Network (<http://www.bsc-eoc.org/national/cmmn.html>). Other projects the BBO is involved with are: MAPS (Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship), Tree Swallow nest box monitoring, raptor migration and nest monitoring, nocturnal owl call surveys, amphibian and rail surveys, butterfly and Odonate counts, and environmental education.

The focus of this project is to increase awareness of the biodiversity and work being conducted at the Beaverhill Lake Natural Area through the BBO. Visitation has been relatively low (apart from the Snow Goose Festival). Interpretive signage will be placed in and around the natural area to inform the public about the BBO and the wildlife and plant species that occur there. Various talks will be given throughout the year to schools, parks, and other natural history related groups about the Beaverhill Bird Observatory, the projects the group is involved with, and the importance of the long-term research.

Preliminary Results: Presentations have been given at the following locations on the following topics:

1. Beaverhill Lake - Birds and Amphibians (field trip)
2. Saskatoon Island Provincial Park - Beaverhill Bird Observatory and Owls
3. Ellis Bird Farm Bluebird Festival - display board on Beaverhill Bird Observatory
4. Edmonton Valley Zoo - Endangered Species and the Beaverhill Bird Observatory
5. Long Lake Camp - Endangered Species, Banding, and the BBO
6. Miquelon Lake Provincial Park - Beaverhill Bird Observatory, Songbirds, Raptors, and Owls

A display table has been set up at the lab that provides free educational materials on Species At Risk (Alberta Sustainable Resource Development) around Alberta, as well as information on the BBO (how to join the membership, volunteer, etc.), and maps of the natural area. Material and supplies are being purchased to set out signage over the late summer and fall. Two slide shows are being compiled that can be used by staff over the following years for presentations. A new website address is being purchased to give BBO higher profile and allows for easier contact by web search engines.

In conjunction with the nocturnal owl call surveys mentioned above, BBO has published: **Guidelines for Nocturnal Owl Monitoring in North America**, by D. L. Takats, C.M. Francis, G.L. Holroyd, J.M. Duncan, K.M. Mazur, R. J. Cannings, W. Harris and D. Holt. March 2001. The procedures outlined in the guideline booklet are designed for broad scale monitoring of relative abundance, distribution, habitat use, and changes in these parameters over time. To receive a printed copy, contact: Lisa Takats, 7th Floor, OS Longman Building, 6909-116 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 4P2

For more information about Beaverhill Bird Observatory, please visit the website at:
www.ualberta.ca/~jduxbury/BBO/bbopage.htm

HawkWatch International Expands Western Migratory Raptor Satellite Telemetry Project

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HawkWatch International (HWI) is expanding its Western Migratory Raptor Satellite Telemetry Project in fall 2001. We will use earth-orbiting satellites to track the movements of 31 raptors, including a mix of Golden Eagles (*Aquila chrysaetos*), Red-tailed Hawks (*Buteo jamaicensis*), and immature Northern Goshawks (*Accipiter gentilis*). The raptors will be captured during fall migration along three major regional flyways in the

western United States and fitted with backpack-style, programmable PTT transmitters. All captures will occur at long-term HWI migration-monitoring stations in the Manzano Mountains, New Mexico (Rocky Mountain Flyway), the Goshute Mountains, Nevada (Intermountain Flyway), and at Chelan Ridge, Washington (Pacific Coast Flyway). This project is made possible by generous grants from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the M. J. Murdock Charitable Trust, the LaSalle Adams Fund, the JEPS Foundation, and Mr. George Perkins Jr.

The primary goal of this project is to document migratory flyways and identify connections between specific breeding, migratory, and wintering populations. This will help ensure accurate interpretation of population trends documented through migration counts (HWI manages or co-sponsors 15 standardized raptor migration monitoring projects in the U.S. and Mexico) and assist in identifying raptor and habitat conservation needs. We chose the three study species because each is large enough to carry safely a transmitter and has demonstrated complex patterns of movement, which satellite tracking will help clarify. In addition, both Northern Goshawks and Golden Eagles are species of established or emerging conservation concern in the West. Enhancing our ability to infer population trends accurately using migration counts is therefore of great interest.

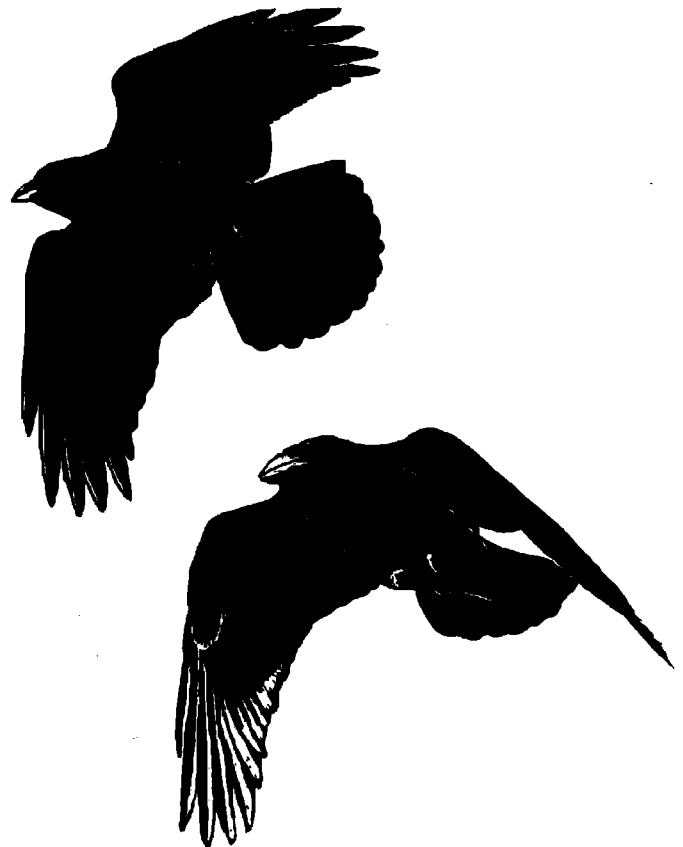
During our initial satellite telemetry efforts in 1999 and 2000, we deployed PTTs on 15 raptors in Nevada and New Mexico. Maps depicting the movements of these raptors, including tracking across three countries, and relevant narratives can be viewed at www.hawkwatch.org. Ultimately, we seek to track 10–15 individuals of each species successfully along each flyway, which will require additional deployments through at least fall 2004.

Our 2001 deployments will involve 20 g PTTs for Northern Goshawks, 32 g units for Red-tailed Hawks, and 80 g units for Golden Eagles, in most cases ensuring that the mass of the transmitter package is 3% of the target bird's mass (up to 4% for adult Red-tailed Hawks). Battery life is projected to be up to one year for the 20 g units, 1.5–2 years for the 32 g units, and 4–5 years for the 80 g units. Except for some of the goshawks, this will allow us to track movements through at least one complete annual cycle, which is important for investigating fidelity to flyways and winter and summer territories.

High flyway fidelity, in particular, is an important prerequisite for migration counts to serve as an effective indicator of regional population trends. We encourage all those interested to follow the progress of the 2001 and all future deployments on our web site, where we will continue to maintain current tracking maps and narratives for each bird we outfit.

Changing of the Guard

Due to the press of other commitments, Jim Steele has found it necessary to resign his position as WBBA's President. First Vice-president Ken Burton will assume the duties of the President.



Common Ravens by George West