CAPE MAY POINT RAPTOR BANDING STATION-1972 RESULTS

WILLIAM S. CLARK

The Cape May Point Raptor Banding Station has been operated every fall for the past six years for the purpose of catching and banding migrating raptors. This article reports the station's results for 1972. The previous years' results are reported in earlier volumes of this journal.

The station was operated every day from September 3, 1972 until November 27, 1972, except for an operatorless day in November and four rained-out days. There are actually two stations, designated North and South because of their relative location. The North station has an alternate station, designated North-East, which was to be operated on northeast winds, when the majority of the local hawk flight comes from a different direction.

The description of the station setup and locations have been described previously.

Tables 1 report the daily banding results. It includes for each day the combined banding totals for both stations by species, as well as the banders and hours manned for each station and the wind direction and velocity.

These banding totals represent our biggest year in total number of hawks banded. A big difference from previous years is that the bulk of the hawks were Sharp-skinned Hawks. In previous years Kestrels were the most numerous banded. (See Table 5 for a detailed comparison of 1971-1972).

There were two foreign recoveries, both Kestrels. The first, a female, was banded by Dr. Mitchell Byrd on January 19, 1972 on the Eastern Shore of Virginia. The second, a male, was banded by Earl Baysinger north of Ocean City, Maryland during March, 1972.

The highlight of the season was the second North American record of the European Kestrel (Falco tinnunculus). Details about this bird have been submitted as a Note to an ornithological journal and photos have been deposited with the National Photoduplication Center, Patuxent Wildlife Center, Laurel, Maryland.

This was the first year we sighted and banded Goshawks. A large invasion of these hawks came south into the United States and some as far south as Cape May Point.

The North-East station was operated for four days in October along with the other North station and its banding totals are included in Table 1B. An experimental station was operated one day about two miles from the station. Its results are mentioned in a footnote to Table 1C.

Tables 2 report the total number of hawks seen daily, and includes the hawks banded. A system was devised to insure that there was no duplication in counting between stations. While it may not be foolproof, the number of hawks was undoubtedly undercounted. The station operators are restricted in visibility by being in a blind and there appears, from our six years experience, to be a minimal number of hawks milling around Cape May Point, except for kettles of Buteos.

The number of Kestrels seen during the season was lower than earlier years and probably reflects a low ebb in the reproductive cycle during 1972. (This was my observation on a limited number of nests in Virginia, none of which fledged young.) However, the Sharp-shinned Hawks came earlier and in greater numbers than we have recorded in our six year history. The numbers seen were comparable to those reported in 1935. (Stone, W. Bird Studies at Old Cape May, Vol. 1, p. 226, Dover Reprint, 1965.). The Merlin flight was regular through September and October. The numbers of these falcons appear to be about the same as in 1935, as have Broad-winged Hawks, Marsh Hawks, and even the endangered Peregrine. (Stone, W. op. cit.). However, these last birds are the tundra nesting sub-species (Falco peregrinus tundrius), which have not yet experienced the reproductive failure of the sub-species which formerly bred in the eastern United States, F.P. anatum. However, the number of Ospreys seen is one-fourth of that reported in 1935. A comparison of the large buteos is not possible as the 1935 counts were ended at the start of November and the majority of these hawks come through during November. As mentioned, Goshawks have not been counted at CMP RBS in previous seasons or in the 1935 data. There are a few scattered winter records near Cape May Point, but not in the numbers counted in 1972.

The total hawks/day counted in 1972 was 194/day. This is less than the 230/day in 1970 and 240/day in 1971. But the light flights in November are the reason, not fewer hawks (see Table 5).

Table 3 gives the number of hawks caught by station and type of trap. This was the first year the mist nets did not catch the most hawks. The reason is more effective use of Dho-Gazas and our increased experience in the operation of the stations. The average hawks caught per day per station is up from 9.8 in 1971 to 12.7.

