

HISTORY & FACTS of the JANUARY CENSUS

JANUARY		14-YEAR TOTALS of SPECIES / INDIVIDUALS						
2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
39 / 1,152	40 / 654	42 / 1,400	48 / 2,385	46 / 1,570	42 / 1,484	43 / 2,147	40 / 1,232	45 / 1,365
2019	2020	2021	2022	2023				
42 / 740	41 / 785	47 / 1,014	41 / 1,508	45 / 2,063				

Most Species seen in January : 48 on 01/01/2013.

Most Individual Birds seen in January : 2,385 Total Birds on 01/01/2013.

Fewest Species seen in January : 39 on 01/01/2010.

Fewest Individual Birds seen in January : 654 on 01/01/2011.

Species Average in January : 42.9 Species.

Total Individuals Average in January : 1,392.7 Total Birds.

Lowest Temperature on January Census : 19-degrees F on 01/04/2010.

Highest Temperature on January Census : 57-degrees F on 01/01/2012.

Longest Time Afield on January Census : 10:00 hours & 25 minutes on 01/01/2021 & 01/02/2021*.

* = due to "Winter Storm John" the 2021 census was done over two days. 01/01/21 was from Red Lock Trailhead to Peninsula and 01/02/21 was from Peninsula south to the end in Merriman Valley.)

Shortest Time Afield on January Census : 6 hours & 15 minutes on 01/04/2010**.

** = due to terrible trail conditions (snow and ice), the inaugural Cuyahoga Valley Towpath Trail Census in 2010 was cut short by almost 2 miles, and Michelle picked me up at the Botzum Trailhead parking lot just south of Bath Rd.

LAST JANUARY'S FIELD REPORT

01/01/22	TOTAL SPECIES:	41	START / END TIME:	7:35am - 4:20pm		
	TOTAL BIRDS:	1,508	TIME AFIELD:	8:45	FT. MI.:	13.11
ROUTE:	Red Lock Trailhead south to Merriman Valley.			TEMP.:	49F ~ 46F	
CONDITIONS:	Cloudy with sprinkles starting at 8:35am then ending at 9:10am; sprinkles starting up again at 10:35am, turning to light mist with heavy fog rolling in; very low ceiling with poor visibility, then fog lifting and back to sprinkles, turning to steady light rain for rest of census.					
OBSERVERS:	John Henry (Red Lock Trailhead to Bolanz Rd.) and Douglas W. Vogus.					
TRAIL CONDITIONS:	Wet, slick, rutted and sloppy; many dead ash trees along the trail from high winds/tornadic weather from the southwest on 12/10/21; several large trees, roots and all, collapsed into Cuyahoga River and took out large sections of riverbank.					
RIVER CONDITIONS:	Muddy, slightly above normal, and rising.					

FOUR YEARS AGO on the TOWPATH TRAIL

On January 06, 2019 we set a census high with two Barred Owls on the monthly census, which wasn't much of a stretch, as we'd only had a record of one prior to that. Both of these occurrences were from the same area, the white pine groves east of Riverview Rd. and north of Yellow Creek. Both occurrences were of birds calling, not actually seen.

JANUARY 2023's BIRD SPECIES PROFILE

BARRED OWL (*Strix varia*)

DESCRIPTION: One of the commonest owls of deep woods. Large and chunky, gray-brown, barred and spotted with buff, dark brown and dull white; dark brown barring on its ruff-like upper breast gives it its name; lengthwise streaking on belly; puffy, round head with no "ear" tufts; large brown/black, marble-like eyes (all other typical owls of eastern U.S. have yellow eyes); eyesight is especially keen, even in full daylight.

LENGTH: 17" - 24" **WINGSPREAD:** 40" - 50" **WEIGHT:** Males: avg. 630 grams (or 1.39 lbs.)
Females: avg. 800 grams (or 1.76 lbs.)

VOICE: Highly vocal, with a wide range of calls. Most likely of all owls to be heard during the daytime, especially on cloudy or overcast days. Its most common vocalization is a rhythmic series of loud "hoot" or "who" notes, phonetically described as "Who cooks for you? Who cooks for you all?" with accented hoots ending in "oo-aw." Readily responds to imitated call vocally, and pairs will advance to call to defend territory with almost monkey-like responses, of loud barks and moans, and versions of main "who cooks for you" call.

