

Introduction to North American Raptor Conservation Species Assessments

In the assessments, we provide a summary of the continental and regional migration count trends through 2023 for each species using data from 80 migration count sites across North America, spanning from Canada to Mexico. For complete and/or long-distance migrants such as Osprey, Broad-winged Hawk, Swainson's Hawk, and Mississippi Kite, where essentially the entire population migrates out of its breeding range to a separate wintering range, the migration count trends provide a reliable assessment of actual population trends. For partial and short-distance migrants such as the Red-tailed Hawk, there is evidence that some species may be shifting their migratory behavior or wintering ranges in response to climate change and other factors (Bolgiano, 2013; Paprocki, et al, 2017). Our goal is to provide accurate population trend summaries and highlight species of concern.

Another factor to consider in viewing the trends is that other species (e.g., Golden Eagle, Peregrine Falcon) have resident populations that may not be well-represented in the migration count data. Therefore, it is important to review results from multiple datasets, including the Christmas Bird Count (CBC, <https://netapp.audubon.org/cbcobservation/>) and Breeding Bird Survey (BBS, <https://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbs/results/>), for a complete picture of the population status of many raptor species. In these assessments, we also briefly discuss CBC trends where those data augment the findings from the migration count results. The results discussed here derive from www.audubon.org and were published in Soykan, C.U., Sauer, J., Schuetz, J.G., LeBaron, G.S., Dale, K., and Langham, G.M. 2016. *Population trends for North American winter birds based on hierarchical models. Ecosphere, 7(5)*. The CBC data represented here only show trends where the confidence interval for the trend derived does not include zero.

Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus*)

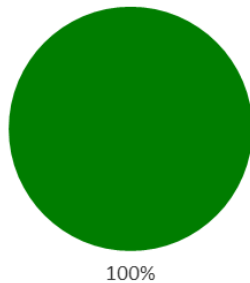
The 10-year migration count trends for the Swallow-tailed Kite suggest primarily increasing counts, with 83% of count sites reporting an increase for this species, with the remaining 16% of sites recording a stable count (n=6). The one site reporting stable counts was located in the Gulf region, while the remaining five sites reporting increasing counts were spread across the Gulf and Eastern region (see pie charts and trend maps below).



The Swallow-tailed Kite overwinters in South America, but USGS Breeding Bird Survey data suggest an overall increase in population at Gulf Region breeding grounds over the last decade (2009-2022). Additionally, eBird abundance data from 2012-2022 has documented an increase in Swallow-Tailed Kite detections in the northern part of the species range. Sightings are increasing at count sites and in eBird database in the Eastern Region suggesting possible range expansion may be occurring. The data reports a median increase of 24% for Swallow-Tailed Kite abundance in the United States.

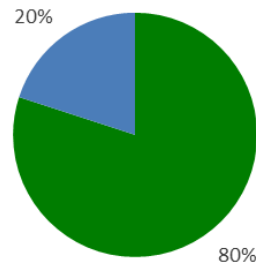
The greatest threat to this species is loss and degradation of nesting, foraging and roosting habitat due to land development. Further threats may occur during their water crossing migration from Florida to South America and in wintering areas in South America. Climate change impacts on storm frequency may be a future issue. In Florida, the center of species abundance, it is one of the most highly ranked species for management attention. There are no formal management listings by state or federal agencies except in South Carolina, where the species is listed as Endangered. Other threats may include contaminants and human persecution.

Swallow-tailed Kite, East (fall only)
2014-2023 (n=1)

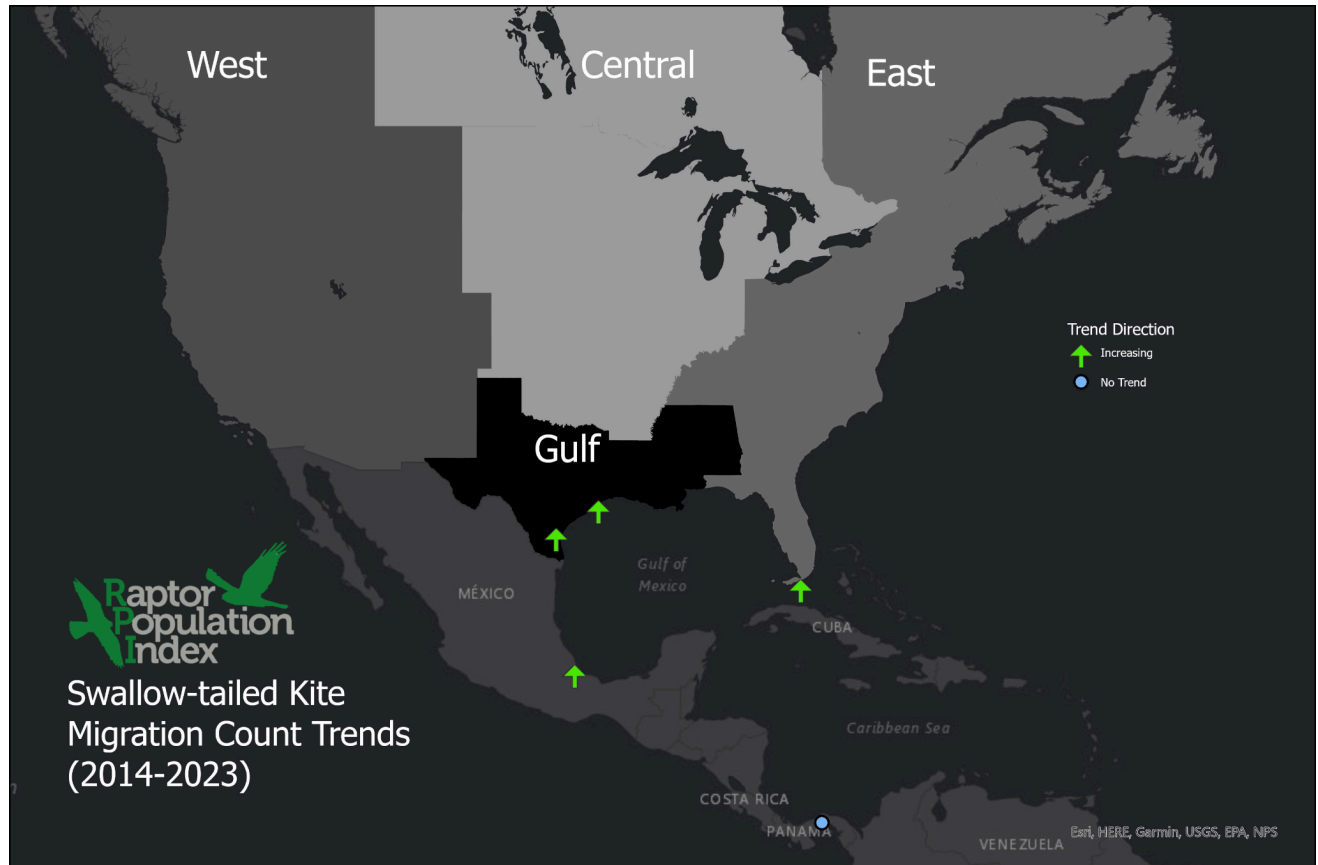


■ Decrease ■ Increase ■ Stable

Swallow-tailed Kite, Gulf (fall only)
2014-2023 (n=5)



■ Decrease ■ Increase ■ Stable



M. Carson, D. Oleyar, D. Ethier, L. Goodrich, D. Brandes, J. Brown, and J. Sodergren. 2025. The Raptor Population Index: 2023 Species Assessments.
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