The hawks caught are presented by age, sex, and species in Table 4. We continue to band mostly immature hawks. And the phenomena of catching considerably more females of the three small species and more male Cooper's Hawks continues. I can offer no explanation for this now. We were able to successfully age and sex almost all of our Merlins. Several additional measures were taken on these birds to aid in properly sexing. A note on the results of these measures will be published.

Table 5 is a new table and is an attempt to compare both the hawk flight and the station operation for 1971-1972. Passes are counted when a hawk is lured from its intended flight path toward the station, but is not caught. Misses are tallied when a hawk should have been caught, but wasn't due to operator error, equipment failure, or escaping from the mist net.

The total number of hawks seen remained fairly constant for the two years, but the species makeup is somewhat different. Fewer Kestrels and many more Sharp-shinned Hawks were seen, as reported earlier. Merlins and Cooper's Hawks were up by 25% and there were slightly fewer Peregrines, Red-tailed Hawks, and Marsh Hawks counted. The number of Broad-winged Hawks was much less in 1972. However the Buteo flights are extremely weather dependent and tend to be highly variable. There were fewer good Buteo flight days in 1972 than in 1971 and when they did come, they were flying high. That is the reason that fewer Red-shoulders were counted. They are somewhat difficult to separate from Red-tails at high altitudes.

The percent lured and caught comparison columns show how much more effective the station was in 1972. We achieved this by having fresher lures, better equipment and layout, and an additional year's experience. However, the banding potential of the station has not yet been realized, as we have identified many

modifications to make the operation even more efficient.

A statistic that is worthy of reporting is that we have had no hawk or owl casualties in the last two years, with over 3,000 hawks and owls banded.

1972 was the first year that birders interfered with the operation. There were over a dozen instances when they ignored the "Please Keep Out" signs and walked into the station area and as a result the hawks would not come in. Steps are being taken to prevent this in the future. Visitors are welcome but arrangements must be made with the operator beforehand. It is also possible to arrange demonstrations for groups.

Operating a raptor banding station requires concentration and patience and is often boring when there is no flight. But it can also be exciting and fun. Unusual occurrances are part of the fun, and some of this season's more interesting events are described below.

On a day when we were operating all three stations, Joe Harmer in the south lured a Peregrine in from off the beach. It made continued stoops at his lure pigeon but avoided all the nets. On one of her outward flights she saw the lure bird for the North-east station, where Ted Swen was luring for a Cooper's Hawk. The Coopers left but the Peregrine made many stoops. I watched from the North-west station until the bird tired of the sport and left. I lured and it come in to my pigeon. Again many stoops at my lures. Ted then lured again and the falcon made a low pass and finally was caught in a Dho-Gaza. Joe, when he saw the bird "stolen", came to the south end of our field and watched the entire show. It took all three stations and over five minutes, but we caught her.

Some of our lure pigeons escape, but stay around the station. One of these escapees was out in the lure-area eating the grain put out for the lure birds while Chris Curts was operating. A Merlin came "out of nowhere" and stooped at this pigeon. It flew away from the hawk directly into the mist net and the Merlin flew right in after it and both were caught.

Next year, operation of both stations is planned from Labor Day weekend through Thanksgiving.

The operators of the station this season were Joe Carter, Pat Carter, Chris Curts, Joe Harmer, Larry Hood, Jerry Mersereau, Brian Sharp and myself. Assistants were Lou Brown, Sam Chevalier, Jane Church, Oz Corson, Bob Dittrick, Fred Hamer, Tom Nicholson, Dick Paspahola, Lynne Sharp, Kathi Sharp, Greg Staub and Ted Swen. Their contribution was greatly appreciated by the operators.

There were many visitors to the station and three demonstrations were given.

I would like to thank Mr. David Rutherford for continuing permission to use his property and for his interest in this operation.

The accompanying photographs were taken at the station during this season's operation.

