

Introduction to North American Raptor Conservation Species Assessments

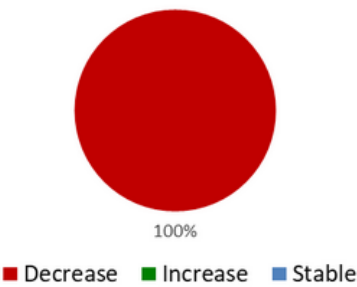
In the assessments, we provide a summary of the continental and regional migration count trends through 2023 for each species using data from 80 migration count sites across North America, spanning from Canada to Mexico. For complete and/or long-distance migrants such as Osprey, Broad-winged Hawk, Swainson's 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.

White-tailed Kite (*Elanus leucurus*)

The few 10-year migration count trends available for the White-tailed Kite suggests a mix of stable and possibly decreasing numbers in the West as indicated by one count site in the Western region, and two count sites in the Gulf region (see pie charts below). Twenty-year count trends showed one site stable and one site decreasing. Winter survey data from the Christmas Bird Count (CBC) show decreasing trends range-wide with the annual percent decrease in population of 5.64% from 2009-2022. Decreased winter observations were reported along the West Coast and in the Gulf Region, but Florida reported an increase in observations of 2.83% per year. Additionally, 10-year trend data from eBird has documented a decline in White-Tailed Kite abundance. The median decline between 2011-2021 was -31.3% range-wide, with steep declines seen in the United States, Costa Rica, and Guatemala. The White-tailed Kite is a *Species of Least Concern*, designated by IUCN red list. It is listed as a "fully protected species" in California. Protected grassland areas that support large populations of voles attract this species in the West. Nest success is unlikely when located within close proximity to human-developed landscapes, and reproductive success is limited when nest trees and foraging habitat are disturbed. Greater monitoring may be needed to fully understand population change in this species. More research is needed to determine the effects of human activity on nesting and increased management or conservation may be warranted.

White-tailed Kite, West (fall only)
2014-2023 (n=1)



White-tailed Kite, Gulf
2014-2023 (n=2)