HABITS: Flight is buoyant and noiseless, flaps and glides skillfully through or around branches of forest trees, suddenly slides upward to alight. Dozes the day away on hidden perch or out in the open, at times in full sun, relying on its tree-like coloration for camouflage; at times, very approachable. Eats mostly shrews, voles, and mice of many species, also chipmunks, squirrels, rabbits, bats, a variety of birds including smaller owls, frogs, crayfishes, lizards, small snakes, salamanders, snails, larger insects, crabs, has been known to wade into shallow water for fish.

HABITAT: Year-round Ohio resident in mixed deciduous forests, river bottomlands, wooded swamps, uniform stands of conifers, preferably white pine or Norway spruce, upland forests usually devoid of larger and more aggressive Great Horned Owl, wooded parks, woodlots, etc.

NESTING: **NEST:** Usually in tree cavity, but often in abandoned nest of hawk, crow, or squirrel;
EGGS: Northern U.S., February to May; Florida, January to March; Texas, February to June; 2 to 3 eggs, rarely 4 eggs, white in color. **INCUBATION:** Possibly by both adult owls, but mostly by female, about 28 days; young do not fly until about 28 days after hatching.

RANGE: Nova Scotia west through southern Canada, through the boreal forests up through British Columbia, possibly southeastern Alaska, south through western Montana, parts of Washington, Oregon, northern California, eastern Dakotas south through eastern Nebraska, Kansas, most of Oklahoma, central Texas east through the Gulf States, all of Florida and up the East coast back up to Nova Scotia. More northerly populations may drift south during late autumn if prey are scarce. Accidental to Bermuda.

STATUS: Stable to increasing in North America. Common in eastern North America. Has expanded its range north and west through Canada's boreal forest and then southward into Montana, Idaho, and California.

Abundance Codes on the graphs below indicate the best time of year to find the Barred Owl in Northeast Ohio.

Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.
uuuuuuuu	uuuuuuuu	uuuuuuuu	uuuuuuuu	uuuuuuuu	uuuuuuuu
Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
uuuuuuuu	uuuuuuuu	uuuuuuuu	uuuuuuuu	uuuuuuuu	uuuuuuuu

- CCCCCCC** = Common to Abundant. Frequently encountered in this region during this time of year.
- uuuuuuuu** = Uncommon. Occurs regularly during this time of year but not frequently detected.
- rrrrrrrrrr** = Rare. These birds can occur more or less annually but are easily missed in their scant presence in the region.
- ooooooo** = Occasional. Limited history in this region and are not to be expected.
- ******* = Accidental. Few records in the past 60 years. Not expected in this region during this time of year.
- ||||||||||** = Fluctuating Abundance. May occur some years yet absent other years. Irruptive or overwintering birds.

History of the Barred Owl on the Cuyahoga Valley Towpath Trail Census 2010 ~ present.

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
JAN.				1				
FEB.								
MAR.								
APR.								
MAY								
JUN.								
JUL.								
AUG.								
SEP.								
OCT.								
NOV.								
DEC.								

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
JAN.		2*			
FEB.					
MAR.					
APR.					
MAY					
JUN.					
JUL.					
AUG.					
SEP.					
OCT.					
NOV.					
DEC.					

DID YOU KNOW?:

If you really enjoy birds of prey, you should visit Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association in east-central Pennsylvania? They have a beautiful visitor and education center on the grounds, exhibits and displays, educational talks and trails leading up to the North Lookout. The view in Autumn is worth the trip!

DID YOU KNOW?:

Michelle and I visited Hawk Mountain during our honeymoon in 2012? Sure, it was cloudy, started to sprinkle & we didn't see many hawks, but like I said, the view is worth the trip!

- *** = HIGHEST COUNT TOTAL ON CENSUS.
- BOLD #** = HIGHEST COUNT FOR THAT YEAR.