--7800 Dassett Court, Apt. 101 Annandale, Va. 22003

WILLIAM S. CLARK WITH HY COOPER'S HAWK

Table 1A. Daily Banding Total

SEPTEMBER

	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	Sept. Total
Sharp-shinned Hawk								1			1	1		5	7	2	8	1		21	16	3	9	23	23	36	1	3	161
Cooper's Hawk																										1			1
Goshawk																													0
Red-tailed Hawk																					1								1
Red-shouldered Hawk																													0
Broad winged Hawk																				1									1
Marsh Hawk													1					1											2
Peregrine																			1							1			2
Merlin									1				6	3	2	1	1	13	5	27	6	4		2	2	13	8	11	105
Kestrel	1	5	3		2	4	12	40	3	1		2	23	10	9		23	36	1	48	25	3	5	7	3	19	2	2	289
Total	1	5	3	0	2	4	12	41	4	1	1	3	30	18	18	3	32	51	7	97	49*	10	14	32	28	70	11	16	563*
Bander North	CL	CL	-	-	-	-	CL	CL	CU	CU	CU	CU	CU	CL	CL	CL	CL	CL	CL	CL	CL	HO	HO	HO	HO	HO	HO	HO	CL	
Bander South	CP	CP	CP	CP	CP	CP	CP	CJ	CJ	CJ	CJ	CJ	CJ	HA	HA	HA	HA	HA	HA	HA	HA	HA	HA	HA	HA	HA	HA	HA	
Wind Direction	W	NW	-	E	SE	NE	NW	NE	SW	S	S	W	NW	W	S	S	NW	N	NE	NW	NE	E	SE	S	SW	NE	SE	SW	
Wind Velocity	10	7	0	20	12	7	8	7	5	5	7	5	10	7	8	10	8	20	15	7	10	3	7	10	5	12	5	10	
Hours North	4	9	-	-	-	-	7	11	10	10	9	10	9	10	9	8	8	10	9	10	11	10	10	10	9	10	8	10	
Hours South	4	9	10	10	10	10	10	11	4	10	10	10	10	10	9	8	8	10	8	10	11	9	10	10	8	10	7	10	

Operator Code:

CJ - Carter, Joseph
CL - Clark
CP - Carter, Patrick
CU - Curts
HA - Harmer
HO - Hood
ME - Mersereau
S - Sharp

* Includes a European Kestrel (Falco tinnunculus)

Table 1B. Daily Banding Total

OCTOBER

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Oct. Total
Sharp-shinned Hawk	124	21	14	30	24	30		107	101	5	7	11	21	20	64	3	36	16		15	7	8	14	33	32	9	8		1	15	17	793
Cooper's Hawk		2	1	1				3	2	4	1	1	1	1	1	1		1	RAINED OUT	2			1		3			RAINED OUT				26
Goshawk																									4	1					1	6
Red-tailed Hawk															1			1		2	2				2	4					1	13
Red-shouldered Hawk																		1		1										1		3
Broad-winged Hawk																																0
Marsh Hawk									1																							1
Peregrine						2						1																				3
Merlin	3	2	3			2	1	4				1			1		3			2			1									23
Kestrel	33	8	1	2		1	11	64	13		2	1	2	5	43	1	3			10	7	1		2	34	3			2	5	5	259
Total	160	33	19	33	24	35	12	178	117	9	10	15	24	26	110	5	42	19	-	32	16	9	16	35	75	17	8	-	3	21	24	1127
Bander North	CL	CL	CL	CL*	CL*	CL*	CL	CL*	ME	ME	ME	ME	ME	ME	CL	CL	CL	CL	-	CL	CL	CL	CL	S	S	S	S	-	CL	CL	CL	
Bander South	HA	HA	HA	HA	HA	HA	HA	HA	HA	HA	HA	HA	HA	CP	HA	HA	HA	HA	-	HA	HA	HA	HA	HA	HA	HA	CP	-	CP	CP	HA	
Wind Direction	N	NE	E	NE	E	E	NW	NW	NE	NE	NE	SW	NW	SE	NW	SW	W	NE	-	N	N	SE	S	SW	NW	NW	S	-	W	N	NE	
Wind Velocity	10	5	10	10	15	15	15	15	10	7	5	5	7	7	10	10	10	5	-	7	5	5	10	5	7	5	10	-	5	10	7	
Hours North	11	11	10	10	8	10	4	11	10	10	8	10	10	10	10	8	10	8	-	10	10	9	9	9	9	9	8	-	8	10	10	
Hours South	11	5	9	9	6	10	5	11	10	8	7	9	7	10	10	6	10	9	-	10	9	9	9	10	9	6	5	-	8	10	9	

