

understanding of migration, but can also add to the confusion of when and where to go. Nonetheless, hawk-watchers wanting the best chances to see the greatest number of hawks, should try to understand some of these terms. Also remember the best days for hawks to migrate might not necessarily be the best day to see them. A sunny, cloudless day with great wind conditions will propel the hawks so high, birders can't see them.

The best place to see a concentration of hawks is where certain types of land forms funnel birds. Hawks migrating over a broad front, meaning a wide spread pattern, offer the observer the least chances of witnessing a sizable flight. Hawks prefer to migrate on days when air currents rising from the warmed surface of the earth help give them lift which requires less self powered flight and reduces their energy output. These conditions occur on any day the sun's rays can heat up the ground. So can it be said that any day in fall when the sun is shining hawks are migrating south? Maybe. One more factor helps our feathered travelers, and that is wind. Logic tells you that a wind that pushes the hawks is best, but that may not be the case. According to the book, *A Season At The Point*, by Jack O'Connor, Paul Kerlinger states that hawks at Cape May Point also migrate south on days with a south wind literally blowing into the hawks' faces. Why is that? Lift. The hawks simply open their wings and (like a kite) can reach unobservable heights. They then glide down a great distance before requiring another lift.

The terms leading line and diversion line have the greatest importance for Illinois hawkwatchers, especially those who wish to observe from the lakefront. The water diverts the hawks because they don't want to cross, so they follow the shoreline or the leading line.

As the story of the Sharp-shinned Hawk illustrates, the wind, and nothing

else, creates conditions for hawks to concentrate along the lakefront. Conditions after a cold front produce sun-laden days for thermals to build. They also produce a westerly component that forces hawks using these thermals to arrive at the shoreline of Lake Michigan. Most hawks will not travel over open water, that is where the terms leading line and diversion line have their meaning understood.

Concordia University... Where & When To Go

The hawkwatch at Concordia University is approximately 60 miles from the Illinois/Wisconsin border on the shoreline of Lake Michigan. Take I-94 north to I-43, continue north to Exit 85, which is Mequon Road and Highway 167. Follow the signs to the college and park in the eastern part of the parking lot. You can observe either from the gazebo or at the southern end of the property via a short trail. This hawkwatch site is easily accessible from your car. If hawks aren't flying, the vista of the lake from the bluff rising 150 feet from lake level offers great views of fall waterfowl and gulls. If you see someone with a clipboard and tally counters, ask them how many hawks have been counted that day.

The best time to go to Concordia is from the last week of August through all of November. Most hawks pass through from mid-September through the third week of October. Early September has Osprey passing through with Broad-winged Hawks arriving a few weeks later. Sharp-shins, Merlins, and a few Red-tails start showing up in late September. Late September is your best bet for Peregrines, too. Bald Eagles can be seen from this period well into October. By mid-October, the days with the most potential for big single day flights increase. Sharp-shins by the hundreds in one day are not uncommon. From mid-October on, Rough-

legged Hawks, Red-shouldered Hawks, and Golden Eagles fly, and continue well into November. Northern Harriers can be seen during late September into November.

Illinois Beach State Park

Illinois Beach State Park had no formal hawkwatch established as of this writing, but the site has great potential for an organized count. The park is on the shores of Lake Michigan near the Illinois border. Take Highway 41 north to Wadsworth Road and go east a few miles to the entrance of the park just across Sheridan Road. Proceed into the park and turn into the nature center area. Take the Dead River Trail south to the observation deck near the end of the path. Remember in fall all the hawks will be either coming from the north or northwest both along the shoreline and inland.

An alternative site that is more accessible from your car and offers both wind protection and a restroom is at the Sailing Beach parking lot in the North Unit of the park. Follow the directions above, but instead of entering the park across from Sheridan Road, turn north onto Sheridan Road to 17th Street where you will see a sign indicating the entrance to the North Unit of the park. Go past the pond and proceed on the winding road to the Sailing Beach parking lot. This site offers the same vista as the Dead River spot as well as a superb look at the shoreline and lake. The best time to watch hawks is between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Some Words on Weather and Identification

Because of the nature of the locations of the hawkwatches stated here, both of these sites are weather dependent. Best days as mentioned earlier are days with westerly to northwesterly winds. But keep in mind, some hawks, such as Peregrine Falcons and

Meadowlark