

URBAN RAPTOR CONSERVANCY
Annual Report
31 January 2019

Dear friends,

Our first year as a nonprofit was a whirlwind of activity. In February we (Martin Muller, Patti Loesche, and Ed Deal) incorporated Urban Raptor Conservancy (URC) as a nonprofit in Washington State. This was quickly followed in March by an application to the IRS for 501(c)(3) nonprofit status. In December we finally received approval of our federal tax-exempt status, backdated to the date of our initial incorporation (February 2018). At last we have consolidated two long-term studies, Seattle Cooper's Hawk Project and Seattle-Tacoma Peregrine Project, and we have finally launched a long-anticipated research project to document rodenticides in raptors.

Seattle Cooper's Hawk Project

Our long-term study of Seattle's Cooper's Hawks kept us very busy from March to September. The 2018 season totals: 46 nest-building pairs, 40 pairs with fledged young, and a record high of 145 fledglings. These results are about double of those from our first year (2012): 26 nest-building pairs, 22 pairs with fledged young, and 70 fledglings.

Despite untold frustrating hours, Martin Muller and I color-banded only 17 juveniles and 2 adults, compared to 20 juveniles and 5 adults in 2017 by Martin alone. In better news, we have color-banded 228 birds since 2012, with 200 subsequent sightings on 89 individual birds, an excellent return rate of almost 40%.

Seattle-Tacoma Peregrine Project

The Seattle-Tacoma Peregrine Falcons had a mixed year. Seattle had five nesting pairs. Two nests failed and three nests successfully fledged a total of eight young, of which we were able to band five. At least four of the eight fledglings are probably dead. One banded bird from the historic 1201 Third Ave nest was sighted eyeing a pigeon flock in Puyallup. Tacoma fared much better, with three active sites each fledging three young. We were able to band the three young at the downtown nest.

Research

We forged two cooperative agreements with PAWS Wildlife Center in Lynnwood. First, we worked with veterinarians and staff to begin a three-year study of the presence of anticoagulant rodenticides in dead raptors. In the few states tested (four), exposure rates were extremely high (96% in MA). We fear this is a leading cause of local raptor deaths. We will test 120 raptors and 50 scavengers (crows), a study never done and long overdue for Washington. This study received great coverage by Seattle TV station KIRO:

<https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/rat-poison-is-suspected-in-deaths-of-washington-raptors/858561694>

We also partnered with PAWS wildlife rehab staff to band successfully rehabilitated raptors just before release so as to track them in the future. We banded 43 total raptors in 2018. Eighteen were diurnal raptors: 7 Bald Eagles, 5 Red-tailed Hawks, 3 Cooper's Hawks, and 3 Peregrine Falcons. We also banded lots of owls: 14 Barred Owls, 4 Northern Saw-whet Owls, 3 Barn Owls, 3 Northern Pygmy Owls, and 1 Great Horned Owl. Band returns to date: One Barred Owl was hit by a car and one Cooper's Hawk was found dead. In better news, one Cooper's Hawk was photographed in flight with the color ID band legible.

For 2019, our main goal is to obtain funding, through individual donations and grants, to continue to fund our study of rodenticides in raptors. We are registering with Amazon Smile, where you can earmark an Amazon donation to your favorite non-profit. We'll also continue long-term monitoring of urban Cooper's Hawks and Peregrine Falcons. A cooperative study with UW on these projects is in the works. On the horizon is to become experts in telemetry to keep track of our elusive Cooper's Hawks.

Our sincere thanks to our volunteers, donors and friends for your strong support of our fruitful first year.