Operator Code:

CJ - Carter, Joseph
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S - Sharp

* NW and NE Stations both Operated

Table 1C. Daily Banding Total

NOVEMBER

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	Nov. Total	Over-all Total
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	2	19	3	11	8	2		2	3	1	7			1		1	2			1		4	2	1			71	1025
Cooper's Hawk							1	RAINED OUT			1			RAINED OUT														2	29
Goshawk												1						2			1		1	1				6	12
Red-tailed Hawk	1		3		3					2		2				4		6			3		5	1				30	44
Red-shouldered Hawk					1							1																2	5
Broad winged Hawk																												0	1
Marsh Hawk																					1							1	4
Peregrine																												0	5
Merlin	1					1	1																					3	131
Kestrel	2	2	9	2	3				5			2	1		1			1								1		29	577
Total	5	4	31	5	18	9	4	-	7	5	2	13	1	-	2	4	1	11	0	-	6	0	10	4	2	0	0	144	1834*
Bander North	CL	CL	CL	CL	CL	HO	HO	-	HO	HO	CL	CL	CJ	-	CJ	CJ	CJ	CL	CL	-	CJ	CP	CL	CL	CL	-	-		
Bander South	-	HA	HA	HA	HA	HA	HA	-	HA	HA	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	CP	CP	CP	CP	CP		
Wind Direction	E	SE	NW	E	N	NE	SE		NW	N	SE	N	SW		NW	NW	NE	NW	NE		NW	NW	NW	W	SE	SW	SW		
Wind Velocity	5	10	10	10	12	7	11		25	5	5	7	5		7	12	7	10	5		12	10	15	15	10	10	15		
Hours North	8	7	8	8	9	8	8	-	8	8	9	9	4	-	9	9	9	8	6	-	6	2	8	8	6	-	-		
Hours South	-	8	8	7	9	8	7	-	9	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	7	7	4	4		

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* Includes 1 European Kestrel. In addition
1 Barn Owl was banded at the station and 7 Kestrels
and 5 Sharp-shinned Hawks were banded at an experimental
station, yielding an overall total of 1847 hawks and owls caught.

Table 2A Total Raptors Sighted

SEPTEMBER

	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	Total
Turkey Vulture		1				2		9						1							1								14
Sharp-shinned Hawk						1	7	28	5	3	5	10	109	57	72	55	117	17	4	200	182	28	240	268	205	248	30	45	1936
Cooper's Hawk														1	1						2		1					1	6
Goshawk																													0
Red-tailed Hawk	7							4					6	4			1			17	5					5			49
Red-shouldered Hawk																					1						3		4
Broad-winged Hawk								1									5			95	77								178
Rough-legged Hawk																													0
Golden Eagle													1							1									2
Bald Eagle																					1								1
Marsh Hawk	2		1	1	3			12					1	2	1	2		55	5	19	4	3		1		10	5	1	128
Osprey						2	4	1		1	1		1	2	4		12	23	9	37	12	5	5	4	1	4	3	7	138
Peregrine								1						1	4		1	3	2					1		3	6	4	26
Merlin						2	3	10	1	2	1	3	32	21	7	3	6	36	33	71	28	17		2	5	45	37	50	415
Kestrel	48	104	17	27	20	39	138	297	21	7	5	15	265	107	38	16	286	277	12	335	137	21	44	67	32	264	4	28	2671
Total	50	112	18	28	23	46	152	363	27	13	12	28	415	196	127	76	428	411	65	775	450	74	290	343	243	582	85	136	5568

