

2017 SEATTLE COOPER'S HAWK PROJECT SUMMARY

Another crazy-busy Cooper's Hawk season has ended and time for the annual report. Over 8 months I made 880 site visits, augmented by another 300+ from our group of volunteer observers. The 2017 season totals are: 44 nest-building pairs; 42 incubating pairs; 39 with hatching; 38 pairs with fledged young; and a record 140 fledglings. The nesting density computes to one nest for every 1.91 square miles. Study colleague Martin Muller devoted many hours to color-banding 20 juveniles and 5 adults. Over the last 6 years we have color-banded 210 birds. We have 158 subsequent band sightings on 71 different birds, an excellent return rate of 33.8%.

The most popular choice of nest tree was again Big Leaf Maple (15), followed by White Pine (9), Douglas Fir (8), Madrona (3), Alder (3), Deodar Cedar (3), Norway Spruce (2), Blue Atlas Cedar (1), Cottonwood (1), Sycamore (1), Apache Pine (1), and Unknown (6). This includes several pairs that built multiple nests.

Most nest sites are located in parks and greenbelts owned by the City of Seattle (28), followed by private yards (15) and the UW (1).

Last Fall I attended my first-ever international Raptor Research Foundation meeting, held in Cape May, NJ. I was able to meet several of the leading researchers on Cooper's Hawks. I will attend this year's conference, held in Salt Lake City, and will start saving for the 2018 meeting, held in Kruger National Park, South Africa.

Our paper on female mate choice in Cooper's Hawks was published in the March 2017 issue of the peer-reviewed Journal of Raptor Research. Once the rainy season settles in, work will start on more short articles that we hope to publish.

With the help of great photos from many people, plus several excellent videos by Martin Muller, I put together an hour-long presentation on Seattle's Cooper's Hawks. So far I have talked to the UW Wildlife Seminar; Falcon Research Group Raptor Census; WA Ornithological Society; and Vashon Audubon. On the Fall schedule are presentations for Tacoma Audubon and N. Cascades Audubon. Invitations are in the works to speak to Dungeness/Olympic Audubon and Eugene/Lane Co., OR Audubon.

I was honored to be profiled in an article on Seattle's Cooper's Hawks in the Seattle web-based newspaper Crosscut.com. Here is the link:

<http://crosscut.com/2017/09/seattle-coopers-hawk-bird-study-raptor/>

I very much enjoyed helping host a visit by British Peregrine researcher Luke Sutton, showing him our local nesting Peregrine Falcons and Cooper's Hawks.

Thank you all for your interest, hospitality and sightings reports. Spring nesting surveys start in March 2018. See you then!

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Photos by Martin Muller and Ed Deal

