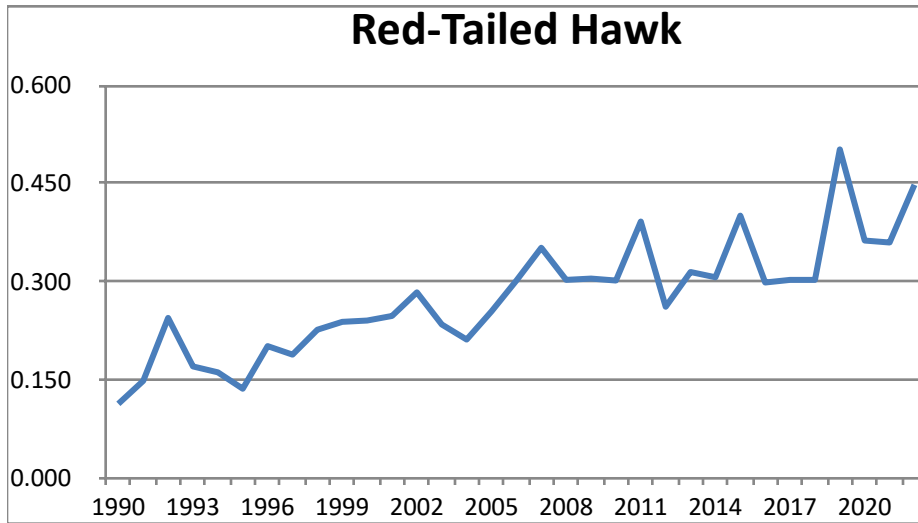
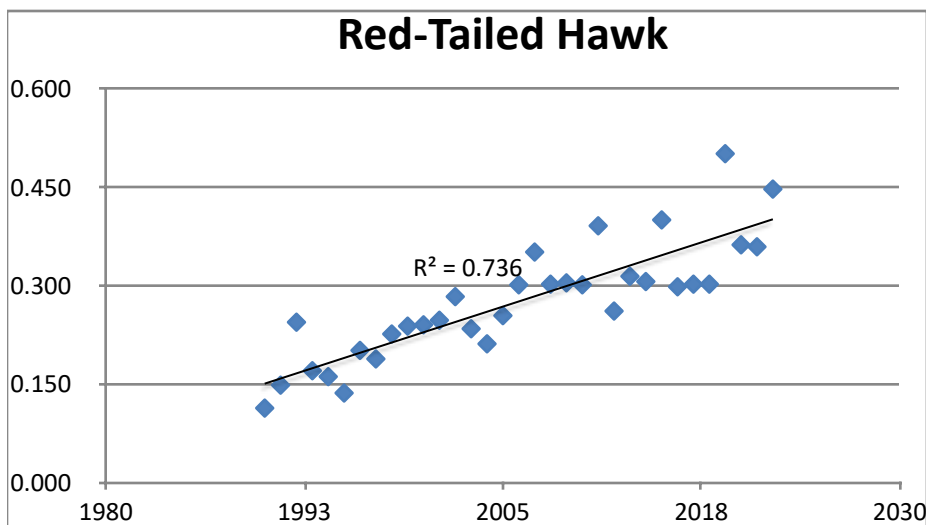


