



Hawkwatch at Buffalo Mountain Natural Area Preserve

Saturday, September 21, 2019

What: Fall Raptor Migration – Broad-winged hawks will be the most commonly observed raptor, passing through early in the season. Other species that **will** likely move through in modest numbers include sharp-shinned hawks, Cooper’s hawks, red-tailed hawks, red-shouldered hawks, bald eagles, peregrine falcons, merlins, and American kestrels.

Where: The summit of Buffalo Mountain Natural Area Preserve. Widely recognized as one of Virginia’s greatest natural heritage treasures, Buffalo Mountain Natural Area Preserve is like no other place in the state. A variety of unusual conditions combine to make the preserve home to 13 plant species, three invertebrate species, and six natural communities that are rare in Virginia. The preserve is located in the southern corner of Floyd County.

From Floyd, travel southwest on US Route 221 about 6 miles to Route 727. Turn left (south) on 727 and go about 6 miles to a low saddle in the ridge near the eastern slope of Buffalo Mountain. Turn right on the gravel access road. Go about 1 mile to the gravel parking area.

From the Blue Ridge Parkway, take Route 799 north about 1½ miles to Route 604. Turn left and go about 1½ miles to Route 727. Turn left and go about 1 mile to a low saddle in the ridge near the eastern slope of Buffalo Mountain. Turn right on the gravel access road. Go about 1 mile to the gravel parking area.

When: Although different species of migrating birds-of-prey will likely be passing along this point throughout the fall, the largest concentrations will be broad-winged hawk flights that will occur in middle through late September. Each species has its own window during the fall migration, and therefore not all species are likely to be seen at the same times. **Saturday, September 21, 2019, between 10AM and 2PM should be an ideal peak of the migratory flow in this area.**

Program Itinerary: Blue Ridge Heritage (BRH) volunteers invite interested members of the public to join us at the summit of Buffalo Mountain Natural Area Preserve. Weather-permitting, at least one professional naturalist will be present from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM to help with sighting and identifying migrating raptors on September 21. **NOTE: bad weather cancels this activity.**

Bring: Participants should bring binoculars, sun-screen, eye-drops, a lawn chair or cushion, water, lunch or a snack, and a bird ID field guide. Wear comfortable footwear suitable for traversing uneven terrain and bring a variety of clothing as weather conditions are subject to change during this time of year.

BRH works to promote education and economic development through place-based programs related to the natural and cultural heritage of the Blue Ridge in Southwestern Virginia’s Bi-County area of Floyd and Patrick Counties. To learn more, please visit brheritage.org.