Table 2B Total Raptors Sighted

OCTOBER

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Total
Turkey Vulture	10	16		2					17	17	7		1	23	6				RAINED OUT	25	9				11	37	17	RAINED OUT		12		210
Sharp-shinned Hawk	782	151	93	204	243	291	7	756	621	81	54	63	114	125	416	17	201	126		119	54	37	122	210	192	57	41		3	130	87	5397
Cooper's Hawk	10	4	3	6				13	26	15	1	2	2	3	15	2	3	12		16	4	1	3	1	8							150
Goshawk																				1					4	2	1				2	10
Red-tailed Hawk	6	3	2	2					6	8	9		12	3	19		3	39		29	75	7			14	38	5			37	29	346
Red-shouldered Hawk									2								1	3		1	1				3	4				1	2	18
Broad-winged Hawk	23	15	4						51	30			2	1	16		8	22		2	7											181
Rough-legged Hawk																																0
Golden Eagle																										1						1
Bald Eagle																																0
Marsh Hawk	10	6	3	1	3			4		5	1			3	24	5	12	4		4	2				9					4	5	105
Osprey	10	10	5	1	3		1	6	1	1	1			2	1						1											43
Peregrine			2	4		2	1		2	1		1		2			1				1									1		18
Merlin	7	3	4	8	2	9	5	9	5			7		5	6		3	1		5	2	4	1	3						4	1	94
Kestrel	153	32	20	42	6	13	112	765	160	12	18	11	31	39	267	10	63	6		33	26	6	5	15	123	9	8		6	35	16	2042
Total	1011	240	136	270	257	315	126	1553	891	170	91	84	162	206	770	34	295	213		234	182	55	131	229	364	148	72		9	224	142	8615

Table 2C Total Raptors Sighted

NOVEMBER

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	Nov. Total	Total
Turkey Vulture			2			14		RAINED OUT		12		11		RAINED OUT				11			17		12					79	303
Sharp-shinned Hawk	8	10	111	50	119	73	19		25	21	8	28	2		5	4	15	24			11		21	10	13			577	7910
Cooper's Hawk	1	1	3		8	5	1			1	1												1					22	178
Goshawk								OUT				1		OUT		2		3	1		3		4	1	1			16	26
Red-tailed Hawk	3		8		60	109				124		39	1		1	56	1	54			53	1	87	1	4			602	997
Red-shouldered Hawk					2	2						1					1		1									7	29
Broad-winged Hawk																												0	359
Rough-legged Hawk																		2										2	2
Golden Eagle						1																						1	4
Bald Eagle																												0	1
Marsh Hawk	3	1	5	8	6	3	2		4	2		2						3			1	1		5				46	279
Osprey																												0	181
Peregrine																												0	44
Merlin	1		2	1			2		7			3																16	525
Kestrel	5	7	45	4	10	3			8		2	8	3		5	2		1	2		2		10	3	3	2		125	4838
Total	21	19	176	63	205	210	24	-	44	160	11	93	6	-	11	64	17	98	4	-	87	2	135	20	21	2	0	1493	15676

Table 3. Hawks Caught by Station and Type of Trap

	NORTH					SOUTH				
	Mist Net	Bow Net	Dho-Gaza	Ver-bail	North Total	Mist Net	Bow Net	Dho-Gaza	South Total	Total
Sharp-shinned Hawk	232	130	148		510	136	158	221	515	1025
Cooper's Hawk	2	11	6		19	2	4	4	10	29
Goshawk		6			6		6		6	12
Red-tailed Hawk	1	31	1		33		11		11	44
Red-shouldered Hawk		2	2		4		1		1	5
Broad-winged Hawk					0	1			1	1
Marsh Hawk		1			1		1	2	3	4
Peregrine		1	1		2	1	1	1	3	5
Merlin	15	17	50		82	4	4	41	49	131
Kestrel	38	181	104	2	325	17	117	118	252	577
Total	288	380	312	2	982	163	304*	387	852*	1834*
# of days in operation					75				70	145
Avg. hawks/day					13.1				12.2	12.7

