

## HawkWatch Needs Hawk Watchers

Melissa Leasia. March 1, 2021 :

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Would you enjoy spending a few hours spotting and counting migrant hawks with other like-minded birders? HawkWatch at Dinosaur Ridge needs more volunteers. Coordinated by Denver Field Ornithologists, HawkWatch is an international volunteer citizen science effort to record the raptor migration.



Ferruginous Hawk

Locally, HawkWatch volunteers monitor raptors as they travel north along the Dakota Hogback, a very busy raptor thoroughfare. This is Colorado's only regularly staffed HawkWatch site and it is one of the best places along the Front Range to look for migrating raptors, including eagles, hawks, falcons and vultures. On a good day, dozens of raptors can pass by overhead. The site holds the national record for the high count of Ferruginous Hawks and is also the best spot in Colorado to hope for a Broad-winged Hawk sighting. When it's slow overhead, this is a great place to see flocks of Bushtits, Woodhouse's Scrub-Jays, and Rock and Canyon Wrens down in the brush and among the rocks.

The Dinosaur Ridge site is staffed from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily from March 1st through May 7<sup>th</sup>. Each day, an experienced volunteer is designated as the official counter but other volunteers are needed to help spot and identify the birds. Universally accepted data-collection methods are used and collected data are submitted to an online public database maintained by the Hawk Migration Association of North America. This information is invaluable for monitoring raptor migration, assessing population trends, and for public outreach and education.

Training is provided. All skill levels are welcome. Binoculars are required; cameras and spotting scopes are also helpful. The site is on top of the Dakota formation, southeast of Interstate 70 and County Road 93, west of C-470, between Golden and Morrison. Access is from the Stegosaurus parking lot at the southeast corner of exit 259 on I-70. The half-mile trail to the site goes uphill from the parking lot and then south along the ridge top; the HawkWatch site is to the left of the trail. Come prepared — in addition to the steep and rugged trail, it can be very windy and the weather is predictably unpredictable.

To learn more about HawkWatch or to volunteer, send an email to David Hill ([davidhill2357@gmail.com](mailto:davidhill2357@gmail.com)), or call him at (303) 796-0638. Even if you aren't able to volunteer, you are always welcome to visit!