



The International Wildlife Refuge Alliance is looking for an Experienced Raptor Counter for the 2026 fall migration season at the Detroit River Hawk Watch!

<http://detroitriverhawkwatch.org/>

The Detroit River Hawk Watch (DRHW) will be celebrating its 44th consecutive season of monitoring diurnal raptor and turkey vulture migration at the mouth of the Detroit River this 2026 season. Every year, tens of thousands of hawks and turkey vultures migrate through this area and are diligently identified and recorded by a team of dedicated volunteers and a professional hawk counter. During the month of September, we can expect upwards of 10,000 to 100,000 broad-winged hawks, alone!

There have only been nine primary counters at DRHW since 1998 and most return for multiple seasons. Applicants must have experience identifying large passages of raptors at a distance and an extremely high personal interest in raptor migration. We seek individuals who enjoy working with volunteer spotters, mentoring apprentices, and communicating with visitors. Good writing skills are essential for daily and end-of-season summary reports. Counters will be expected to follow the official DRHW protocol.

Contract will be through the International Wildlife Refuge Alliance, which is a non-profit (501c3) organization furthering the mission of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge. Compensation is \$10,920 for the season. Housing or housing support available.

Duties

- Serve as the face of the Detroit River Hawk Watch while working at the count site six days a week from 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM September 1st through November 30th, 2026
- Interact and share knowledge with dedicated volunteers
- Mentor two apprentices in hawk identification and counting techniques during non-peak migration periods
- Review data and write daily narrative summaries in the HawkCount database
- Conduct ad hoc outreach with members of the public at the count site, when able
- Assist with apprentices and volunteer spotters with writing an annual season summary

Required Qualifications	Preferred Qualifications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - >1 year of experience working as a counter for hawk migration - Willingness to work in adverse conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some education and outreach experience

Please email (at a minimum) your CV or resume and contact information for three references to **Erika Van Kirk at erika_vankirk@fws.gov**. Review of applications will begin on April 17th and will continue on a rolling basis.