

PUTNEY MOUNTAIN HAWKWATCH

Established in 1974, the Putney Mountain Hawk Watch is the only autumn raptor watch in Vermont that is monitored full time during the fall hawk migration. Volunteers generally count raptors from late August until the second Saturday of November, frequently racking up over 550 hours on the Mountain in a season.

Sixteen species of raptors and vultures fly over Putney Mountain most years. Peak Broad-winged hawk flights are between September 10 and the 25th. A site record of 12,045 Broad – winged hawks was recorded in 2018. Sharp-shinned hawks and golden eagles were also seen in record numbers. Our final tally for 2018 hit 15,971, our highest count ever!

The Putney Mountain Hawk Watch is located on a prominent N - S ridge at an elevation of 1660' five miles west of the Connecticut River. From Interstate 91, take exit 4 to Putney, head north on Hwy. 5, then go left on Westminster West Road. Proceed 1.1 miles, turn left onto West Hill Road and go 2.5 miles. Turn right onto Putney Mountain Road and follow it for 3.3 miles to the ridge top and the parking lot on the right. Take any trail to the summit. The mountain has excellent views NW, W, S, E and NE. Visitors are welcome to join the hawk watchers. Bring binoculars, water and appropriate layers for hanging around a mountain top.

The summit is owned and maintained by the Putney Mountain Association and open for use every day for free. No overnight camping or fires are permitted. The summit trail is part of a 20-mile recreational trail system. Maps are available online at www.windmillhillpinnacle.org. The walk from the parking area to the summit clearing is 0.7 miles of gentle to moderate difficulty. Conditions can be icy or muddy.

To monitor the count as it happens or to see site records since 2003, go to www.hawkcount.org, for count data and site profiles for over 300 North American hawk watch sites. Here is a chart with species by species data for the raptors and vultures that fly over Putney Mountain.

February, 2019