

VULTURES



Black Vulture



Turkey Vulture



Northern Goshawk



Cooper's Hawk

ACCIPITERS



Sharp-shinned Hawk



Osprey



Red-shouldered Hawk

BUTEOS



American Kestrel



Broad-winged Hawk



Red-tailed Hawk

FALCONS

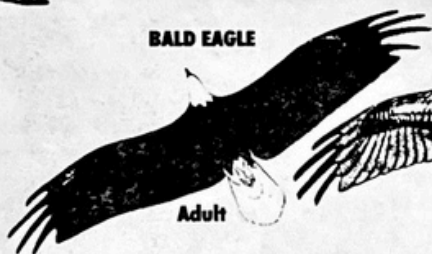


Peregrine Falcon



Merlin

BALD EAGLE



Adult



Subadult



Immature

EAGLES



Adult

GOLDEN EAGLE



Subadult



Immature

Illustrations by Frederick William Wetzel; Reprinted here courtesy of Hawk Mountain Sanctuary.



PILOT MOUNTAIN HAWK WATCH

A basic guide to monitoring raptor migration by:



FORSYTH AUDUBON

THE ATLANTIC FLYWAY

Every fall thousands of hawks sail the updraft and thermals along the Blue Ridge on their southward journey to their non-breeding grounds in southern North America or Central and South America. This spectacular event is witnessed and recorded at hundreds of hawk watch sites from Alaska and New Brunswick to Florida and Texas. The Sauratown Mountains serve as an alternate migration route that shortcuts the big bend in the Blue Ridge at the NC/VA line.

LOCATION

The Pilot Mountain hawk watch is located at the Little Pinnacle Overlook (elevation 2,221 ft.) at Pilot Mountain State Park 20 miles northwest of Winston-Salem off Route 52. Park at the summit lot and follow signs for Little Pinnacle. In the fall, Pilot Knob Park Rd often reaches capacity and closes. To guarantee car access, we recommend arriving as early as possible in the morning.

FACILITIES

Restrooms and water fountains are located at the northeast corner of the summit parking lot. The nearest restaurant, coffee shop, and gas station are five miles north in the town of Pilot Mountain, NC



CALENDAR OF MIGRATION

While some hawks like accipiters may begin moving as early as 8 am, most activity starts after the sun has had time to generate thermals (~10 am). Our official count takes place September 20-30 from 10 am until 4 pm. Our primary migrants are Bald Eagles, Ospreys, American Kestrels, Broad-winged, Sharp-shinned, and Cooper's Hawks. Pilot Mountain is also home to a resident population of Black and Turkey Vultures, Common Ravens, and Red-shouldered and Red-tailed Hawks.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

Every interested person is welcome at the Pilot Mountain Hawk Watch! Learning to identify most migrating raptors comes quickly, and even just spotting a hawk, whatever it is, can be helpful to the count. The more observers we have, the fewer migrants slip by undetected. Binoculars are a must, and be sure to bring water, food, sun protection, and jackets for changing weather!



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