

## MAJOR BROAD-WINGED HAWK FLIGHTS REPORTED BY THE EASTERN MASSACHUSETTS HAWK WATCH

*The August 1995 issue of Bird Observer contains an article titled, "The Fall Hawk Migration—The Eastern Massachusetts Hawk Watch: Twenty Years and Counting." Through an inadvertent error, the table for the largest flights of Broad-winged Hawks reported by the Eastern Massachusetts Hawk Watch was omitted. The text below is reprinted from the article—only the first table (top ten flights) is new.*

Broad-winged Hawks are clearly the stars of the migration season, with at times several hundred hawk watchers appearing at Wachusett Mountain in hopes of seeing one of those "monster" flights. Research by the NorthEast Hawk Watch (NEHW) suggests that broadwings may migrate on a fairly broad front, perhaps fifty miles wide at times, with denser currents in the stream, so good numbers can be seen virtually anywhere north or west of southeastern Massachusetts. The single most spectacular Broadwing flight in Massachusetts occurred on September 13, 1983, when more than 16,000 hawks were tallied in little more than thirty minutes. At the time, this was again the largest hawk flight ever reported in New England. Subsequently, significantly larger single-day flights have been reported at several sites in southwestern Connecticut and eastern New York. An overwhelming majority of all the migrant Broad-winged Hawks seen in any one season may pass through southern New England in a single day or, as on September 13, 1983, pass a single site within an hour.

Originally, many observers questioned the accuracy of the large counts. Having been there for all the major Broadwing flights at Wachusett, I am confident that the numbers reported below are conservative and reliable. Recent research in California and on a much larger scale in Veracruz, Mexico, clearly indicates that even highly experienced observers significantly undercount huge kettles of hawks.

The preponderance of migrant Broadwings passes through New England between September 12 and 19. Broad-winged Hawk counts vary considerably from year to year. Below-average counts were reported throughout the NEHW region during the early 1990s, but a record Broad-winged Hawk flight was seen in the western half of the region in 1993, followed by an average flight in 1994.

**Table 1. Top Ten Broad-winged Hawk Flights, EMHW**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Number</u>
9/13/83	Wachusett Mountain	19,912
9/17/84	Wachusett Mountain	17,415
9/13/89	Wachusett Mountain	15,916
9/17/87	Wachusett Mountain	10,095

9/13/78	Wachusett Mountain	10,086
9/12/92	Wachusett Mountain	9692
9/15/94	Mount Watatic	9094
9/12/88	Wachusett Mountain	7554
9/16/87	Wachusett Mountain	5368
9/14/88	Wachusett Mountain	5326

Although the largest single counts of Broad-winged Hawks have been seen at Wachusett Mountain, very large flights, and often the largest Broadwing flights of the year, have been reported from many other sites throughout eastern Massachusetts.

**Table 2. Large Broad-winged Hawk Flights at Locations Other than Wachusett Mountain**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Number</u>
9/15/88	Page School, West Newbury	4527
9/17/87	Lancaster	4524
9/13/92	Mount Watatic	3990
9/15/89	Mount Watatic	3828
9/13/89	Mount Watatic	3776
9/12/92	Mount Watatic	3242
9/14/86	Page School, West Newbury	2440
9/19/93	Mount Watatic	2195
9/14/86	Bolton Flats	2070
9/14/88	Worcester Airport	1993
9/15/85	Bolton Flats	1725
9/12/88	Worcester Airport	1708
9/15/87	Bolton Flats	1633
9/19/93	Fales School, Westborough	1512
9/13/86	Middle School, Littleton	1479
9/16/84	Page School, West Newbury	1159

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