



# Hawk Migration Association of North America



## HMANA Position Statement

### **Anthracite Ridge, LLC - Clean Air Generation, LLC - Wind Energy Project**

The Hawk Migration Association of North America (HMANA) has serious reservations about the proposed Anthracite Ridge, LLC - Clean Air Generation, LLC - Wind Energy Project. While HMANA does not oppose wind energy, we vehemently oppose construction of industrial wind machines that are sited along known migration routes. The aforementioned project appears to be one that would endanger populations of raptors, including the federally protected Bald and Golden Eagles.

HMANA has expertise in this domain, where our members, counters, support staff, and volunteers obsess on knowing when, where, and how raptors migrate. In fact, HMANA's written mission is to advance scientific knowledge and promote conservation of raptor populations through study, enjoyment, and appreciation of raptor migration. In addition, HMANA's HawkCount.org is the premiere database for raptor migration data in North America and has raptor data stretching back to 1934. In Pennsylvania alone, there are dozens of hawk sites that collect data, with about a dozen active sites that are along the ridges of this proposed wind energy project, that have long-term, longitudinal data on raptors.

In addition, HMANA has partnered with Bird Studies Canada, Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, and Hawk Watch International to produce statistically defensible indices of annual abundance and trends for each species of migratory raptor. This Raptor Population Index (RPI) has spawned numerous research papers in peer-reviewed scientific journals concerning population trends for raptors and serves as a metric for informing the scientific community, conservation agencies, and the public about deleterious behaviors that impact raptor populations.

The migration of raptors, both in the spring and the fall is published in Hawk Migration Studies, the official journal of HMANA. Here, well over a hundred active sites have their migration seasons analyzed. This analysis provides the basic understanding of the state of the raptors, and yet, is often overlooked by the uninformed.

A technique of energy producers to bamboozle permit granters is to minimize their projected harm by citing breeding bird surveys. While this data is important, it does not show the actual population of various raptors that migrate through the region. For example, Golden Eagles are not considered a breeding species in Pennsylvania.



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However, they do migrate through the state, flying along the ridges from late September through late December, and then again from mid-February through April. And this is not just some theoretical number, for as the Saturday counter at the Allegheny Front Hawk Watch, I personally have counted hundreds of Golden Eagles, with one Saturday in October 2019 where I counted 59 in one day.

We cannot always predict when we will see particular birds because they often jump from ridge to ridge depending on the weather. This is why any survey that is mandated for this project needs to consider all of the adjacent ridges, for as the climate changes, the winds also change, thus making predictions about which ridge the birds will fly on, a crapshoot. What is not a gamble is that the raptors will use the ridges...we just do not know which they will use.

This letter should give the Hegins Township Zoning Board pause! HMANA is very concerned about greenlighting a large-scale project without knowing the full impact it will have in the coming decades.

Please feel free to contact me directly for additional information.

Sincerely,

Brian M. Wargo, Ph.D.  
Director – Hawk Migration Association of North America (HMANA)  
Chair of the Data Committee (HMANA)  
Chair of the Education and Conservation Committee (HMANA)  
Eastern Flyway Editor – Hawk Migration Studies

Contact me at: [wargo@hmana.org](mailto:wargo@hmana.org)