2021-22 Boulder County Wintering Raptor Survey Summary

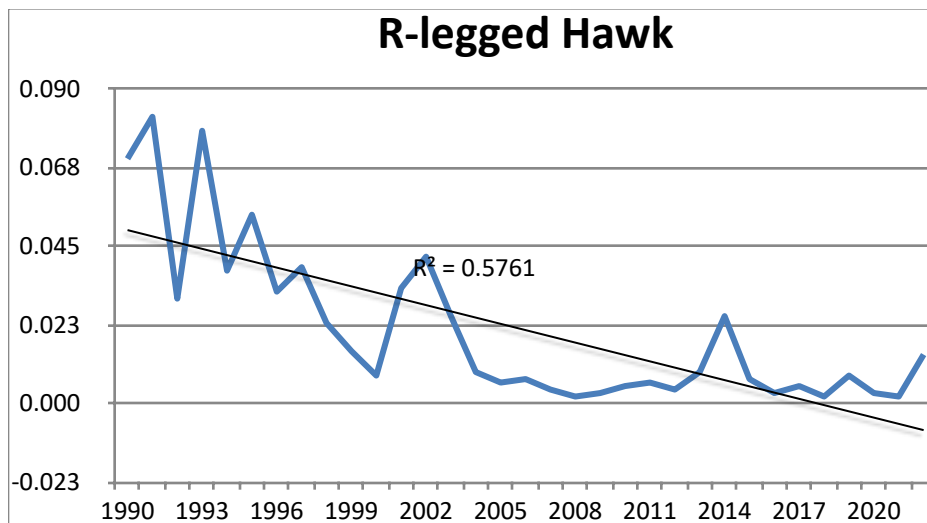
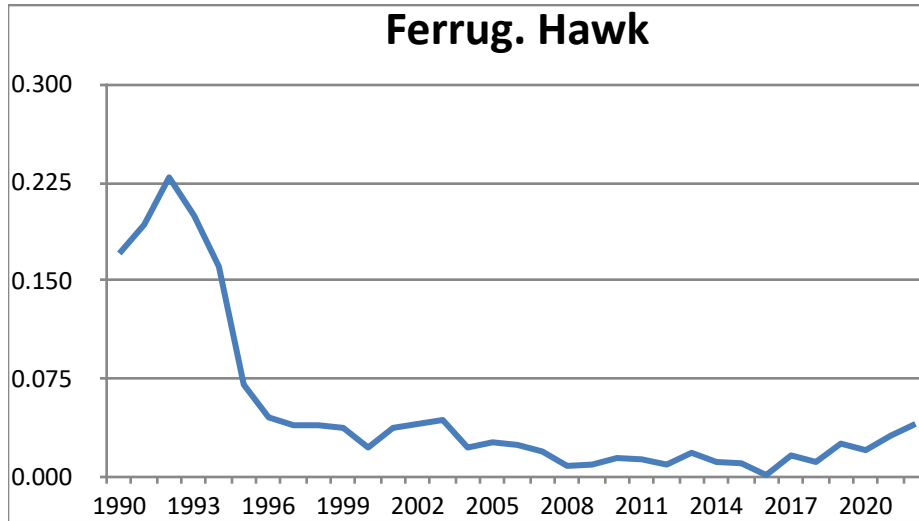
As promised, here are graphs summarizing results of our 2021-22 wintering raptor surveys. Starting with the Buteos, you'll see that the Red-tailed Hawks did achieve their second-highest total since 1990.



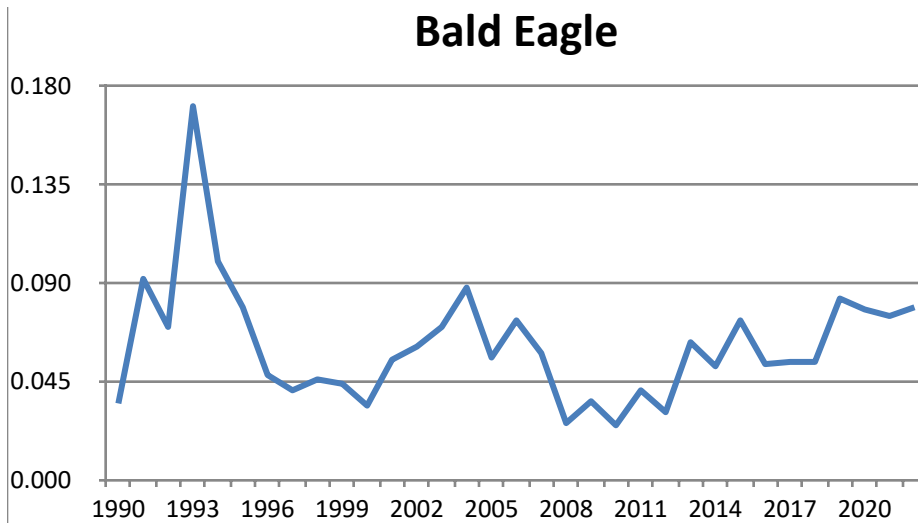
The scatter plot for Red-tailed Hawk shows a significant increase throughout the 39 years of our study. As you know, this most likely reflects increasing urbanization in Boulder County, making it easier for these habitat generalists to outcompete habitat specialists such as Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawk.



