

Rough-legged Hawk

Vital Statistics

L = 21 in., WS = 53 in.,

Wt. = 2.2 lb.

pale chest and head

relatively small bill

feathered legs and small feet

Habitat – open country, fields and marshes, nests on Arctic tundra

Behavior – hunts from perch or relatively low flight, often hovers, feeds on small rodents



Visual identification tips



soaring - slight dihedral

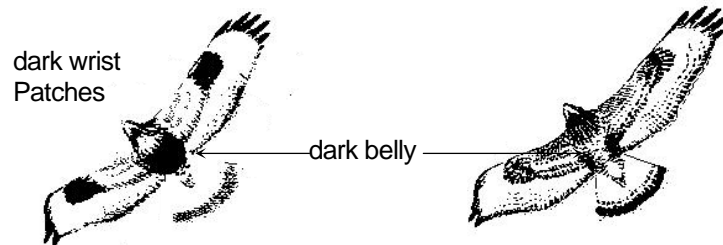


gliding – nearly flat



Other flight silhouettes

light morph has very dark belly



dark wrist Patches

dark belly

- large, slender buteo, long broad-tipped wings, long tail
- occurs in light and dark morphs, few intermediates
- may congregate in communal roosts during cold periods
- overwinters in Colorado

Broad-winged Hawk

Vital Statistics

L = 15 in., WS = 34 in.,

Wt. = 14 oz.

brown chest and head

underparts are barred reddish brown

pointed wingtips

unmarked underwings except dark border



Habitat – deciduous or mixed deciduous coniferous woodlands

Behavior – hunts from perch, feeds on toads, frogs, chipmunks, shrews, voles and nesting birds

Visual identification tips

soaring



soaring - nearly flat



glides with wings angled down

wingbeats relatively quick, stiff, deep



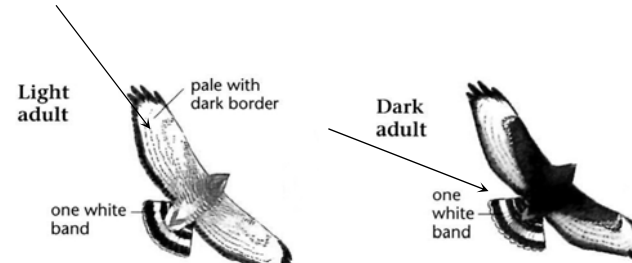
soaring



glides with wings angled down



Other flight silhouettes



Light adult

pale with dark border

Dark adult

one white band

one white band

- small buteo with pointed wingtips
- occurs in light and dark morphs
- may be seen in both spring and fall migration near water features
- nests in deciduous forests in Northeastern Colorado

THE BUTEOS

Red-tailed hawk

Ferruginous hawk

Rough-legged hawk

Swainson's hawk

Broad-winged hawk

Abbreviations

L= length from tip of bill to end of tail

WS= wingspan from wing tip to wing tip

Wt= weight in pounds (lb.)

Terminology

Buteo – group of broad-winged soaring raptors

Gape – mouth opening

Kiting – method of hovering in place using wind currents rather than flapping

Morph – color variation

Patagial bar – dark area near shoulder along leading edge.

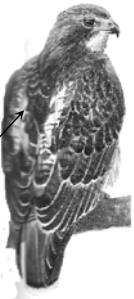
Primaries – outer wing (flight) feathers

Red-tailed Hawk

Vital Statistics

L = 19 in., WS = 49 in.,
Wt. = 2.4 lb.

stocky, broad-winged hawk
distinctive, rusty red tail in
adult, pale “backpack straps”
form a V on upper surface.



Habitat – deserts, fields, farmland, grasslands, woodlands,
may prefer forest edges

Behavior – hunts from perch using sit and wait strategy or
may soar and scan for prey, also uses kiting technique, feeds
on small to medium-sized mammals and snakes

Visual identification tips



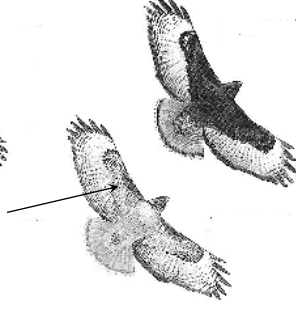
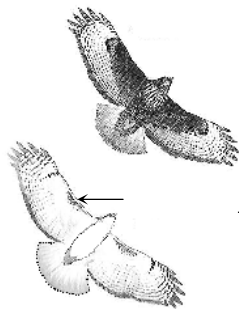
gliding



soaring – slight dihedral



Kiting



- redtails are the most common hawk in N. America.
- “typical” redtails have a light breast, dark belly-band and rusty red tail.
- patagial bars are good indicators on lighter morphs

Ferruginous Hawk

Vital Statistics

L = 23 in., WS = 56 in.,
Wt. = 3.5 lb.

pale head, large beak, long gape
bright white breast, rufous back
feathered legs and large feet



Habitat – semi-arid open country,
desert, prairie and grasslands

Behavior – hunts from perch or the
air, often seen on the ground, feeds
on small mammals and occasionally
ground birds like pheasants.