DID YOU KNOW?: *The Barred Owl is the nocturnal counterpart of the Red-shouldered Hawk? Both birds are at home in moist bottomland woodlands. Frogs, crawfish, and water snakes are avidly eaten by both species. In contrast with Great Horned Owls, which have been known to forcibly dislodge Red-tailed Hawks from their nests and even to kill them, Barred Owls and Red-shouldered Hawks live on fairly peaceable terms. Thus the owl and the hawk that typify aerial predation in wooded swamps not only agree on their choice of food and real estate, but may even now and then share a nesting site.*

DID YOU KNOW?: *The benign nature of the Barred Owl is attested by myriad observers? In this respect it is the opposite number of the Great Horned Owl. Great Horned Owls are majestic, aloof, and dangerous. Barred Owls are quite harmless and try to appear horrifying. At this, they do a first-rate job. What the bird lacks in genuine ferocity it more than makes up in acting ability. A Barred Owl will glide directly toward a birder's eyes, break flight seconds before contact, and perch a few feet away, glowering menacingly.*

DID YOU KNOW?: *The Barred Owl is an owl of many names? Older "slang" names for this owl include: Black-eyed Owl, Bottom Owl, Crazy Owl, Hoot Owl, Laughing Owl, Old-folks Owl, Rain Owl (for their hooting on overcast or rainy days), Round-headed Owl (from lack of "ear" tufts), Swamp Owl and Wood Owl.*



More common than you think - the Barred Owl is present throughout Summit County if you know where to look.

(photo courtesy of: AnimalSpot.net)

DID YOU KNOW?: *Birds of prey have been persecuted for years but none more so than those along the Blue Mountains in east-central Pennsylvania near Dreherstown? Many don't know the appalling history of this area and how it was transformed from a place of wanton slaughter to a safe haven of protection, biological study, and enjoyment for future generations.*

DID YOU KNOW?: *Mrs. (Charles Noel) Rosalie Edge was the force and the money behind the creation of "Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association" but somebody had to enforce this change. This "somebody" was Maurice Broun and his wife, Irma, "The Keeper of the Gate." So far as early conservation and bird protection goes, I highly recommend "Hawks Aloft," originally printed in 1948, written by Maurice Broun (1906-1979). The back cover of the book reads:*

For many years hunters came to the top of Hawk Mountain in the fall to shoot migrating birds of prey. The carnage was appalling. Then, in 1934, the mountain was acquired by the Emergency Conservation Committee of New York City. It was turned into a sanctuary, with Maurice Broun as its first curator, and the hunters' guns were replaced on the mountain by the field glasses of naturalists.

How this miracle of conservation was brought about and at what hazards is the exciting story told by Maurice Broun in "Hawks Aloft." It is a warm and friendly book, filled with interesting information on the flora, fauna, people, and other natural phenomena of the Hawk Mountain region... a lively and sometimes funny account of life on the mountain during the sanctuary's early years.

DID YOU KNOW?: *The book graphically details this shocking slaughter of all birds of prey by locals from near and far that thought it was their God-given right to kill these birds and the commitment and resolve to which the Broun's went through to ensure this amazing annual migration route was to be enjoyed by future generations. The following excerpts are from Chapter 1:*

My interest in birds was awakened one glorious, never-to-be forgotten morning in May when I was thirteen years of age. I had wandered into the Boston Public Garden and had come upon a group of serious-looking grown-ups scanning the the treetops with field glasses. I looked on with open-eyed wonder, when a tall, gracious lady left the group and offered me her glasses; and presently I too was straining my neck upwards, looking at a dainty bird flitting nervously through the upper reaches of a willow tree. The bird, I was told, was a magnolia warbler. So graceful, so vivacious, so trim in its brilliant spring plumage of bright yellow, black and white, it was truly the most strikingly beautiful thing my eyes had ever beheld. A magnolia warbler! It had a name, which fell like music on my ears, accustomed only, as they were, to the strident sounds of the city streets. Birds suddenly became a daily excitement to me, a passion, and contact with birds in one way or another became as necessary to me as food.

I grew up in the heart of Boston - a poor environment, perhaps, for anyone to cultivate a love for wild birds. But I was fortunate. I met many friendly expert and amateur bird students in the city park, and all were helpful and encouraging to the small boy consumed with the bird passion.

Within five years, with borrowed binoculars and books, I had learned and identified more than two hundred kinds of birds within five miles of the State House. And then my career with birds really began with a research job in the State House, in the Department of Agriculture, under two master bird men: Edward Howe Forbush, dean of American Ornithologists, who for forty years, until his death in 1929, had been the State Ornithologist of Massachusetts; and his assistant, Dr. John B. May. It was a privilege to be associated with these men, both of whom were a tremendous stimulus and an inspiration to me. I helped Mr. Forbush for three years in the compilation of his monumental "Birds of Massachusetts and Other New England States." Dr. May was an authority on hawks. He understood hawks better than anyone else I knew. Perhaps it was my daily contact with Dr. May that crystallized my interest in hawks. In any event, the occasional hawks that I was fortunate to see in and around the outskirts of the city quickened my blood "like fiercely ringing bells or far-off bugles."

