

# Eagle Audubon Society

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## Florida Keys Hawk Watch

|        |                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|--------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| WHERE  | Curry Hammock State Park, Marathon, FL — count deck atop the Campground's Restroom Building                                                                                           |
| WHEN   | Counters are on the deck roughly 8 AM–4 PM daily through migration season (weather permitting). Steve & Jan plan to be there Oct 10–12; join for a day, a weekend, or the whole trip. |
| LEADER | Steve & Jan Burkholder                                                                                                                                                                |

### About the Hawk Watch

The EAS tour to the "Hawk Watch" takes place at Curry Hammock State Park in Marathon, Florida. It's run by Hawk Watch volunteers who count the birds as they pass overhead from the second-floor deck of the campground's restroom building, roughly 8 AM to 4 PM each day of migration, depending on weather.

This has been the counting site for many years because the Middle Florida Keys pinch down to about six-tenths of a mile wide there, funneling migrating raptors into a narrow corridor right overhead. From the deck, you get a great view of everything moving through.

The site is famous for the number of Peregrine Falcons that pass through. Last season (Aug 1–Oct 31, 2025) volunteers tallied **23,201 total raptors**. No birds were counted on October 10th last year — it rained all day — but October 12th brought an all-time record: **1,812 Sharp-shinned Hawks** in a single day.

### 2025 Season Snapshot — October 11–13

|                     | Oct 11 | Oct 12 | Oct 13 |
|---------------------|--------|--------|--------|
| Peregrine Falcons   | 387    | 248    | 105    |
| Sharp-shinned Hawks | 465    | 1,812  | 125    |
| American Kestrels   | 627    | 476    | 177    |
| Daily Total         | 2,079  | 4,216  | 1,023  |

*1,812 Sharp-shinned Hawks on Oct 12, 2025 was an all-time single-day record for the site.*

### Migrating Warblers

It's not just raptors — migrating songbirds can be seen in the trees close by the deck at the campground, including Palm Warblers (most numerous), American Redstarts (easy to spot with their flash of red), and Ovenbirds (you'll hear them before you see them), plus Black-and-white and Prairie Warblers, Gray Catbirds, Eastern Kingbirds, and Barn Swallows.

## Planning Your Trip

You can drive down in one day or two — let us know if you'd like to carpool. (One rule: you can't carpool and insist on riding shotgun the whole way.)

### Option 1 — Drive straight through, Friday Oct 9

Sun City Center to Marathon, FL — approx. 350 miles, 7–8+ hours depending on time of day and how many breaks you take.

### Option 2 — Split the drive (Steve & Jan's plan)

**Fri, Oct 9:** Sun City Center to Homestead, FL — 279 miles, about 4 hours. **Sat, Oct 10 morning:** Homestead to Marathon — 78 miles, about 2 hours depending on traffic. Hotels run less in Homestead than in Marathon.

## Lodging

### Home2 Suites by Hilton

77 NE 3rd Street, Florida City • 305-248-3155 • approx. \$130/night. Free gas BBQ on the outdoor deck — bring hot dogs, burgers, or chicken and we can grill a group dinner together (bring your own plates, drinks, and utensils; the hotel supplies the grill tools).

### Hampton Inn Marathon

13351 Overseas Highway, Marathon • 305-359-3040 • approx. \$227/night. One of at least 10 hotel options in Marathon.

### Camping at Curry Hammock SP

Contact the park directly to reserve — \$38.50/night for a site with electric and water hookups. As of 9/7/26 no tent or RV sites were open for 10/9–11, but availability can change — check again as the date gets closer.

## Group Dinner — Saturday, October 10

We have a reservation for 6 at **Florida Keys Steak and Lobster House**, 3660 Overseas Hwy, Marathon (305-743-5516), made under Jan Burkholder's name for 5:30 PM — happy hour runs until 6 PM. We'll adjust the headcount as we hear who's joining, so let Steve or Jan know if you'd like a seat at the table.

## Good to Know

- Park website: [floridastateparks.org/curry-hammock-state-park](http://floridastateparks.org/curry-hammock-state-park)
- This is an informal, self-organized EAS trip — drive yourself, carpool, or join for just a day. Reach out to Steve & Jan ([steve@steveandjan.com](mailto:steve@steveandjan.com)) if you're planning to come, especially if you want to carpool or join the Saturday dinner.

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