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## Golden Gate Raptor Observatory 2009 Report

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### **Golden Gate Raptor Observatory 2009 Report**

The Golden Gate Raptor Observatory celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary this past October, with two days of what we called "Raptor Fest." We presented a mini symposium of GGRO research performed over the past 25 years, demonstrations and displays of our trapping procedures, banding demonstrations, a demonstration of study skin preparation, non-releasable "education birds" of several species were displayed, and a variety of children's activities. More than 450 visitors and friends attended the festivities.

Sandwiched on either side of the celebration was our usual fall raptor migration monitoring with 24,826 raptors counted, and 1,399 raptors of 10 species banded. Although the total was slightly below average, we did set a new high for Merlins banded at 62.

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### **Western Canada Cooperative Waterfowl Banding Program Willow Lake, Northwest Territories Report 2009**

In 2009, the Tulita Renewable Resources Council (TRRC), the Government of the Northwest

Territories' Department of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR), and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) collaborated for the 15th consecutive year (1995-2009) of duck banding at Willow Lake (65°14' N; 125°25' W) in the Mackenzie River Valley, Sahtu Settlement Area, NWT. Our annual goal is to band 2000 Mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*), 1500 Northern Pintail (*A. acuta*), and all incidentally captured ducks (up to 1000 per species) prior to the opening day of waterfowl hunting in the NWT (01 Sep). The USFWS, Sahtu Renewable Resources Board (SRRB), and ENR provided funding for the project. A Waterfowl Biologist (USFWS) supervised two contract Banding Assistants (TRRC) and two crew members hired by the SRRB.

A maximum of 24 funnel traps were set for a total of 486 trap-nights during 11 to 31 Aug. Trap success was 3.2 ducks per trap night. A total of 1803 kg (3975 lb) of barley was used as bait. Standard leg bands (Call 1-800-327-BAND) were placed on 1549 ducks: 895 Mallards (58% of all ducks banded), 511 Northern Pintails (33%), 90 American Green-winged Teal (*A. crecca*; 6%), 50 American Wigeon (*A. americana*; 3%), 2 Northern Shoveler (*A. clypeata*), and one Blue-winged Teal (*A. discors*).

The number of ducks banded in 2009 was 10.4% above the 1995-2009 average of 1388 ducks. The greatest one day catch of unbanded birds occurred on 13 Aug, and the greatest total catch in one day occurred on 25 Aug, with a catch of 225 ducks.

Willow Lake water levels were average to slightly above average for the 2009 season. Eighteen percent of banded ducks (N= 276) were in the hatch-year or local age-class, which is less than the 1995-2009 station average of 33% juvenile age class. Eighty-four recaptures were recorded, of which 16 were foreign recaptures and 68 recaptures of birds banded in prior years.

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