

## Mt. Peter 2025

Ken Witkowski

The 68<sup>th</sup> annual Mt. Peter fall hawkwatch counts were conducted from September 2 through November 16, 2025. After a couple of years of well below average counts, we had a nice rebound year with stronger counts for many species. This was aided with the help of one new volunteer counter and the return of two other counters who had not been able to help out for a few years. Thanks to all of our volunteers we only had two days without coverage that were not weather related.

It is not uncommon for the first week or so to start off slowly with just a few Broad-winged Hawks seen here and there up to September 11. But on the afternoon of 9/12, Jeanne Cimorelli recorded over 1,200 Broad-wings between 2 and 6 pm. Over the next several days Broad-wings kept moving with 171 recorded by Tom Millard on 9/13, 501 on 9/14 by Ken Witkowski and Beverly Robertson, 465 on 9/15 by Ken Witkowski and Tom Millard, 100 on 9/19 by Ken Witkowski and Jeanne Cimorelli with the final good movement on 9/20 with 612 recorded by Matt Zeitler. The one thing we can count on during this period is lots of extra eyes as most of our volunteers spend extra time helping with the counts. A total of 3,349 Broad-wings were tallied this year – a big improvement over the past couple of years. We also saw a bit of an improvement with our counts for Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks. Red-tail migration usually picks up by mid October and while there were no big flight days, the season total of 345 is better than the 10 year average. The Red-shouldered Hawk migration was similar, no big days and the total of 113 is slightly below the 10 year average. There were 39 adults, 29 immature and 45 unknown. Rough-legged Hawk is rarely seen here and was last seen in 2010. Fortunately we get to see Rough-legs almost every year overwintering in the Wallkill Valley.



Adult Red-shouldered Hawk



A pair of adult Red-tailed Hawks

Photo Credit Matt Zeitler

The 437 Sharp-shinned Hawks counted were much better than last year but still only a little more than half the 10 year average. The best day was 35 on 9/21 by Beverly Robertson.

We have not had a 100+ day for Sharp-shins since 2018. Cooper's Hawks faired better with a total of 68 counted – another big improvement over the past couple of years. American Goshawk was again a no show.

The steady decline of the eastern population of American Kestrels was once again evident this year. Only 38 were observed – 8 males, 7 females and 23 unknown. The Merlin and Peregrine Falcon flight was also disappointing with 9 and 8 respectively.

The count of Osprey again showed a solid improvement over the past couple of years – 59 were observed. As noted by Judy Cinquina in the 2022 report, there appears to be a correlation in the decline of Ospreys and the increase in the number of Bald Eagles. This years total of 117 Bald Eagles is just above the 10 year average. There were 70 adult, 43 immature and 4 unknown. We also see non migrating Bald Eagles almost every day. Northern Harrier numbers increased nicely compared to the past 3 years and were just above the 10 year average. The total of 36 was as follows: 2 male, 16 female, 8 immature and 10 unknown. Harriers also overwinter commonly in the Wallkill Valley.

There was a nice showing of Golden Eagles with a total of 6 seen. The first on 10/15 by Tom Millard and the last on 11/14 by Rick Hansen. There were 2 adult and 4 immature.

Immature Golden Eagle

Photo credit Matt Zeitler



The very strong flight of Turkey Vultures continued this year. The best days were on 10/27 when Ken Witkowski recorded 194 with one kettle of 160. Chuck Smith had 170 on 10/16. The total of 861 is well above average. There was also an improvement in the Black Vulture flight with 105 counted – best tally since 2020.

