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**For additional information and questions, please email
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Golden Eagle Survey 2023

Final Report

On January 21st, 2023, over 226 citizen scientist volunteers from the National Eagle Center spread out across the blufflands and forested areas of southeast Minnesota, western Wisconsin, eastern Iowa, and northwestern Illinois for the 19th annual Wintering Golden Eagle Survey. They were seeking Golden Eagles that winter in the region. Due to increasing interest, we were able to add 13 new routes to the survey. Many of these routes are areas with potential habitat for wintering Golden Eagles that we have wanted to survey for some time. There is a learning period new surveyors to learn these new routes and where the Golden Eagles are hanging out, but all information gleaned is valuable to the survey. The Center greatly appreciates the time and energy all of our citizen scientists dedicated to the survey.

Although the number of Golden Eagles was a little below average, this was likely due to the weather conditions. Overcast skies, cold air temps in the 20's, wet conditions and very little wind were present most of the day. Rime frost and freezing fog occurred in most of the survey areas making spotting birds in the trees or sky very challenging. Numerous surveyors commented that they scouted their survey areas in the days before or after the survey and observed Golden Eagles, but survey day produced a lower-than-average number of 83.

Bald Eagle numbers were up for a second straight year with 1,737 reported making it the second-highest count in survey history! It also bumps last year's count of 1,643 down to the third-highest total for the survey.

Next year will be the 20th anniversary of the Annual Wintering Golden Eagle Survey and several exciting things will be happening with this milestone. We will add more survey routes, data will be collected and entered into an Global database from the field on survey day, and a longer choice of days to complete the survey will be enacted. Other happenings will be announced as the 20224 count approaches, so be on the lookout for emails announcing these exciting details.

We would also like to express our sincere thanks to the Zoological Association of America (ZAA) for awarding a \$2,500 Conservation Small Grant to the Wintering Golden Eagle Survey at their annual meeting in December. Their support will help us continue this important and exciting research.

-Scott Mehus
Golden Eagle Survey Coordinator

Overview

Citizen Scientist Observers: 226
Survey Routes: 86
States Covered: 4 (Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois)
Counties: 54
Total Surveying Hours: 670+ **Total Miles Driven:** 9,100

Total Golden Eagles Observed	
2023	83
2022	99
2021	126
2020	119
2019	145

Golden Eagles (Adult : Juvenile)	
2023	66% / 34%
2022	67% / 33%
2021	75% / 25%
2020	77% / 23%
2019	67% / 33%

Total Bald Eagles Observed	
2023	1,737
2022	1,643
2021	1,433
2020	1,403
2019	1,391

2023 Most Active Routes (Bald Eagles)		
IA 08	Jackson County	141
WI 18	Trempealeau County	110
WI 06	Buffalo County	79
IL 03	Carroll/Jo Daviess/Whiteside	78
WI 25	Vernon County	54

2023 Routes Reporting > 5 Golden Eagles	
WI 05	Buffalo County

2023 Routes Reporting 3-4 Golden Eagles			
WI 06	Buffalo	WI 02	Buffalo
WI 20	Pepin/Pierce	WI 11	Buffalo
WI 13	Buffalo	WI 33	Richland/Sauk
WI 01	Buffalo/Pepin	MN 11	Houston
WI 29	Richland/Vernon	WI 03	Buffalo

Bald Eagles (Adult : Juvenile)	
2023	78% / 22%
2022	74% / 26%
2021	72% / 28%
2020	78% / 22%
2019	74% / 26%

2022 Most Active Routes (Bald Eagles)		
MN 06	Winona County	107
WI 16	Trempealeau County	105
WI 10	Buffalo County	94
IA 08	Dubuque/Jackson Co.	90
WI 25	Vernon County	76

Unidentified Eagles	
2023	49
2022	86
2021	93
2020	60

Hawks

Total Red-Tailed Hawks Observed	
2023	609
2022	866
2021	480
2020	461
2019	583

2023 Most Active Routes (Red-Tailed Hawks)		
WI 33	Richland/Sauk	32
WI 25	Vernon County	22
WI 24	Vernon/LaCrosse/Monroe	21
WI 30	Grant County	19
IA 03	Clayton/Allamakee	18

2022 Most Active Routes (Red-Tailed Hawks)		
WI 30	Grant County	46
WI 33	Sauk/Richland Co.	35
WI 25	Vernon County	32
WI 22	LaCrosse County	31
MN 13	Winona/Houston Co.	28

Total Red-Shouldered Hawks Observed	
2023	2
2022	1
2021	0
2020	1
2019	0

Total Rough-Legged Hawks Observed	
2023	213
2022	199
2021	154
2020	127
2019	124

2023 Most Active Routes (Rough-Legged)		
MN 11	Houston County	15
MN 12	Houston County	12
WI 25	Vernon County	11
WI 33	Richland/Sauk	11
IA 07	Allamakee/Winneshiek	8
WI 26	Crawford/Vernon	8
WI 27	Crawford County	8

2022 Most Active Routes (Rough-Legged)		
WI 27	Crawford County	16
WI 30	Grant County	11
WI 33	Richland/Sauk Co.	11
WI 02	Buffalo County	10
MN 13	Winona/Houston Co.	10

Total Sharp-Shinned Hawks Observed	
2023	7
2022	8
2021	5
2020	1
2019	4

Total Cooper's Hawks Observed	
2023	21
2022	16
2021	10
2020	10
2019	5

Falcons

Total American Kestrels Observed	
2023	140
2022	111
2021	154
2020	89
2019	64

Total Merlins Observed	
2023	3
2022	5
2021	1
2020	3
2019	1

2023 Most Active Routes (American Kestrels)		
WI 33	Richland/Sauk	11
WI 25	Vernon County	11
WI 50	Sauk County	7
WI 29	Richland/Vernon	6
IA 08/WI 30	Jackson/Grant	6

Total Northern Harriers Observed	
2023	15
2022	6
2021	8
2020	6
2019	6

Shrikes

Total Northern Shrikes Observed	
2023	10
2022	6
2021	13
2020	23
2019	6

Other Noted Species

American Crow	Horned Lark
American Goldfinch	House Finch
American Robin	House Sparrow
American Tree Sparrow	Killdeer
Barred Owl	Mallard
Belted Kingfisher (<i>8 - record high</i>)	Meadowlark Species (<i>2</i>)
Black-Capped Chickadee	Mourning Dove
Blue Jay	Northern Cardinal
Brown Creeper	Pileated Woodpecker
Canada Goose	Red-Bellied Woodpecker
Cedar Waxwing	Red-Headed Woodpecker (<i>12</i>)
Common Merganser	Red-Winged Blackbird
Common Raven	Ring-Necked Pheasant
Common Redpoll	Rock Dove
Dark-Eyed Junco	Ruffed Grouse
Downy Woodpecker	Song Sparrow (<i>5</i>)
Eastern Screech Owl	Snow Bunting
Eastern Bluebird	Townsend's Solitaire (<i>survey first!</i>)
Eurasian Collared Dove	Trumpeter Swan
Hairy Woodpecker	White-Breasted Nuthatch
Hooded Merganser	Wild Turkey (<i>over 925</i>)

Non-Bird Species

Coyote	Squirrel (Fox, Gray, Red)
North American Porcupine (<i>2</i>)	Striped Skunk
Raccoon	Virginia Opossum
Red Fox	White-tailed Deer
River Otter	