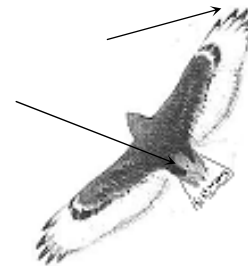
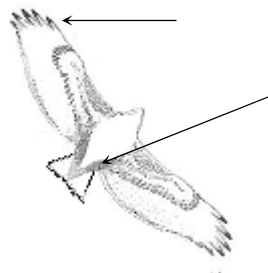
Visual identification tips



soaring - distinct dihedral



gliding



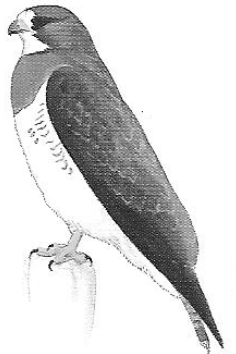
- largest of the buteos
- long wings, no patagial bar as in redtails
- upper surface of primary feathers whitish toward outside
- year around resident of eastern Colorado
- very pale underneath, contrasts with dark leg feathers

Swainson's Hawk

Vital Statistics

L = 19 in., WS = 51 in.,
Wt. = 1.9 lb.

dark bib, whitish chin
mostly white chest, sometimes
with brown barring, long tail has
dark band near tip.



Habitat – arid to semi-arid open
country, Inhabits farmlands and
pastures of great plains

Behavior – often seen on fence posts
or on the ground, diet varies seasonally
from rodents and small birds to insects.

Visual identification tips

Similar profile as ferruginous but smaller size, wings narrower



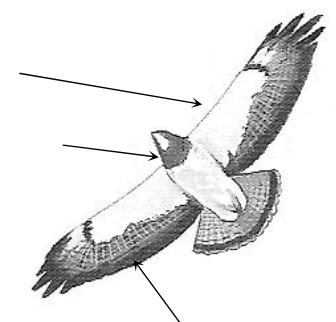
soaring - distinct dihedral



gliding – nearly flat



dark morph adult



light morph adult

- wings longer than redtail's
- dark morphs make up about 10% of population
- mainly summer resident of Colorado
- migrates to Argentina in winter

Osprey

Vital Statistics

L = 22-25 in., WS = 58-72 in.,
Wt. = 3.5 lb.

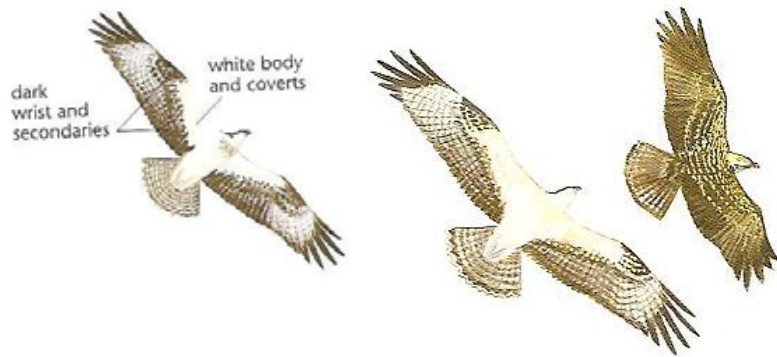
Black and white patterned plumage
Dark eye stripe separates head and throat



Habitat – Wetland habitats, especially coastal marshes, as well as lakes and rivers.

Behavior – Feeds on fish it captures by hovering, then plunging feet-first into water.

Visual identification tips



Adult

Juvenile

- Soars on long, lanky, crooked wings.
- Flight feathers are uniformly dark.
- Migrates south in winter.
- Mainly summer resident in Colorado.

Northern Harrier

Vital Statistics

L = 17-23 in., WS = 38-48 in.,
Wt. = 15 oz.

