

offers a spectacular view of the Lake Michigan shoreline. Situated along the western shore of Lake Michigan, migrating hawks following thermals can be seen from early September through late November.

The hawk watch site is at the west pavilion where there's parking for approximately 20 vehicles and a rest room. The pavilion provides shade from the sun and has picnic tables. It is slightly elevated above the surrounding area, offering a good vista, especially to the north and northwest. Hawks come from the northwest and avoid going over the water, so they follow the shoreline.

To get to the site from the south, take I-94 or Highway 41 to Route 173. Go east on Route 173 to Sheridan Road, then north on Sheridan. Continue north on Sheridan to 17th Street and turn right (east). Proceed into the park past Sand Pond to the Sailing Beach turnoff. The hawk watch is conducted at the first pavilion as you enter this section.

Getting Involved

To learn more about hawk watching in general, books are available from the library or bookstores. Guide books on hawk identification are also available. Recommended are the following: *Hawks in Flight*, by Pete Dunne, David Sibley, & Clay Sutton (1988); *Hawks of North America Second Edition* (Peterson Field Guide), William S. Clark & Brian K. Wheeler (1987); *A Photographic Guide to North American Raptors*, by Brian K. Wheeler & William S. Clark (1995) reprinted with corrections in 1999.

To learn more about the Hawk Migration Association of North America log onto their website at: www.hmana.org. To learn more about Hawk Watch International log onto their website at: www.hawk-watch.org. To learn more about the Illinois Beach State Park Hawk Watch or to volunteer as a hawk counter



Vic Berardi, center, records data as hawk watchers identify and count raptors in the sky at Illinois Beach State Park, Lake County. Photo taken in fall 2001 by Eric Walters.

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Editor's note: Vic Berardi has watched hawks since 1994, helping with the hawk counts at Concordia University in Mequon, WI as well as establishing the hawk count at Illinois Beach State Park. He has served as count compiler for both Concordia and Illinois Beach State Park since 1998. He has frequently visited all of the Western Great Lakes hawk migration spots on Lake Michigan, Lake Superior, and Lake Erie and on occasion helped with their counts. He serves on the board of the Hawk Migration Association of North America.

The Making of a Hawk Watcher

by Vic Berardi

As Paul Sweet scanned the northern horizon at Illinois Beach State Park in Illinois, he started calling off hawks one by one. "Two Sharpies in the Big Gap, one Redtail over Flat Top and a possible Osprey just right of the Bushy Tree." An observer standing nearby looked in that direction and exclaimed, "Those things are just specks! How can you even tell what they are?"

With that, Sweet smiled and said, "Yeah, but those specks have wings!"

Sweet's statement truly depicts the essence of hawk watching. Hawk watching and the birders drawn to it may indeed be in a class of their own. Standing or sitting out on days with cold northwest winds and waiting for hawks does test one's patience. But the anticipa-