

## **Braddock Bay Spring 2010 Hawkwatch Summary**

### **By David Tetlow**

The Spring 2010 season at Braddock Bay could be described as poor and somewhat frustrating. The weather once again just did not want to cooperate. Winds seemed to always be out of the north or east, light in force, and with quite often blue skies. These conditions allow too many birds to go around us so that on “good” weather days (with southerly winds) there is not the flight you would expect. Despite the conditions, this is Braddock Bay, and as usual it had some highlights and special moments.

The highlight of the season was the number of Black Vultures (*Coragyps atratus*) counted (total of 11 for the season). What was remarkable, and disappointing, was that in past years there have been at least two days of 5-digit counts, and this year there were none.

### **March**

We opened up the season with 1 Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) counted on the 1 March. There was coverage for 27 out of 31 days this month, an indication that the weather was fair even if not favorable. A total of 4,335 birds were counted, quite a bit below the monthly average. The peak day was on 28 March, with a total of 1,256 birds counted, most of which were Turkey Vultures (*Cathartes aura*).

### **April**

Again, the weather was fair even if not favorable and 28 out of 30 days were covered. A total of 25,664 birds were counted in April, not too shabby by recent years' standards. The best day was on 30 April with a total of 4,545 birds counted, the majority of which were Broad-winged Hawks (*Buteo platypteron*). The Black Vultures were the highlight of the month. We had one on each of the following days: April 3, 5, 11, 19 and 24. There were 2 counted on 12 April.

### **May**

A total of 4,060 birds were counted on the 1 May. Would this set the tone for the month? Unfortunately not—sadly this was the peak day. May 2010 was one of the most frustrating months weather-wise that Braddock Bay has ever seen. Only 15 days had any significant coverage, a testament to the unfavorable conditions. The weather was not actually bad, it would be better described as benign. Almost every day was clear with light NNE or ENE winds. Birds definitely move on those conditions, but they are high, scattered, and move along a broad front almost impossible to detect. A total of 6,873 birds were counted for May, about three times this total is expected. But as usual, highlights were had. 1 Black Vulture was counted on 10 May, and 3 were counted on 26 May.

## Acknowledgements

Thanks to all who provided any form of help or companionship. Mike Tetlow assisted with coverage again this year by covering a few hours and/or days. As always, Braddock Bay even in a frustrating year is a great place to be and it is very special to be a part of the spectacle. For monthly, daily and hourly totals for the hawkwatch, you can view these by visiting [www.bbrr.org](http://www.bbrr.org). For those interested, go on-line and go to [E-bird.org](http://E-bird.org) to view all bird species (not just raptors) counted for the season at Braddock Bay.

<b>Hawk Watch Monthly Totals by Species For the Spring Migration of 2010</b>				
<b>Species</b>	<b>March</b>	<b>April</b>	<b>May</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Black Vulture	0	7	4	11
Turkey Vulture	2663	11522	1909	16094
Osprey	0	65	39	104
Bald Eagle	34	50	71	155
Northern Harrier	60	258	57	375
Sharp-shinned Hawk	134	1687	714	2535
Cooper's Hawk	120	133	17	270
Northern Goshawk	1	8	0	9
Red-shouldered Hawk	451	112	0	563
Broad-winged Hawk	0	10038	3804	13842
Swainson's Hawk	0	2	0	2
Red-tailed Hawk	830	1539	228	2597
Rough-legged Hawk	25	21	0	46
Golden Eagle	4	21	0	25
American Kestrel	10	191	18	219
Merlin	3	7	7	17
Peregrine Falcon	0	3	5	8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4335</b>	<b>25664</b>	<b>6873</b>	<b>36872</b>