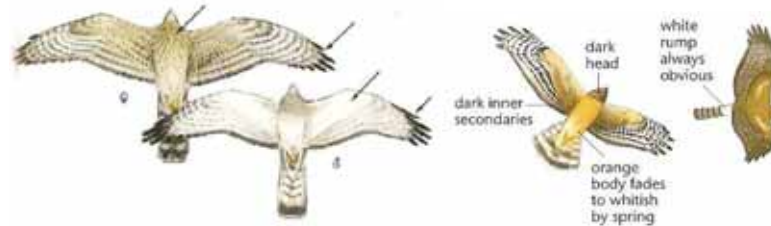
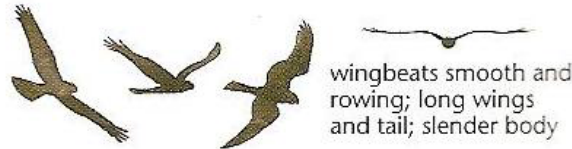
Owl shaped facial disk
White rump patch
Tail long and narrow



Habitat – Coastal and inland marshes, as well as open meadows, fields, and grasslands.

Behavior – Usually seen coursing low over fields or marshes; it captures small birds and mammals with a sudden pounce.

Visual identification tips



Adult Female/Male

Juvenile

- Male is gray, female and immature are brown.
- Wing beat loping and regular. Unique cadence to wing beats.
- Wing attitude can appear like falcon or buteo.
- Resident in Colorado.

THE EAGLES AND OTHERS

Bald Eagle

Golden Eagle

Osprey

Turkey Vulture

Northern Harrier

Abbreviations

L= length from tip of bill to end of tail
WS= wingspan from wing tip to wing tip
Wt= weight in pounds (lb.)

Terminology

Primaries – outer wing (flight) feathers

Nape – back of neck

Dihedral – wings in v-shape while in flight

Wing attitude – how wings are held

Differences in plumage by sex and/or age

Bald Eagle

Vital Statistics

L = 31-37 in., WS = 70-90 in.,
Wt. = 9.5 lb.

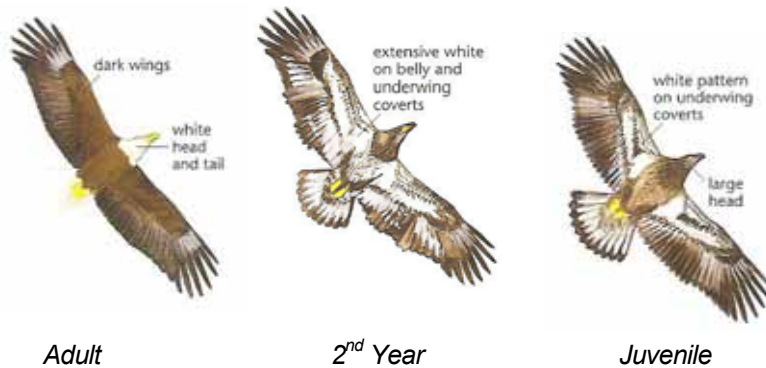
White head and tail in adults
Head and bill are massive
Visible in flight



Habitat – Almost invariably adjacent to wetlands, especially along coastlines and around large lakes and rivers.

Behavior – Usually found near water, it feeds mainly on fish (often scavenged) and waterfowl captured in pursuit.

Visual identification tips



Adult

2nd Year

Juvenile

- Takes 4 to 5 years to reach maturity & adult plumage.
- 1st year white limited to underwing linings.
- 2nd & 3rd year underwings patches generously white.
- Wing beat is slow, robust, deeply arched on upstroke.
- Winters in large numbers in Colorado with a few breeding pairs year round.

Golden Eagle

Vital Statistics

L = 30-40 in., WS = 80-88 in.,
Wt. = 10 lb.

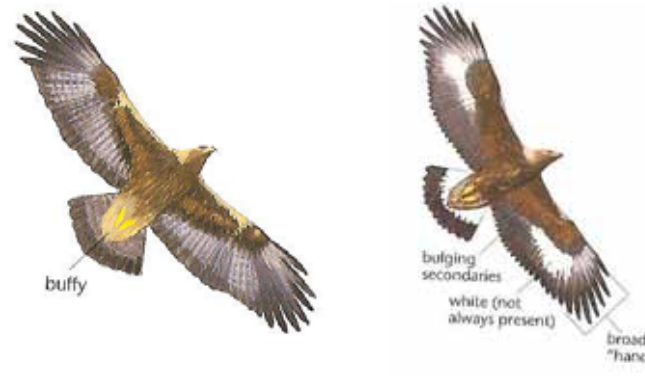
Golden feathers on nape
Overall large and dark



Habitat – Mountainsides and canyons, as well as open grasslands and prairie. Eastern salt marshes in winter

Behavior – It hunts mammals and birds mainly from the air, often in spectacular stoops.

