

Red-tailed hawk research at O'Hare International Airport, Chicago, IL

To supplement the research previously conducted with red-tailed hawks (RTHAs) at O'Hare International Airport (ORD), USDA-Wildlife Services (WS) is conducting a project in collaboration with WS' National Wildlife Research Center (NWRC). Specific data regarding temporal and spatial movement patterns of red-tailed hawks on airfields is lacking. This project will provide information regarding the movement and activity patterns of red-tailed hawks in and around airport environments and allows for a quantification of the risk posed by red-tailed hawks to safe aircraft operations. The objective of the study is to use patagial tags on red-tailed hawks to monitor return rates from relocation sites that are 50, 75, 100 and 125 miles west and south of ORD.

Birds will be uniquely marked using standard U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service aluminum bands and patagial tags on the wings. Patagial tags will be attached to up to 200 RTHAs per year through 2015 and relocated offsite to 50, 75, 100 and 125 miles west of ORD in years 2010-2012 and south during years 2013-2015. Birds with patagial tags will be documented upon return to ORD via opportunistic sightings. Time, date and GPS location information will be recorded when tagged birds are encountered. For the birds tagged in 2010 and 2013, the patagial tags will be green with white numbers while 2011 and 2014 tags will be white with black numbers and 2012 and 2015 the tags will be orange with black numbers.

If any of these birds are spotted please feel free to contact Craig Pullins (craig.k.pullins@aphis.usda.gov) at (773) 686-6742 or Travis Guerrant (Travis.guerrant@aphis.usda.gov) at (773) 686-6955. If possible, time, date and GPS location would be greatly appreciated, but any information and/or pictures you can provide would be helpful. Any questions about the project please do not hesitate to reach out to the contacts above.