Then in late 1932, I learned of the graveyard of hawks at Drehersville, in east-central Pennsylvania. At that time I was a research associate at the Austin Ornithological Research Station, on Cape Cod. A fresh copy of "Bird Lore" on my desk carried the shocking intelligence in a few words, signed by Richard H. Pough: "On top of Blue Mountain above Drehersville, Schuylkill County, an appalling slaughter is going on... Blue Mountain is a long, continuous ridge along which thousands of hawks pass in migration. First the broad-wings in September, and out of this flight I would say 60 were shot. Then came the sharp-shinned and Cooper's hawks - thousands of these were killed. The enclosed photographs show 218 birds picked up in about an hour last Sunday morning at one stand. Among others I have found 5 ospreys, a protected bird, of course, but one that will be shot every time, along with eagles, sparrow hawks, flickers, blue jays, so long as hawk-shooting of this sort is permitted. When 100 or 150 men, armed with pump guns, automatics, and double-barreled shotguns are sitting on top of a mountain looking for a target, no bird is safe. The birds are seldom retrieved, and I have found many wounded birds, some alive after several days."

In October, 1927, Dr. George M. Sutton, ("The Towpath Traveler - Nov. 2022), then connected with the Game Commission, visited the mountain to see for himself. He gathered up 158 hawks of four species, all killed by several gunners "in a remarkably short time." Dr. Sutton published a paper on plumage differences and other technical data, based on his collection of birds; it appeared in the "Wilson Bulletin," 1928. Science was served. But no crusader aroused the sentiments of people who might be humanely disposed toward the birds.

Meanwhile the "hawk-shoots" were being well advertised in local newspapers. A typical example follows, quoted from the Pottsville Journal of late October, 1929: "SPORTSMEN SHOOT MIGRATING HAWKS. Pottsville Hunters Knock Down Pests from Point of Vantage in Blue Mountains. Kill 300 in single day.

"Thousands of huge hawks, redtails, marsh and goshawks, borne by a stiff northwest wind over a steep pinnacle in the Blue Mountains... are daily challenging hunters and sportsmen of Pottsville and vicinity."

"Chilled by the early October winds, many thousands of hawks are sweeping past the mountain pinnacle, inviting extermination, a challenge that has been accepted by local sportsmen and hunters who are shooting hundreds every favorable day."

"Impressed by the unusual opportunity to wipe out thousands of enemies to bird and game life in the State, a Pottsville sportsman urged local hunters to cooperate in killing hawks."

"The migrating birds pass within a few feet of the ground at the mountain pinnacle, generally between the hours of 10am and 3pm, only when a stiff northwest wind is blowing. With ordinary shotguns, 300 hawks were killed last Friday..."

The "sportsman" was reputed to also be a sporting goods merchant, doing a lucrative business selling shells to the local sportsmen who accepted the challenge of the hawks which were brashly "inviting extermination." It is interesting to note the familiarity with basic details of the hawk flights, such as requisite wind conditions and the best time of day to be on hand.

Henry H. Collins, in the "Bulletin of the Hawk and Owl Society" for 1933, called the attention of conservationists to the wanton slaughter. "The season extends from early September to December," Collins wrote. "The height appears to be during the first weeks of October. On one occasion, sixty-four automobiles, the means of transportation of over two hundred gunners, were parked along the mountain road. On another occasion there were forty cars, with about one hundred and fifty hunters, including twelve women."

On Sundays, if the flight was good, few birds succeeded in running the gauntlet of the blood-thirsty mob. Earl L. Poole, Director of the Reading Museum, who became familiar with the locality in the early '30's reported: "On such days (Sundays) the roar of the guns is almost continuous and resembles a Fourth-of-July celebration on a vast scale. The consensus of opinion among those that have taken part in these 'hawkshoots' over a number of years is that only a quarter as many fly past this point now as could be seen eight years ago. Little wonder! The lamentable feature of this slaughter is that most of the victims are not even picked up as they fall, but allowed to decompose or serve as food for foxes, skunks, opossums, cave-rats, mice and shrews that live in the rocks. Many of them are merely wounded and allowed to die a lingering and miserable death... During September hundreds of the distinctly beneficial broad-wings are butchered in the same manner, and in October many ospreys, red-tailed and red-shouldered hawks and eagles receive the same treatment."