Visual identification tips



Adult

Juvenile

- Takes 3 to 4 years to reach maturity and adult plumage.
- Wing beat slow and ponderous, shallower than Bald Eagle.
- Juvenile similar in appearance to immature Bald Eagle.
- Feathered down legs to toes.
- Year around resident of Colorado.

Turkey Vulture

Vital Statistics

L = 35-32 in., WS = 69 in.,
Wt. = 4 lb.

Uniformly dark black
Red featherless head up close
Bold dihedral



Habitat – Often soars above open land, including agricultural areas, pastures, and roadsides; roosts in deciduous woodlands.

Behavior – often seen soaring or roosting in groups. They find food by smell.

Visual identification tips



Adult

Juvenile

- In flight - Long tail and appearance of no head.
- Rarely flaps, bold dihedral.
- Mainly summer resident of Colorado.
- Migrates south in winter.

American Kestrel

Vital Statistics

L = 8-10 in., WS = 20-24 in.
Wt. = 3.4-5.3 oz

Smallest falcon
 Long tailed and pointy wings



Habitat – Found in open country and in cities.

Behavior – Feeds on insects, reptiles, and small mammals, hovering over prey before plunging. Often perches on telephone lines. Frequently bobs its tail.

Visual identification tips



Adult Female



Adult Male

- The most colorful falcon, best field marks are white cheeks with two bold black mustache marks.
- Soars with wings flat and hovers regularly.
- When perched, wingtips fall short of tail tips.
- Common over most of North America.

Gyr Falcon

Vital Statistics

L = 20-25 in., WS = 43-51 in.
Wt. = 3.1 lbs.

Heavily built, wings broader based than other falcons.
 Adult has yellow-orange eye ring, cere and legs



Gray Morph

Habitat – Open tundra near rocky outcrops and cliffs.

Behavior – Flies with slow, powerful wing beats. Preys on birds.

Visual identification tips



- Extremely rare winter visitor, breeds in arctic tundra of Alaska and N. Canada.
- 3 color morphs – dark, gray, and white.
- Best field marks are two-toned underwings on gray and dark morph falcons. On the white morph - all white body and underwings with black wingtips.

The Falcons

Prairie Falcon Peregrine Merlin

American Kestrel Gyr Falcon

Abbreviations

L = length from tip of bill to end of tail
WS = wingspan from wing tip to wing tip
Wt. = weight in pounds (lb.)

Terminology

Primaries – outer wing (flight) feathers
Nape – back of neck
Axillaries – similar to our underarms
Cere - A fleshy or waxlike membrane at the base of the upper beak through which the nostrils open
Wing attitude – how wings are held
Differences in plumage by sex and/or age

Prairie Falcon

Vital Statistics

L = 15.5-19.5 in., WS = 35-43 in.

Wt. = 1.6 lb.

Habitat – Dry, open country and mountains of the Western N. America.

Behavior – Preys upon small mammals and birds.



Visual identification tips



Adult



- Confused with Merlin and Peregrine Falcon.
- The best field marks are the dark axillaries,
- Square head with white marks directly behind eyes when perched.
- Usually nests in cliff sites.

Peregrine Falcon

Vital Statistics

L = 16-20 in., WS = 36-44 in.

Wt. = 1.6 lb.

Crown and nape black
Black wedge extends below eye, forming a distinctive helmet.

Habitat – Open wetlands near cliffs, Also nests on bridges and tall buildings.

Behavior – Preys on birds.



Visual identification tips



Adult



- Best field marks are dark, bold mustache and uniformly dark underwings.
- Wingtips almost reaches tail tip when perched.
- Wing beat is fluid and elastic.
- Usually found near water fowl and shorebirds.

Merlin

Vital Statistics

L = 9-12 in., WS = 21-27 in.

Wt. = 4.5-8.3 oz

Uniformly dark, lack of bold mustache mark.

Habitat – Uses a variety of forested habitats with open areas.

Behavior – Powerful flyer; does not hover. Soars with wings flat. Catches birds in flight by a sudden burst of speed rather than by diving.



