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**The Raptor Population Index Program Receives Second-year Grant  
from the  
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation**

by Ernesto Ruelas Inzunza, RPI Project Manager

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The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation has awarded a challenge grant of \$105,750 to Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association and its partners for the second year of the Raptor Population Index (RPI) program, commencing on April 1, 2006. The grant must be matched 2:1 from private or other non-federal government sources.

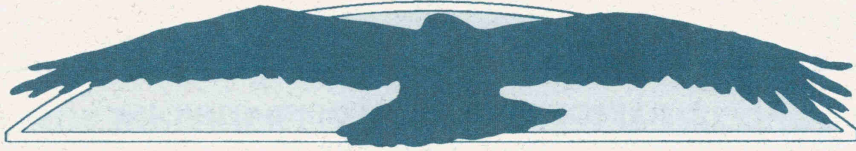
The RPI program is a joint venture of Hawk Mountain Sanctuary (HMS), HawkWatch International (HWI) and the Hawk Migration Association of North America (HMANA). The goal of RPI is to contribute to raptor conservation by creating a permanent continent-wide monitoring program for migratory raptors based on counts of migrating raptors at numerous watch sites throughout North and Central America. RPI will produce statistically defensible estimates and assessments of trends in abundance for each species of migratory raptor and disseminate those results widely to the scientific and conservation communities and to the public.

A report on the first year of the project can be downloaded from <http://hmana.org/rpi>. The report indicates that as of August 31, 2005, the HawkCount database (<http://hawkcount.org>) contained nearly 30,000 hawk count data days, an increase of 27% over the past year, with 149 hawkwatches currently contributing data. Historical data from HMANA paper archives, HWI watch sites, and other sources are continually being added to the HawkCount electronic database to make those data readily accessible and available for research and monitoring.

RPI analyses conducted so far include calculation of trends from 6 sites in the northeast and Great Lakes regions and from 3 western sites – Hawk Mountain and Waggoner's Gap PA, Montclair and Cape May NJ, Lighthouse Point CT, Holiday Beach ON, Bridger Mountains MT, Goshute Mountains NV, and Manzano Mountains NM. Data from several other watch sites that are slated for analysis in the near future will contribute to a developing picture of continental status and trend. Species conservation assessments will be produced based on these and other data sets. Results will be made available in peer-viewed publications and via the web ([www.hmana.org](http://www.hmana.org)). Sample conservation assessments for the eastern populations of three species are shown at [www.hawkmountain.org](http://www.hawkmountain.org).

A total of 85 individuals and 4 organizations contributed over \$28,000 in 2005 as "RPI Sponsors" and assisted the RPI partners in meeting the 2:1 match needed to take the first step towards an effective continent-wide program to monitor raptor populations. To become an "RPI Sponsor," contact Ernesto Ruelas Inzunza, HMANA, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, 159 Sapsucker Woods Road, Ithaca NY 14850 ([er99@cornell.edu](mailto:er99@cornell.edu)) or Laurie Goodrich ([Goodrich@hawkmtn.org](mailto:Goodrich@hawkmtn.org)).

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