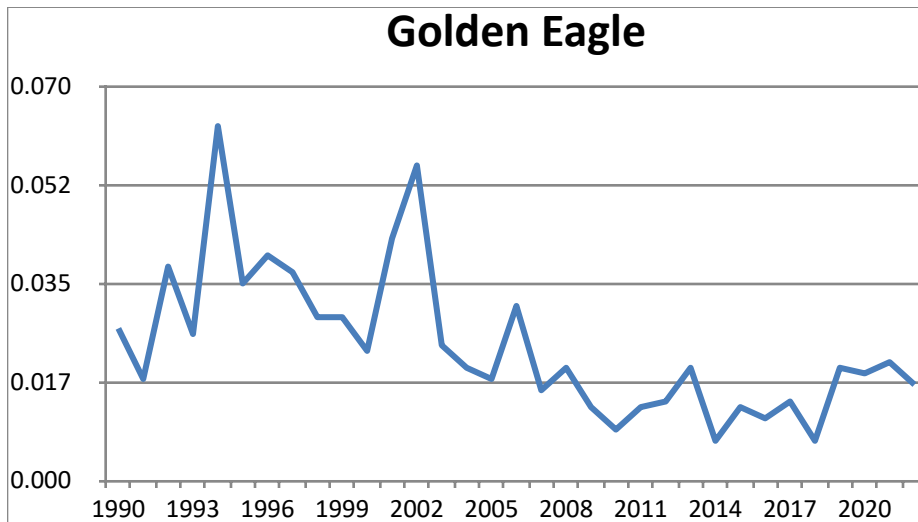
You'll notice that the Ferruginous Hawks did, indeed, increase in number during 2021-22, with most of the increase occurring along the North Rabbit and South Rabbit survey routes, where prairie dog numbers appeared to be higher than during recent years.



Numbers of rough-legged hawks increased dramatically along the South County survey route. This increase may reflect the presence of near continuous snow cover throughout the county during January and February of 2021 or higher availability of small rodent prey in the south county area; perhaps most telling, the December 31 Marshall fire created extensive areas of scorched and bare ground where small mammals may have been easier to find.



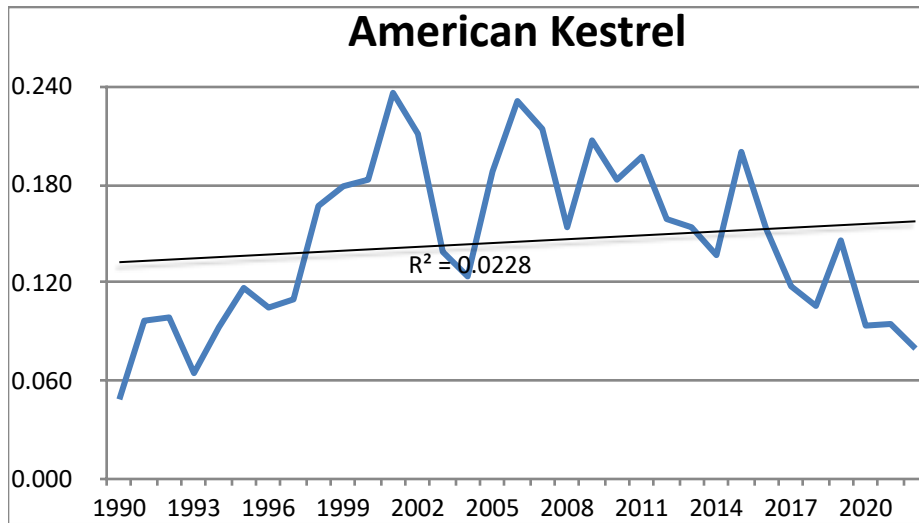
Bald Eagle numbers remain relatively high throughout the study area, with little change over the past half-dozen years. Highest numbers during 2021-22 occurred around Lagerman Reservoir, where several bald eagles have roosted in trees near Swede lakes, and where a pair maintains a nest on the ridge south of the reservoir throughout the year.