Visual identification tips



Adult Male



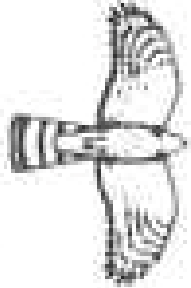
Adult Female



- Very aggressive.
- Wing beats are quick and continuous with short strokes.
- Will take prey bigger than itself.
- Point to point flight is consistent and direct.

Which accipiter is it?

Northern Goshawk, Coopers, Sharp-shinned

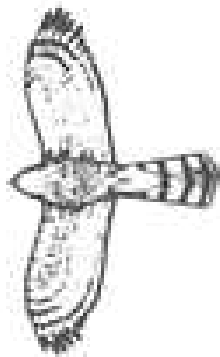


1. _____

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2.NOGO
3.COHA</p> |
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Coopers Hawk Sharp-shinned Hawk

Accipiters

Northern Goshawk Coopers Hawk

Sharp-shinned Hawk

Abbreviations

L= length from tip of bill to end of tail
 WS= wingspan from wing tip to wing tip
 Wt= weight in pounds (lb.)

Terminology

Accipiter – group of short-winged, long tailed forest raptors.

Plumage Differences – feather colors due to age or sex.

Crown – Top of head

Nape – back of neck

Tail bars – lines of colors differences on tail

Superciliary – area of feathers like an eyebrow

Northern Goshawk

Vital Statistics

Male L = 18- 20 in., WS = 38- 41 in.,

Wt. = 24- 36 oz.

Female L = 21- 24 in., WS = 41- 45 in.,

Wt. = 26- 43 oz.

Best field marks are long wings that taper in soar and glide and appear pointed when flapping and wedge-shaped tail tip. Adult's dark head with white superciliary lines.



Habitat – Breeds in forests of Northern U.S. south in Appalachian Mts. To West Virginia, throughout Canada and Alaska, and in forested Western mountains.

Behavior – Weaves thru mature forests like a jet plane, the Goshawk rarely gives it's prey time to react.



Visual identification tips



- Flies with wrists thrust forward much like Sharp-shinned Hawk but head look for superciliary line.
- Wedge shaped tail.
- Hunts in coniferous forests.

Coopers Hawk

Vital Statistics

Male L = 14-16 in., WS = 28- 30 in.,

Wt. = 10-14 oz.

Female L = 16-19 in., WS = 31- 34 in.,

Wt. = 17- 24 oz.

Best field marks area crown darker than back and rounded tail with a wide white band on tip, often worn by spring.



Habitat – Breeds in open forests over most of U.S. and southern Canada, except Florida peninsula and northern Great Plains. Winters throughout U.S. except northern Great Plains

Behavior – Experts in ambush and surprise attack, appearing from nowhere and stopping at nothing in the pursuit of prey. They do not hesitate to enter brushy areas or to run on the ground after prey.



Visual identification tips



- Flies with more straight at the wrist and head projects out from the leading edges.
- Rounded tail.
- Hunts fields near forest edges and open forests.

Sharp-shinned Hawk

Vital Statistics

Male L = 9-11 in., WS = 20-22 in.,

Wt. = 3- 4 oz.

Female L = 11-13 in., WS = 23-26 in.,

Wt. = 5- 8 oz.

Best field marks are small rounded head with eye centrally placed and square-tipped tail, with at most a narrow white band on tip.

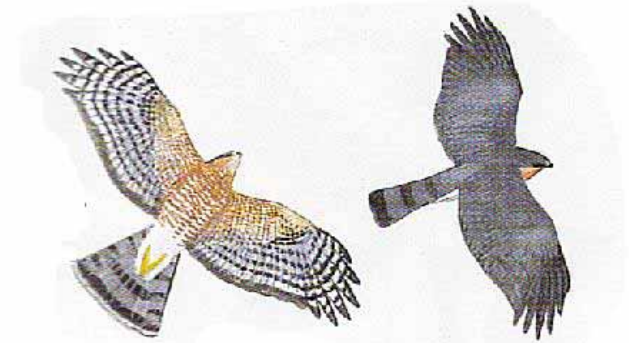


Habitat – Breeds in dense forest stands. Winters throughout U.S. except northern Great Plains

Behavior – hunts by stealth and camouflage, both in gaining close approach to its victim and in avoiding capture by larger raptors.



Visual identification tips



- Small narrow head that does not extend much past wrists that are thrust forward in flight.
- Squared off tail.
- Hunts in forests and forest edges.