

Hawks ready to soar over the weekend

[Matt Suoja](#) Budgeteer News

Published Thursday, September 18, 2008

When walking up to Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory Tuesday, there was a very deep line of parked cars.

Some of the plates named places like Rhode Island and Wisconsin.

Others were more international, like Manitoba.



Debbie Waters, education director at Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory, holds up a red-tailed hawk Tuesday. This weekend there will be numerous events at Hawk Ridge for Hawk Weekend. Matt Suoja/Budgeteer News

Tom Kuehl, an avid birder who lives near Pittsburgh, was also visiting Hawk Ridge Tuesday.

Kuehl said he was “very impressed.”

Impressed might not be the right word — awestruck perhaps — more than 21,000 hawks were spotted Monday.

If you're going only once to Hawk Ridge, this is your weekend.

Hawk Weekend began Friday, but it will continue through the weekend.

So, why are the hawks at the ridge?

During fall migration, the hawks are heading south and they ride along the coast of Lake Superior, said Janelle Long, executive director of Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory. They do that because warm air is pushed up there. The birds then ride these thermals to go higher and higher, because, for every mile

they go in elevation, they get seven miles of soaring distance.

Long added that, by doing this, they get to conserve energy for their vacation to the south.

“It’s almost like ... a tornado of birds,” she said. “Right where we’re located, we’re part of a major migratory flyway. ... Basically, in Duluth here, we’re kind of a concentrating point before they start heading south.”

During a regular peak day in the fall, the ridge can get about 100 people to witness the bird blitz, but, during Hawk Weekend, about 300 observers are expected.

RELATED

CONTENT



[Hawk Ridge](#)



[Add a comment](#)



[Matt Suoja Archive](#)

Jane and Frank Liupakka, from Esko, who were visiting Hawk Ridge Tuesday, said they are not avid bird watchers.

Hawk Ridge appealed to them however, adding they like to try different things for a new experience.

Watching hawks isn't the only thing to do at the ridge.

Birds are also banded. Staff attract the birds with lures that look like injured birds. The birds are then caught in a net, examined and released.

Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory programming doesn't end after Hawk Weekend.

The facility has many programs on the weekends and in the school classroom during the year.

Schedule of events

Field trips will begin at 7 a.m. and 9 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 20.

There will be events such as hawk watching, interpretive programs, banding demonstrations and optics displays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Hawk Ridge.

There will be evening programs beginning at 4 p.m. at First United Methodist Church (Coppertop) Saturday as well.

Field trips will begin at 7 a.m. Sunday, Sept. 21. There will also be the same events held on Saturday, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Hawks Ridge.

Anyone who registers — \$25 for non-members, \$20 for members and \$10 for students — can go to the Coppertop events and on the field trips.

For more information, call 428-6209.

For a complete schedule of other events going on at Hawks Ridge, visit www.hawkridge.org.

News to use

For more information about bird watching in the area visit www.hawkridge.org or www.duluthaudubon.org.



Tom Kuehl, who lives near Pittsburgh, scopes out some of the birding action at Hawk Ridge.