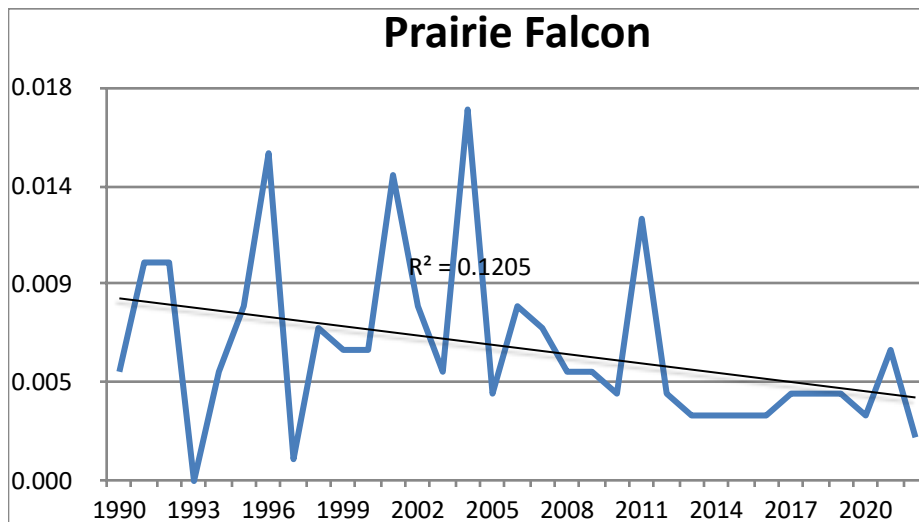
Golden Eagle numbers remain relatively low. Fragmentation of grassland habitat by roads and subdivisions may simply make eastern Boulder County less desirable for these open country specialists. However, monitoring of nesting golden eagles throughout Boulder County does not indicate a decline in the resident population.

Numbers of wintering American Kestrels do appear to have declined during the past half-dozen years. I think it's worth noting that these winters were mostly snowier than average, and kestrels may prefer to hunt over snow-free areas. Also, they are urban-adapted generalists who may gravitate toward suburban areas with birdfeeders

during the winter. But you'll notice that there is no overall trend from 1990-2022, so we will have to see what happens over the next few years before jumping to any conclusions. American Kestrel numbers have declined recently throughout North America.



Prairie Falcon numbers show considerable annual variation throughout the study, but we simply do not have enough data to conclude that wintering numbers are declining overall.



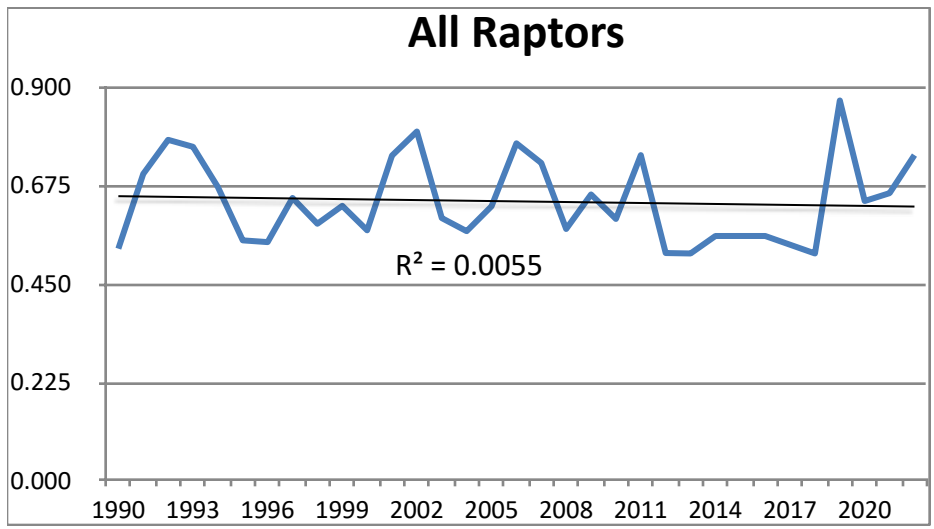
Here's the table showing 2021-22 numbers by survey route. As I mentioned in my earlier post, numbers were up this year along the North Rabbit, South Rabbit, and South County survey routes. Numbers along the other four survey routes were close to average.