* Includes 1 European Kestrel

Table 4. Hawks Caught by Age and Sex

	HY				AHY				U				TOTAL			
	M	F	U	Total	M	F	U	Total	M	F	U	Total	M	F	U	Total
Sharp-shinned Hawk	425	560		985	11	29		40					436	589		1027
Cooper's Hawk	21	5		26	1	2		3					22	7		29
Goshawk	2			2	1	9		10					3	9		12
Red-tailed Hawk			38	38			6	6							44	44
Red-shouldered Hawk			5	5											5	5
Broad-winged Hawk			1	1											1	1
Marsh Hawk	2	2		4									2	2		4
Peregrine	2	3		5									2	3		5
Merlin	40	75	1	116	4	11		15					44	86	1	131
Kestrel	215	248		463	28	41		69	1	44		45	247	333		577
Total	707	894*	45	1646	45	92	6	143	1	44		45	754	1029*	51	1834*

* Includes 1 European Kestrel

Table 5. 1971-1972 Comparisons

	Total Seen		Caught		Passes		Misses		% Lured		% Caught	
	1971	1972	1971	1972	1971	1972.	1971	1972	1971	1972	1971	1972
Sharp-shinned Hawk	6115	7910	356	1025	547	1177	117	177	16.65	30.03	5.85	12.96
Cooper's Hawk	152	178	9	29	25	54	17	18	33.60	56.70	5.93	16.30
Goshawk	0	26	0	12	0	5	0	3	-	77.00	-	46.20
Red-tailed Hawk	1046	997	57	44	124	113	16	18	18.83	17.52	5.67	4.01
Red-shouldered Hawk	62	29	3	5	7	9	0	1	14.50	51.70	2.07	17.25
Broad-winged Hawk	567	359	5	1	1	1	2	0	1.38	0.56	1.17	0.28
Marsh Hawk	308	279	5	4	40	87	4	3	19.17	33.70	1.62	1.43
Peregrine	50	44	1	5	22	14	0	0	46.00	43.20	2.00	11.65
Merlin	407	525	78	131	117	161	16	12	51.90	57.95	19.18	25.00
Kestrel	7132	4838	638	577	1247	997	91	73	27.70	33.07	8.95	11.92
Total	15,839	15,185	1,152	1,834*	2,130	2,618	263	305	22.2	31.3	7.3	12.1

* Includes 1 European Kestrel

PHOTOS: Top: Goshawk with Brian and Lynne Sharp.
Bottom Left: Adult Goshawk.
Bottom Right: Joe Harmer with Goshawk
[Page 165]-Top: Male Kestrel on Dho-Gaza Pole.

A WARBLER RECOVERY

ROBERT J. PANTLE

Every year during the spring breeding season I have tried to mist net a wooded hillside not far from my home in order to determine the makeup of species and their breeding success on an annual basis. During the course of 1964, on June 28, a female Canada Warbler (Wilsonia Canadensis) with a brood patch was duly banded and recorded.

Two years later, on June 26, this female repeated in the same net lane. She was obviously breeding as she had a brood patch. Subsequent banding on the same hillside during the breeding seasons did not produce this Canada Warbler again. However, late summer of 1971 I received a recovery card from the Banding Office on this female.

The recovery is as follows: found dead 5/25/71 in Cleveland Heights, Ohio. Two points are of particular interest. The age of this Canada was approximately eight years and the point of recovery was about 300 miles southwest of banding.

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