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Winter recoveries in Guatemala and southern Mexico of Broad-winged Hawks banded in south Florida

Eric C. Tabb

Southern Mexico and south Florida are said to be the northern-most extent of the Broad-winged Hawk's (*Buteo platypterus platypterus*) tropical winter range (Brown and Amadon, 1968). In the southeastern Florida winter population, which I have studied since 1968, juveniles have outnumbered adults 156 to 23 among the sample of Broad-wings banded over the past ten years. There have been no returns of any of these banded hawks. The possibility of differing selection of winter ranges with maturity was suspected as the reason. Three foreign recoveries of Broad-wings banded in south Florida since 1970 have supported this theory and re-confirmed the existence of wintering Broad-wings in southern Mexico and Guatemala.

Further study is needed to determine why most adult Broad-wings seem to prefer wintering in Central America. Perhaps the south Florida population represents a small percentage of the total North American population that has separated from the mainstream of migrating Broad-wings. While some sizable migrating flocks are observed flying south from the Florida Keys (Tabb, 1973),

some individuals may choose to remain in subtropical south Florida rather than attempt an arduous flight over the straits of Florida. Migratory studies in the southern Appalachian mountains and the Gulf Coast may show that the bulk of the Broad-wing population enters the central flyway, as sightings of large flocks in Texas indicate, then funnels into the preferred Mexican and Central American wintering grounds.

The three recovered hawks were all shot. It would be interesting to learn if Broad-wing mortality at the hands of gunners for food, sport, or out of prejudice is significant to the population as a whole.

Literature cited

- Brown L. and Amadon, D. 1968. Eagles, Hawks and Falcons of the World. McGraw-Hill, New York.
 Tabb, E.C. 1973. A study of Wintering Broad-winged Hawks in Southeastern Florida 1968-1973. EBBA News, supplement 1973, Volume 36. 🐾

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Figure 1. Map showing recovery locations.

