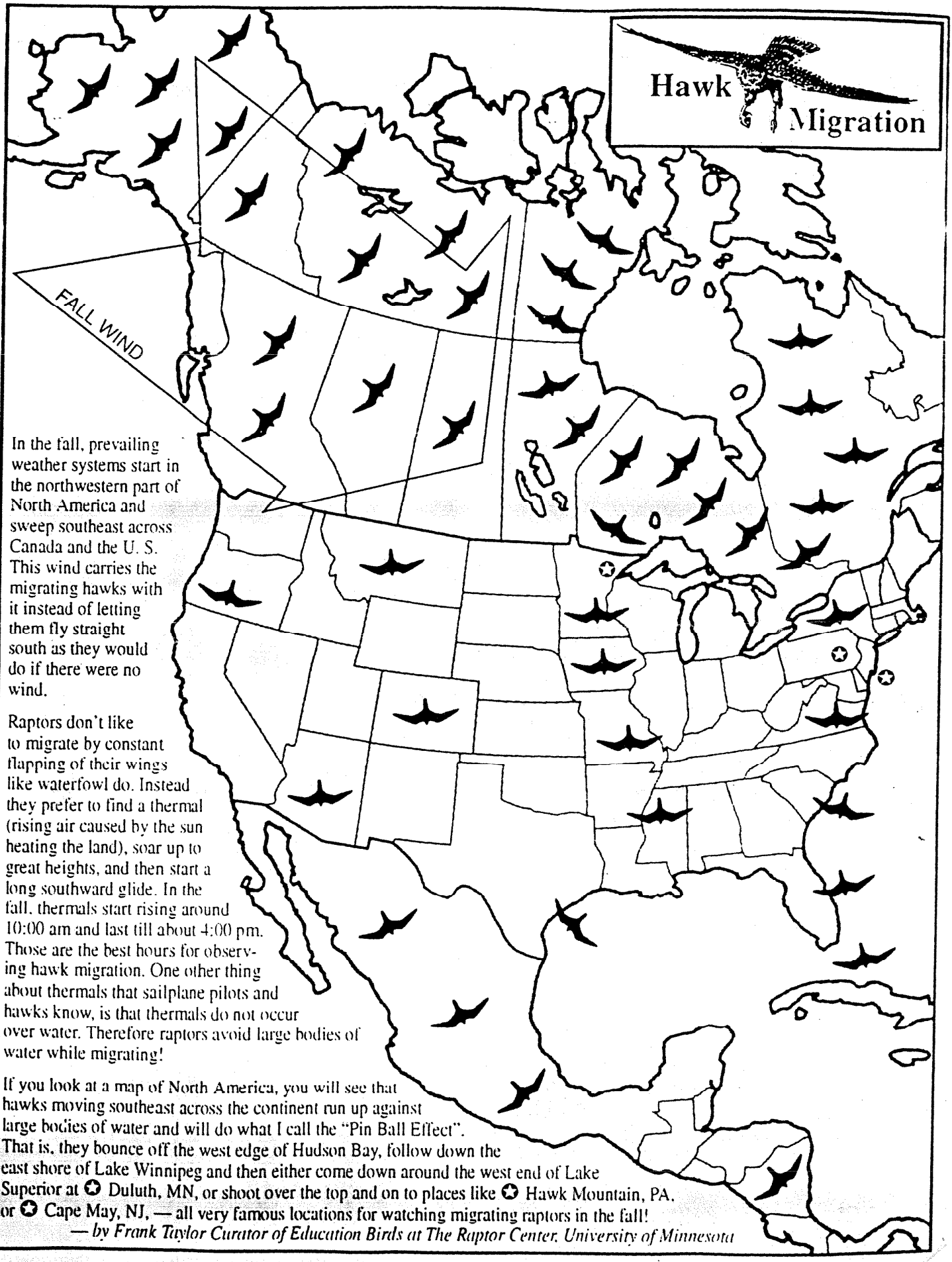

In the fall, prevailing weather systems start in the northwestern part of North America and sweep southeast across Canada and the U. S. This wind carries the migrating hawks with it instead of letting them fly straight south as they would do if there were no wind.

Raptors don't like to migrate by constant flapping of their wings like waterfowl do. Instead they prefer to find a thermal (rising air caused by the sun heating the land), soar up to great heights, and then start a long southward glide. In the fall, thermals start rising around 10:00 am and last till about 4:00 pm. Those are the best hours for observing hawk migration. One other thing about thermals that sailplane pilots and hawks know, is that thermals do not occur over water. Therefore raptors avoid large bodies of water while migrating!

If you look at a map of North America, you will see that hawks moving southeast across the continent run up against large bodies of water and will do what I call the "Pin Ball Effect". That is, they bounce off the west edge of Hudson Bay, follow down the east shore of Lake Winnipeg and then either come down around the west end of Lake Superior at ✪ Duluth, MN, or shoot over the top and on to places like ✪ Hawk Mountain, PA. or ✪ Cape May, NJ, — all very famous locations for watching migrating raptors in the fall!

— by Frank Taylor Curator of Education Birds at The Raptor Center, University of Minnesota