

Gillespie Creek Journal

Hawk Encounter !

9:18 AM Today

Hawks and Falcons are all Raptors as are Eagles, Kites, and Owls. Cooper's, Red-tails and Peregrine's are all members of the "Buteo" family. Goshawks are true Hawks.

The annual Hawk migration is already underway. Beginning on August 15 at the Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory in Duluth their count has begun. It will continue until November 30.

Visit hawkridge.org for more information.



Cooper's Hawk
Judy Appel Photo

I have had four memorable encounters with Hawks. This morning's visit by a magnificent Cooper's Hawk was certainly the most unexpected. Cooper landed on the lowest branch of the White Oak tree just five feet away from my South facing sunroom window. He seemed to want to pose for me, showing both sides of his feathering so that I might identify his species. Although Cooper's Hawks are very common in Wisconsin, Gillespie Creek's creatures generally are only threatened by Red Tail Hawks. Cooper's Hawks' favorite prey are medium sized birds: robins, jays, flickers, as well as small mammals, such as chipmunks. (It's too soon to tell if today his meal included "Chippy," the chipmunk who so impolitely interferes with my seed planting.) Perhaps Cooper wanted to tell me, "Mission Accomplished...I'll be back when needed!"



Peregrine Falcon
eBird Photo

Years ago I was lucky to watch a Peregrine Falcon feast on a nest of just birthed RedBellyRacer snakes. Dipping and slurping he got a belly full just below the bedroom window of our Loon Lake Home. (My photo is long lost. I thank eBird for this one.) Notice the feathered legs identifying this Falcon.



Red-tailed Hawk
By Judy Appel



Northern Goshawk by Miles Hearn.com

On a cold winter afternoon we were entertained by a Goshawk that was perched high in a tree top eviscerating a squirrel. Their black and white feathering suggest the nickname "Flying Skunk."

This Red-tail flew within two feet of my head at the Center for Birds of Prey, in Awendaw, S.C. in 2021. I ducked! Wow that was certainly a "Close Encounter of the Bird Kind"