We also get to enjoy the non raptor migration and year round birds that spend some time on Mt. Peter. Ruby-throated Humming birds move through in September and there were 6 on 9/13 and 5 on 9/15. One or two were also seen a few times. This is also the time of year that Chimney Swifts pass by and they were noted on numerous days. Not many warblers were seen this year but Cape May Warbler was recorded a few times in September along with Palm Warbler and American Redstart. Yellow-rumped warblers are plentiful later in the

season. From late September into October we see regular Blue Jay migration with a high of 145 on 9/30 and 50+ on 9/28. Tree Swallows are plentiful on many days in September with dozens to hundreds seen occasionally. There was a steady flight of Purple Finches starting in mid October with a high of 25 on 10/29. Eastern Bluebirds were seen or heard in flight frequently along with Red-breasted Nuthatches. A pair of Common Ravens are usually seen daily on the tower where they have a nest and a few times during the season there are larger flocks of them passing through – 23 on 11/9 and 10 on 11/3. Varying size flocks of Cedar Waxwings are also present almost every day feeding on the berries on the Red Cedars. Many Robins also passed through in November feeding on the berries as well. Other notable birds were Blue-headed Vireo on 10/6, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker on 10/18 and 11/8, Hermit Thrush on 10/25 and a flight of Blackbirds on 11/11 – 150 Common Grackles and 250 Red-winged Blackbirds in separate flocks. There was a good waterbird day on 10/28 with Canada Goose(295), Common Loon(1), Common Merganser(1) and Double-crested Cormorant(87). Multiple Common Loons were also seen on 10/10 and 11/8.

Thanks again to our dedicated group of volunteers. Tom Millard maintains the count box, wind flag and thermometer and Will Test replaced a couple of seats on the platform.

**Count Leaders:** Jeanne Cimorelli(JeC), Judy Cinquina(JCC), Rick Hansen(RH), Tom Millard(TM), Beverly Robertson(BR), Chuck Smith(CS), Will Test(WT), Ken Witkowski(KW), Matt Zeitler(MZ)

# 11 Year Summary of Fall Hawk Counts at Mt. Peter, NY

Species	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Black Vulture	107	84	96	79	136	109	77	26	42	52	105
Turkey Vulture	292	337	320	504	426	850	1,582	393	1,282	601	862
Osprey	114	98	111	134	123	121	122	60	42	38	59
Bald Eagle	70	95	85	112	163	177	140	103	107	72	117
Northern Harrier	28	35	26	35	27	42	46	16	26	24	36
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1,017	1,104	841	1,469	693	1,048	871	647	444	318	437
Cooper's Hawk	74	94	121	176	82	85	114	76	38	36	68
American Goshawk	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Red-shouldered Hawk	85	104	122	213	203	149	119	70	73	55	113
Broad-winged Hawk	11,256	5,894	6,874	5,071	7,360	3,865	6,769	3,306	1,477	1,937	3,349
Red-tailed Hawk	289	478	232	508	443	465	113	183	135	202	345
Rough-legged Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Golden Eagle	5	3	4	6	9	1	4	2	1	4	6
American Kestrel	75	52	83	159	85	121	125	64	45	36	38
Merlin	24	15	18	15	8	20	8	11	4	6	9
Peregrine Falcon	11	13	26	23	14	13	11	8	14	6	8
Unidentified Eagle	1	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unidentified Raptor	33	42	8	18	28	30	17	7	6	11	17
GRAND TOTAL	13,481	8,448	8,973	8,524	9,800	7,096	10,118	4,972	3,736	3,398	5,569
TOTAL HOURS	480	488	480	418	479	453	472	353	299	328.5	421
RAPTORS/HOUR	28.09	17.31	18.75	20.40	20.45	15.67	21.44	14.08	12.49	10.36	13.23