2022 raptor data. Mean Number per Trip

<u>Route</u>	<u>Distance</u>	<u>Trips</u>	<u>RT</u>	<u>FH</u>	<u>RL</u>	<u>NH</u>	<u>BE</u>	<u>GE</u>	<u>AK</u>	<u>MR</u>	<u>PF</u>	<u>Total</u>
Boulder Reservoir	19 km	35	8.74	1.4	0.23	0.11	1.2	0.57	0.64		0.08	13.87
East County	30 km	22	14.5	0.14	0.09	0.36	1.05	0.27	3.82		0.05	20.78
Lykins Gulch	3 km	15	1.53	0.27					0.13			2
Rabbit North	23 km	32	10.94	2.11	0.11	0.28	3.22	0.94	1.44		0.11	22.58
Rabbit South	18 km	32	9.84	1.56	0.19	0.75	3.17	0.56	1.16			18.2
South County	32 km	17	7.65	0.24	1.35	0.35	1	0.12	1.76			12.82
Stearns Lake	20 km	14	11.71	0.22		0.86	1.86	0.05	2.64		0.05	18.02
Mean/all routes	145 km		64.91	5.94	1.97	2.71	11.5	2.51	11.59	0	0.29	108.3
Mean/km			0.448	0.041	0.014	0.019	0.079	0.017	0.080	0.000	0.002	0.745

Other raptors observed included 3 Turkey Vultures, 1 Osprey, 4 Woodland ("Cooper's") Hawks, and 6 Great Horned Owls. It's been a long time since any of our wintering raptor volunteers reported a Short-eared Owl, though a few continue to be seen during fall and spring migration.

Here's one of my favorite graphs. Forty years of doing this and we've noted absolutely no change in total numbers of raptors in eastern Boulder County. But I'm afraid our wintering raptor population is becoming progressively more "urbanized."



Thanks again for the excellent reporting, and I hope this season turns out to be at least as productive as last season.

Steve

Groups Reporting:

Boulder Reservoir

Bev Postmus, Noonie Yaron, Zach Pesch, Anya Donicht, Elliot Gihle
George Coffee, Fern Ford, Maribel Williams, George Young
Linda Gathany, John Adams
Howard and Patty Witkin
John Herndon, Randy Gietzen
Megan Jones Patterson, Michael Patterson
Paul Schultz, MarySue Schultz
Elena Klaver, Pam St. Clair, John Wright

East County and Stearns Lake

Jim Holitza, Carol Newman-Holitza, Merle Miller, Sally Miller
Mary Stuber, Sue Coffee
Darin Toohey, Barbara Brandt
Elena Klaver, Dave "Luke" Lucas
Sue Ponsor, Mark Ponsor
Bob Cormack, Cathy Cormack
Barbara Brandt, Jane Angulo
Sue Cass, Casey Cass
Carol McCasland, Brinda Henley

North Rabbit Mountain

Jean and Michael Delaney
Kristin Laubach, Mark Venzke
Tammy Sanders, Ira Sanders
Holly Devaul, Tim Weston
Randy Gietzen, John Herndon
Elena Klaver, Alejandro

South Rabbit Mountain and Lykins Gulch

Carron Meaney, Marion Mackay, Josh Evetushick
Jean and Michael Delaney, Joyce and Ric Porreca
Tammy Sanders, Ira Sanders
Robin Ecklund, Linda Patten, Russell Ruof
Chris Koerner, Patricia Cullen, Tina Roumi
Judy Patrick, Candice Dickinson
Kevin Reardon, Roxanne Brickell-Reardon
Viki Lawrence, Bev Cole
Holly Devaul, Tim Weston
Cindy and Jay Hutchins

South County

Mort Wegman-French, Lysa Wegman-French

Ed Youngs, Brenda Winters

Viki Lawrence, Bev Cole, Claudia VanWie

Bev Baker, Sandra Laursen, Suzanne Bhatt, Ramesh Bhatt