

DISPARITIES BETWEEN RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS: DO GOLDEN EAGLES WARRANT SPECIAL CONCERN BASED ON MIGRATION COUNTS IN THE WESTERN UNITED STATES?

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Abstract. A recent summary of raptor migration count data concluded that the status of Golden Eagles (*Aquila chrysaetos*) in western North America warranted concern (Hoffman and Smith 2003). Our analysis of these data did not lead us to the same conclusion. We have three specific concerns. First, the regional characterizations of eagle migration in Hoffman and Smith (2003) are based on a very small sample of sites. Therefore, we recommend that these characterizations be considered as hypothetical in nature. Second, we suggest that the population cycles and patterns of age-specific population change described by Hoffman and Smith (2003) are neither as general nor as clear-cut as they indicated. Finally, although the authors expressed concern about the status of Golden Eagles based upon both their findings and data from other sources, we did not find compelling evidence for population declines in our inspection of those same data.

Key words: *Aquila chrysaetos, Golden Eagles, migration counts, population cycles, population trends.*