**Mt. Peter, NY Hawk Watch Daily Counts for September 2025**

Day	Dat	Hrs	Weather	BV	TV	OS	BE	NH	SS	CH	AG	RS	BW	RT	RL	GE	AK	ML	PG	UE	UR	Day #	Tot	Obs	Ldr
Mon	1																								
Tue	2	4	m/sunny																			0	0	1	KW
Wed	3	4	m/sunny																			0	0	1	TM
Thu	4	4																				0	0	2	CS
Fri	5		No Cover																						
Sat	6	6	cloudy										5									5	5		MZ
Sun	7	7	cldy/sunny				1	1	3	1							1				1	8	13	3	BR
Mon	8	6.5	m/sunny		1		1	1				1	1									5	18	2	KW/TM
Tue	9	4.5	clear				2		1				3									6	24	1	KW
Wed	10	5	cloudy										3									3	27	1	TM
Thu	11	5.25	m/sunny						2													2	29	1	CS
Fri	12	8.5	m/sunny			2	3	1	5	1			1208				3					1223	1252	2	RH/JEC
Sat	13	8	clouds/sun		1	5	2	2	33	7		2	171				9					232	1482	5	TM
Sun	14	7	clear/clouds	2		7	1		13	2		1	501									527	2011		KW/BR
Mon	15	9	sun/clouds			11	8	3	29	3		1	465					1			1	522	2533	5	KW/TM
Tue	16	8	cloudy			6	2		28	1		3	79				2				1	122	2655	3	KW
Wed	17	7	m/cldy			1	2		15	1			36									55	2710	5	TM
Thu	18	7	clear		3	2		1	7				19	1			1	1				35	2745	5	CS
Fri	19	8.5	sun/cld/sun			3	5	2	29	1		1	100	1			11	1			1	155	2900	5	KW/JEC
Sat	20	9.25	clear			5	4	3	13	3		1	612	1			1		1			644	3544	7	MZ
Sun	21	6.5	clds/sun		3	6	4		35	2			81				1				1	133	3677	5	BR
Mon	22	4	cloudy			1																1	3678	1	KW
Tue	23	6.5	m/cloudy		2	2	1		2	1		1	2				1		2			14	3692	1	KW
Wed	24	5	cloudy																			0	3692	1	TM
Thu	25	1	rain																			0	3692	1	CS
Fri	26	7.25	m/sunny		1	2	1		1			1	8									14	3706	2	RH/TM
Sat	27	7.00	m/sunny				2		13	3			22				1		1		1	43	3749	3	MZ
Sun	28	6.00	clear				5	1	4			5	20	3								38	3787	2	BR
Mon	29	6.00	m/cloudy		4	4	2	2	15	4			11				1					43	3830	1	KW
Tue	30	6.00	p/cloudy		1	1			13	2			1				1		1			20	3850	1	KW
		173.75		2	16	58	46	17	261	32		17	3348	6			33	3	5		6		3850		

Mt. Peter, NY Hawk Watch Daily Counts for October 2025

Day	Date	Hrs	Weather	BV	TV	OS	BE	NH	SS	CH	AG	RS	BW	RT	RL	GE	AK	ML	PG	UE	UR	Day #	Tot	Obs	Ldr
Wed	1	5.50	clear				1		2													3	3853	1	TM
Thu	2	4.25	sun/clouds		11		2	1	6	2				2							1	25	3878	1	KW
Fri	3	5.00	clear						3				1				1					5	3883	1	RH
Sat	4	4.50	m/sunny	4	4		2		2	1				8			1				1	23	3906	2	BR
Sun	5	6.00	clear		3		1		1	4				7			1					17	3923	3	WT
Mon	6	3.50	clear		2		1		1					2								6	3929	2	KW
Tue	7	5.00	sun/clouds		1	1	3	2	1	1									1			9	3938	1	KW
Wed	8	4.50	am rain/sun		10				1	1		2										15	3953	1	TM
Thu	9	6.00	clear		2		1		1	2												6	3959	2	CS
Fri	10	4.50	m/sunny		2		1		6	1				4							1	15	3974	1	KW
Sat	11	4.75	m/cloudy		3				1			1		4								13	3987	1	MZ
Sun	12	3.50	clouds/rain		1																	1	3988		BR
Mon	13		rain																						
Tue	14	5.50	cloudy		4		1		2	1							1					9	3997	1	KW
Wed	15	6.00	m/cloudy		17				1	1						1						20	4017	1	TM
Thu	16	6.50	clear		170		1	2	5			3		6								187	4204	2	CS
Fri	17	6.00	clear		5				1			1										7	4211	1	RH
Sat	18	7.25	sun/clouds		2				12	1		2		2		1						20	4231	1	MZ
Sun	19	7.00	p.cloudy		11		4	1	7	2				4		1						30	4261	4	WT
Mon	20	6.00	clouds/rain		19		4		2	2				2								29	4290	3	KW
Tue	21	6.00	clear		8		2		5	1		5		3								24	4314	1	KW
Wed	22	6.25	m/cloudy	3	17		4		10			1		3								38	4352	1	TM
Thu	23	6.00	m/cloudy	3					8			1		7								19	4371	1	CS
Fri	24	6.00	sun/clouds		15		2	1	18	3		7		4				1				51	4422	1	RH
Sat	25	7.00	m/cloudy	4	9				14			4		12			1	2				46	4468	1	MZ
Sun	26	7.25	sun/clouds		89		3		9	1		4		8		1						115	4583	1	MZ
Mon	27	6.00	m/clear	3	194		3		3			2		24				1			2	232	4815	2	KW
Tue	28	7.00	sun/clouds	1	21		1		8	3		14		22		1		1			1	73	4888	2	KW
Wed	29	7.00	clouds/sun		9									2								11	4899	2	JCC/TM
Thu	30		rain																						
Fri	31	6.00	cldy/windy	4	18		4	2	3	1		1		1								34	4933	1	RH
		165.75		22	647	1	41	10	136	28		48	1	127		5	6	5	1		6		1083		

