

SEATTLE COOPER'S HAWK PROJECT – 2015 SUMMARY

Dear Cooper's Hawk nest neighbor,

This was another busy year for the study. I personally logged over 700 site visits between February and September. In addition, 7 other volunteers contributed several hundred additional site visit reports. Special thanks are due to all of them for their work!

The study has three main goals. First, we try to census the city of Seattle and establish how many Cooper's Hawk nests exist each year. This year we located 41 nest-building pairs, of which 38 progressed to egg-laying and 34 nests successfully produced young who lived to fly.

Second, we count how many young each site produces. This year we documented 115 young that lived to fly.

Third, myself and my study partner, Martin Muller, attempt to put unique color ID bands on as many birds as possible. This allows us to track individual birds as they move around the city and beyond. We put orange bands on females and purple bands on males. Our color bands have been sighted at Freeland on Whidbey Island, Kelsey Creek in Bellevue, Pine Lake on the Sammamish Plateau and at SeaTac airport, as well as numerous locations in Seattle. This season we were able to color band 22 youngsters and 7 adults. Over the last 4 years we have color banded 148 birds. We have 102 subsequent sightings on 51 different birds, an excellent return rate of 34.4%.

The most popular choice of nest tree was Big Leaf Maple (21), followed by Douglas Fir (12), Madrona (7), W. White Pine (4), E. White Pine (1), Alder (1), W. Red Cedar (1), Deodar Cedar (1), Hemlock (1), Cottonwood (1), English Oak (1), and Unknown (3). This includes several pairs that built 2 nests and one pair that refurbished 3 old nests plus built a new nest.

Most nest sites are located in parks and greenbelts owned by the City of Seattle (28), followed by private yards (12) and the UW (1).

I want to thank all of you for your phone calls and emails. I especially want to express my appreciation to all the property owners who allowed us access to nests and banding opportunities on their private property.

I welcome your questions, and look forward to working with you all next year. We will start surveying for courtship and nest-building activity in early February 2016.

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P.S. Thanks to Martin Muller, Larry Hubbell and Aaron Allred for permission to use their photographs.



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