

Braddock Bay Raptor Research's RAPTORTHON Report

By Daena Ford

BBRR conducted their 2nd annual Raptorthon on April 30, 2011. While it was a beautiful, clear and sunny spring day, the winds were not all that conducive to having much of a hawk flight at Braddock Bay. Just 3 days prior we had seen our record day of over 42,000 hawks! Though the winds were against us for Raptorthon, the nice weather brought us several of visitors, including the Spring Field Ornithology Class from Cornell. Almost everyone who stepped on the platform that day was treated to views of one or more non-migrant bald eagles (for many it was their first eagle sighting ever), and several people got to see a low flying golden eagle – what a treat! A total of 10 species of raptors, and 1 specie of vulture, were tallied throughout the day. These included, in order of appearance, turkey vulture, bald eagle, rough-legged hawk, broad-winged hawk, northern harrier, sharp-shinned hawk, red-tailed hawk, Cooper's hawk, golden eagle, osprey and American kestrel. The official hawk count of the day for migrating raptors can be found at www.hawkcount.org.

Pledges and donations collected for this year's Raptorthon totaled \$375. This is more than double the total from 2010's event! Much appreciation goes out to those who made pledges this year to show their support of BBRR and HMANA. We also collected another \$166 for BBRR with t-shirt and field guide sales, memberships and Adopt-a-Hawk sponsorships.

Many thanks also go out to all the BBRR staff and volunteers who made the day a success: Luke Tiller, the official hawk counter, for keeping the tally; hawk banders Dan Niven and Dick Mather for hosting banding station tours throughout the day; Steve Pogoda & Carl Crumley for leading the banding station tours; Ed Sailer, Martha Sorriero, Sue Roth and Carly Semrau for posting themselves at the hawkwatch and information table and interacting with visitors throughout the day.