**Mt. Peter, NY Hawk Watch Daily Counts for November 2025**

Day	Dat	Hrs	Weather	BV	TV	OS	BE	NH	SS	CH	AG	RS	BW	RT	RL	GE	AK	ML	PG	UE	UR	Day #	Tot	Obs	Ldr
Sat	1	7.25	sun/cld/wnd	3	44		3		8	1		1		33							1	94	5,027	3	MZ
Sun	2	6.75	clear	20	51		4			1				23								99	5126	1	WT
Mon	3	5.00	sun/clouds	1	3		2		1			1		1							1	10	5136	2	KW
Tue	4	6.50	sun/cld/wnd	5	17		3		5			2		32							2	66	5202	1	KW
Wed	5	5.00	m/cloudy	6			1							1								8	5210	1	TM
Thu	6	6.00	m/cloudy	14	3		1		2			1		15					1			37	5247	2	CS
Fri	7		No cover																						
Sat	8	7.25	m/sunny	13	20		3	1	8	2		9		6							1	63	5310	2	MZ
Sun	9	6.00	cloudy/rain	2	24		1	3	7	1		7		18				1				64	5374	2	BR
Mon	10		fog/rain																						
Tue	11	5.50	wind/snow		11		4	1		1		1		18								36	5410	3	KW
Wed	12	4.25	cloudy		1		2	1														4	5414	1	TM
Thu	13	6.00	m/cloudy	7	2		2	1	1	1		4		19								37	5451	1	CS
Fri	14	6.00	m/cloudy	10	14				4	1		5		21		1			1			57	5508	3	RH
Sat	15	7.00	m/cloudy		8		1	2	3			16		6								36	5544	4	MZ
Sun	16	3.00	m/cloudy		1		3		1			1		19								25	5569	1	TM
		81.50		81	199		30	9	40	8		48		212		1		1	2		5		636		
Total		421.00		105	862	59	117	36	437	68		113	3349	345		6	38	9	8		17		5569		

**Mt. Peter Fall Counts 10 Year Average: 2015-2024**

	BV	TV	OS	BE	NH	SS	CH	AG	RS	BW	RT	RL	GE	AK	ML	PG	UE	UR	Total
10 Year Avg.	81	659	96	112	31	845	90	1	118	5,381	305	0	4	85	13	14	1	19	7,855
Total 2025	105	862	59	117	36	437	68	0	113	3,349	345	0	6	38	9	8	0	17	5,569

Key: BV-Black Vulture, TV-Turkey Vulture, OS-Osprey, BE-Bald Eagle, NH-Northern Harrier, SS-Sharp-shinned Hawk, CH-Cooper's Hawk,  
AG-American Goshawk, RS-Red-shouldered Hawk, BW-Broad-winged Hawk, RT-Red-tailed Hawk, RL-Rough-legged Hawk, GE-Golden Eagle,  
AK-American Kestrel, ML-Merlin, PG-Peregrine Falcon, UE-Unidentified Eagle, UR-Unidentified Raptor