To a young conservationist, deeply sensitive to the value and the beauty of our native hawks, "Bird Lore's" fragmentary picture of carnage was profoundly shocking. And the worst of it was, I thought, that little if anything could be done to stop that slaughter, since Pennsylvania laws at that time provided merely nominal protection to but three kinds of hawks: the osprey, the bald eagle and the sparrow hawk.

How in the name of decency could this sort of thing be tolerated? Were there no merciful people in Pennsylvania capable of rallying support and militant action to wipe out this shambles? Little did I realize that within two years something would indeed be done about it; something would be done so effectively that for the first time in sixty-five years or more every migrating hawk would cross the mountain unmolested. And little did I dream that the strange pull of destiny was to draw me to Dreherstown, that I would be granted a role in bringing about the metamorphosis of shambles into sanctuary.

DID YOU KNOW?: *That's just parts of Chapter 1. All this and more in "Hawks Aloft." To learn how the land was acquired, how it went over with the "local sportsmen", and the dangers of trying to enforce such laws, it's all in there. It doesn't get much more dangerous than knowing that those you are trying to keep away are already unreasonable, armed, and possibly dangerous! I find it amazing that this was happening at the beginning of the Great Depression! Did certain families go without just to make sure they had ammunition for Sunday!?*



The Brouns - devoted to each other and to birds, and conservationists ahead of their time and just in the nick of time.

(photo courtesy of: Hawk Mountain Sanctuary)

IN MEMORIAM: MAURICE BROWN, 1906-1979

ALBERT E. CONWAY

1672 Deer Run Road, Catawba, South Carolina 29704, USA

Maurice Broun, Curator Emeritus of Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, died 2 October 1979 in Lehigh Valley Hospital at Allentown, Pennsylvania. He was elected an Associate of the American Ornithologists' Union in 1922 and an Elective Member in 1948.

Born in New York City on 27 August 1906 of immigrant Romanian parents, Broun was orphaned when he was two years old. With adoptive parents, he moved to Boston where, at age 13, he became interested in birds because of a chance encounter with birders at the Boston Common.

After graduation from high school, Broun worked with Edward Howe Forbush, Massachusetts State Ornithologist. He aided John Bichard May in editing the posthumous third volume of Forbush's monumental *Birds of Massachusetts and Other New England States* (1929, Massachusetts Department of Agriculture, Boston). Broun contributed the text for five species accounts and for the hybrids of the Blue-winged and Golden-winged warblers.

Several years later, Oliver L. Austin, Sr., asked Broun to take charge of Austin's bird-banding station at Wellfleet on Cape Cod. While there, Broun met Irma Knowles Penniman, who survives him, and they were married on 15 January 1934. Later that year, Rosalie (Mrs. Charles Noel)

Edge, chairman of the Emergency Conservation Committee, secured an option to buy the land, which shortly became Hawk Mountain Sanctuary. She chose Broun to be its curator.

Except for three years, 1942-1945, when he served as a photographer with the Seabees in the South Pacific during World War II, Broun was curator of Hawk Mountain Sanctuary until his retirement in 1966. In addition to over 100 articles on natural-history subjects, Broun was the author of the popular *Hawks Aloft: The Story of Hawk Mountain* (1949, Dodd, Mead and Co., New York) and *Index to North American Ferns* (1938, privately published, Orleans, Massachusetts).

Broun's efforts on behalf of conservation were recognized by honorary doctoral degrees from Muhlenberg College in 1952 and Albright College in 1976. He also received numerous accolades from scientific and conservation organizations. Chandler S. Robbins lauded Broun's contributions to the cause of conservation in a letter to Irma Broun shortly after his death, writing that, "Maurice spent his lifetime working with greater dedication for the cause of conservation than anyone else I can think of. The nation and the world will be forever indebted to him for remolding public opinion regarding our birds of prey."



No two people more deserving of a bronze statue, Irma and Maurice Broun on Strawberry Hill Farm in 1978.

(photo by: Cameron Davidson)



Senseless slaughter - the sad harvest of "sport" - 230 dead hawks picked up near the Lookout in October 1932.

(photo by: Henry H. Collins and Richard H. Pough)

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