



## Volunteering with **Lehigh Gap Nature Center**

### **Hawk Count Team**



Lehigh Gap Nature Center (LGNC) is seeking **Hawk Count Team volunteers** to support our annual hawk count at Bake Oven Knob near Germansville, PA. Do you enjoy birding or being outdoors? As a Hawk Count Team volunteer, you will have the opportunity to be a part of one of the world's longest continually-running raptor migration studies!

#### **Hawk Count Team Role at a Glance:**

**Responsible for:** Observing migrating birds; recording and reporting hawk count data (optional)

**Report to:** Chad Schwartz, Executive Director  
([chad.schwartz@lgnc.org](mailto:chad.schwartz@lgnc.org) | 610-760-8889)

**Time Commitment:** 1-8 hour shifts, August 15-late November

#### **About LGNC**

Nestled within the Kittatinny Ridge alongside the Lehigh River, Lehigh Gap Nature Center is a member-supported 501(c)(3) nonprofit environmental education center and wildlife refuge. LGNC is the *first and only nature center in the U.S. created from a federal Superfund site*. When LGNC was founded in 2002, much of the mountainside in our surrounding area was barren and lifeless, scarred by decades of industrial pollution. LGNC's efforts to revegetate several hundred acres of this former 'moonscape' have not only successfully restored life to the mountain, but they have also established a community resource that is now enjoyed by thousands of visitors annually. Today, the restored site is home to a 756-acre wildlife refuge featuring hundreds of native species, 13 miles of trails, and endless opportunities for learning, ecological research, and outdoor recreation. Visit [lgnc.org](http://lgnc.org) to learn more.

#### **Volunteering with the Hawk Count Team**

Each autumn since 1961, hawk counters have recorded migrating birds of prey at the Bake Oven Knob Hawk Watch atop the Kittatinny Ridge near Germansville, PA. Coordinated by LGNC with support from the Pennsylvania Game Commission, the Bake Oven Knob Hawk Count contributes data to an international research network, informing global scientific research and conservation efforts. Over 800,000 migrating raptors – an average of over 10,000 birds per year – have been recorded at the hawk watch since the count began.

Although LGNC's Hawk Count Intern now staffs the hawk watch on weekdays, the Bake Oven Knob Hawk Count was run entirely by volunteers throughout most of its history. Volunteers still have a vital role in spotting migrating birds of prey and running the count on weekends. Prior birding or hawk watching experience is **not** needed to volunteer as an observer.

## Responsibilities of the Hawk Count Team

Hawk Count Team volunteers are responsible for the following in support of LGNC's Bake Oven Knob Hawk Count:

- **Observers** help our hawk counters locate migrating birds of prey from two scenic lookouts on the Kittatinny Ridge. This role is great for birders of all ages and experience levels.
- **Counters** count and record migrating birds of prey. This role is for more experienced hawk watchers.

## Hawk Count Team Leadership

The Hawk Count Team is coordinated by LGNC's Executive Director, Chad Schwartz. Hawk Count Team volunteers should contact Chad directly at 610-760-8889 or [chad.schwartz@lgnc.org](mailto:chad.schwartz@lgnc.org) with any questions or concerns.

## Training and Orientation

New **observers** are encouraged to plan some time to visit the hawk watch and chat with the Hawk Count Team. The hawk watch is staffed daily from about 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. during the count season. To make sure our counters know to expect you, please email [chad.schwartz@lgnc.org](mailto:chad.schwartz@lgnc.org) before your first visit.

New **counters** should email [chad.schwartz@lgnc.org](mailto:chad.schwartz@lgnc.org) to schedule a one-on-one Zoom training. During the training, we will review count protocols and answer any questions you might have.

A detailed manual with Hawk Count protocols is available electronically and at the Nature Center. LGNC also has volunteer supply kits – complete with binoculars, guides, data collection tools, and more – available to borrow.

## Time Commitment

The Hawk Count Team is active August 15 through the end of November. Hawk Count Team volunteers may volunteer as often or as little as they are available.

**Observers** are welcome to volunteer for any amount of time any day of the week during the count season. **Counters** can sign up for either a half shift (4 hours) or a full shift (8 hours) on Saturdays and Sundays during the count season. However, any amount of time is helpful even if a volunteer is unable to commit to a half or full shift.

## Clearances

In accordance with Pennsylvania Act 153 (Child Protective Services Law), all LGNC volunteers must complete free criminal background checks prior to volunteering. Clearances must be renewed every 60 months. Clearances must be renewed every 60 months.