



# 2023 Seattle Cooper's Hawk Project: Annual Report

We continue to prowl the greenspaces, parks, and neighborhoods of Seattle in search of nesting Cooper's hawks. Here is news of the past season.



First fledgling to disperse: male purple left K-E (Nancy Schutt)

## Banding Update

URC banders spent many hours persuading 45 fledglings out of 200 potential customers to wear the color-ID bands associated with the Seattle Cooper's Hawk Project (orange on right leg for females, purple on left for males). Since 2012 we have banded 565 Coops and have received 768 reports of band sightings, thanks to all you observers out there. A phenomenal 254 (45%) of our banded Coops were seen again; 89 of those band sightings were fatalities, most commonly from collisions with windows (30) or cars (10). Curiously, although we have banded more females (302) than males (263), band returns comprise 109 females and 145 males. Other studies have documented that juvenile females disperse further than males. This means that males are more likely to reside inside the city, with its higher density of observant birders.



Ravenna nesting pair (adult male, 1-year-old female) showing sex size difference (Doug Plummer)

## By the Numbers

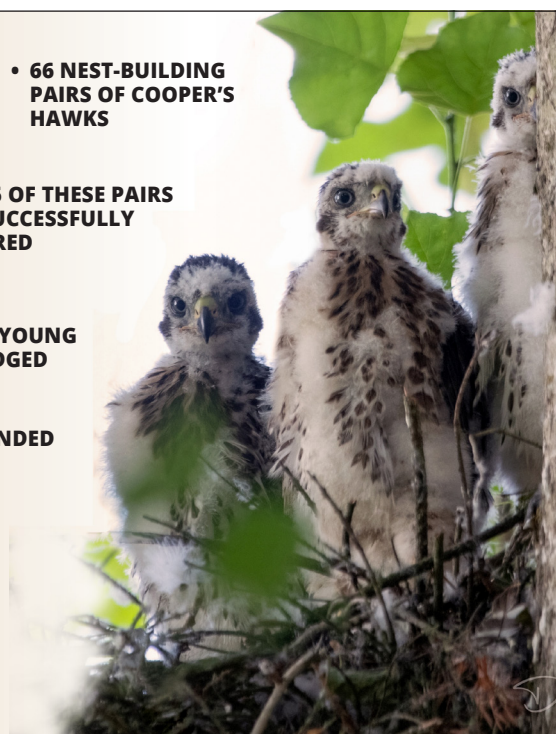
In 2023 we had record numbers. Last year's slight downturn in fledgling numbers may be a statistical hiccup or it may be related to other factors, such as the effect of the 2021 heat dome on juvenile survival. Regardless, we once again find a growing population, and we continue to wonder how many more pairs the city can support. Our urban hawks value the Seattle Parks system; 40 of their nests were in parks.

- **66 NEST-BUILDING PAIRS OF COOPER'S HAWKS**

- **55 OF THESE PAIRS SUCCESSFULLY BRED**

- **200 YOUNG FLEDGED**

- **45 BANDED**



"Branchers": Cooper's hawks hatch asynchronously, resulting in size disparity in young (Geoff Dodd)



### Volunteer Profile

Veteran birders and new Coop volunteers Darwin Nordin and Rebecca Watson scoured the dozen West Seattle Coop territories this season, providing hard-won and critical information. Besides their extensive reporting on known nesting pairs, they found their first new Coop nest: a second pair in Fauntleroy Park. They have certainly earned the title of Rookies of the Year.



Clockwise from top: Fledglings (Larry Gilpin); Fault bar in tail (Martin Muller); Sketch of D-4 as a 1-year-old (Alley Kloba); Darwin and Rebecca (Rebecca Watson, Darwin Nordin)

### Another Supermom Story

Veteran readers may recall the 2018 supermom story of a nesting female who lost her provisioning male to a fatal window hit; she subsequently hunted on her own and successfully fledged three young. This year, at a nest in the I-5 greenbelt near Columbian Way, the hunting (banded) male was in a fatal window collision on 6/13, leaving four very young nestlings. By 7/13 we confirmed the presence of all four fledglings—plus a second-year male. We were unable to determine if this male was recruited by the adult female as a helper at the nest or was an opportunistic mooch, but he is now banded, so perhaps we will see him as the nesting male in 2024. One of the fledglings is now also banded; as expected, he had a fault bar in his tail, reflecting temporary food stress.



### Latest Happy Ending for 2021 Orphan D-4

As some may recall, in 2021 PAWS and URC were overwhelmed by premature Coop fledglings as a result of the unprecedented three-day heat dome. We fostered one juvenile female (orange right D-4) to a nest in Ravenna Park that only had two fledglings and could support a third. This spring D-4 was found nesting in Sandel Park in northwest Seattle, where she fledged four young. Alley Kloba, who lives nearby, spotted D-4 in her yard over the winter and documented her eventual nesting in the park.



### Support URC

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