Golden Eagle Migration Pathways Along the Continental Divide in Alberta and Montana (Poster)

Jess Garby*, Crown of the Continent Research Learning Center, Glacier National Park, West Glacier, MT
Jami Belt, Crown of the Continent Research Learning Center, Glacier National Park, West Glacier, MT
Lisa Bate, Science and Resource Management, Glacier National Park, West Glacier, MT
Rob Domenech, Raptor View Research Institute, Missoula, MT

*Indicates Presenter
**Indicates Student Presentation

The number of Golden Eagles (*Aquila chrysaetos*) counted annually at fall migration sites in western North America has been declining in recent years. This decline in migration count numbers could be attributed to factors such as lead poisoning, habitat loss, declines in prey species, and climate change. Given widespread population declines, efforts to continue monitoring population trends are needed. Prior to 1987, Golden Eagle migration corridors through Glacier National Park (GNP) were unknown. In response, researchers conducted three years of fall and spring migration counts, averaging 1973 Golden Eagles in the fall. As a result, GNP established the Mount Brown raptor migration site to monitor the long-term migration trends of Golden Eagles and other migratory raptor species. The Mount Brown hawk watch site was officially established in 2018 and is situated between two other fall hawk watch sites along the Continental Divide with long term datasets: Mount Lorette and the Bridger Mountains. All three migration sites are along the primary flyway for migrating Golden Eagles; however, count numbers can vary widely among sites on similar dates. In this poster, we analyzed Golden Eagle count data among three migration sites and inferred potential eagle flyways along the Continental Divide from Alberta to Montana. We used count data during peak fall migration at each site from 2020 through 2023 to synthesize and visualize potential Golden Eagles flight paths across the flyway, examine the similarities and differences of the results, and propose further research questions.