



# 2020 Seattle Cooper's Hawk Project: Annual Report

What a challenging year! Two weeks into the Cooper's Hawk season came the Coronavirus lockdown in March. However, searching the nearly empty city parks and greenbelts early in the morning provided the perfect antidote to cabin fever. Another upside to the pandemic is that a lot of people were staying at home and noticing Coops in their yards.



Coronabirders (Jeremiah Holt)

Our growing network of volunteers and local informants found 61 nests in Seattle, of which 51 fledged 191 youngsters (3.7 fledged young per nest)—all record high numbers.

This season we banded 54 birds: 41 juveniles and 13 adults. The "Trap of the Year" was banded adult male blue right E over V on 11 March, originally banded as a 1-year-old on 10 January 2011 in Magnuson Park by our project founder, Jack Bettesworth. E-V has nested in Northacres Park since 2011, fledging 37 young over 10 consecutive successful years.

Over the past 9 years we have put color-ID bands on 346 Cooper's Hawks, including 15 successfully rehabilitated by PAWS. Thanks to many citizen observers, we now have 323 band sightings of 141 different individuals, a 41% rate of return. Most (271) of our sightings are in Seattle, with another 30 elsewhere in King County. Band sightings of note include:

Second-year nesting female at Madrona (Nancy Schutt)



At Meadowbrook Pond (Peg Morgan)

- 6-year-old male purple right 1-S, banded as a juvenile in NW Seattle, continues to be a regular visitor to a yard on Whidbey Island, near Clinton, WA (29 km and a water crossing from his banding site).
- Two birds banded last year as fledglings were found as a rare second-year nesting pair in Ravenna Park. Male purple left 8-5, banded near his natal nest in Roanoke Park (3.2 km natal dispersal) and female orange right A-2, banded near her natal nest in Victory Heights (3.8 km natal dispersal) fledged 4 young, an uncommon achievement for one-year-olds.





- 1-year-old male purple left 6-8 was photographed in a yard in the Licton Springs neighborhood. The photo shows an unusual view of a hawk in molt halfway from juvenile to adult.
- 7-year-old male purple right 3-7, banded near his natal nest in Volunteer Park in 2013, once again fledged young at Laurelhurst Playfield. We learned of his nest in early 2018, which means we probably missed nesting in 2015-2017. We have banded 7 of his offspring and 5 of his grandchildren.

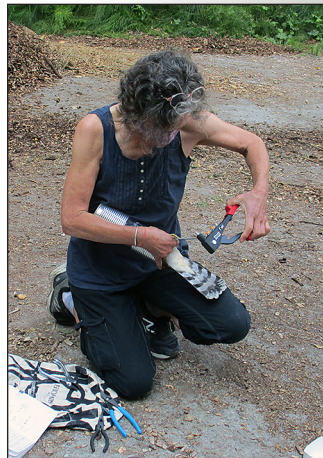


Two fledglings, one banded, at Center for Urban Horticulture (*Jeff Graham*)

As usual, the 61 pairs of nest-building Coops picked a diverse list of nest tree species. Perennial favorites were well represented: Big Leaf Maple (26), Douglas Fir (13), Madrona (6), White Pine (5), and Alder (5). We found a total of 73 nests (one pair built four nests; nine pairs built two nests). Most nest sites are in Seattle parks and greenbelts (40), followed by private property (17), cemeteries (3), and UW (1).

This year's Cooper's Hawk humility lesson was administered to Ed in Pritchard Beach Park, a mile from his own back yard. He searched it three times this spring – nothing. Then a discovery in mid-August of four food-begging juveniles.

We at URC give thanks for all the love, support and donations we received from the bird community over the past year! Now that autumn is here, we look forward to catching up on the rest of our lives and a respite from alarm clocks.



Banding (*Ed Deal*)

We wish you all good health and a safe and effective vaccine.

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Right: Molting 1-year-old with breast feather mix of adult horizontal bars and vertical juvenile streaks (*Laura Kunen*)