

Highlights from Feb 26 Raptor Outing to Adams County

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Chuck Aid

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Ferruginous Hawk – light-morph adult (c) Rob Raker

By popular demand we did back-to-back raptor trips on successive Saturdays in February, and the second one was as thrilling as the first one. Here's a brief synopsis. While we had seen four Northern Harriers on the first outing, we only had one on our second outing. Bald Eagle numbers stayed constant with 23 and 27 seen on the two outings. The second outing way outdid the first in numbers of Red-tailed Hawks with 26 versus 15, and we also got to see the same dark-morph and rufous-morph Red-tails hanging out in the same areas on both trips. While the first outing had an incredible nine Rough-legged Hawks, including two dark-morphs and a beautiful light-morph juvenile that knocked my socks off, the second outing only had three Roughies, but did manage one dark-morph. The second outing outdid the first in numbers of Ferruginous Hawks (five versus one), and the bird of the day was an almost entirely bright white light-morph juvenile Ferruginous. Both outings had the same adult Prairie Falcon in virtually the identical location. And, finally, while the first outing got skunked on American Kestrels, we had three on the second outing.



Rough-legged Hawk – light-morph adult male (c) Rob Raker

Overall, both of these trips were quite rewarding and the only raptors we failed to see were a Harlan's Red-tailed Hawk, a Golden Eagle, a Merlin, and a Peregrine Falcon. However, even though we didn't see these last species, participants were given plenty to set their heads spinning with what we did see, and it's safe to say they know just a bit more about raptors than they did prior to these outings.

As an addendum, I returned to the same area on Feb 28, and was fortunate to see a dark-morph Ferruginous Hawk. These gorgeous, large, chocolate-brown buteos make up only ten percent of the Ferruginous population, and it was special to find one.

This great raptor show should go on until about the end of March, so I hope you're able to pick up on some of it.

Chuck

Feb 26, 2022, 112th and Barr Lake

Number of Taxa: 31

Raptor numbers from Feb 19 in parentheses.

122 Canada Goose

4 Mallard

5 Common Merganser
400 Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon)
7 Eurasian Collared-Dove
2 Ring-billed Gull
1 Northern Harrier (4)
27 Bald Eagle (23)
26 Red-tailed Hawk – 1 dark-morph and 1 rufous-morph (15)
3 Rough-legged Hawk – 1 dark-morph (9)
5 Ferruginous Hawk (1)
1 Great Horned Owl (1)
2 Northern Flicker
3 American Kestrel (0)
1 Prairie Falcon (1)
8 Black-billed Magpie
7 Black-capped Chickadee
22 Horned Lark
20 European Starling
1 Gray Catbird
1 American Robin
50 House Sparrow
7 House Finch
4 American Tree Sparrow
9 Dark-eyed Junco
2 Dark-eyed Junco (Slate-colored)
1 Dark-eyed Junco (Pink-sided)
17 White-crowned Sparrow (Gambel's)
4 Song Sparrow
34 Western Meadowlark
1264 Red-winged Blackbird