

# A Field Guide for Hawks seen in the North East

BECAUSE MANY HAWKS DIFFER IN APPEARANCE DUE TO VARIOUS DARK AND LIGHT PHASES, ONLY THE ADULTS ARE ILLUSTRATED.

## KNOW YOUR SILHOUETTES

### Buteos

BROAD WINGS AND BROAD ROUNDED TAILS; OFTEN SEEN SOARING IN WIDE CIRCLES HIGH IN THE AIR.



### Falcons

STREAMLINED-LONG POINTED WINGS; LONGISH COMPRESSED TAPERED TAILS; STRONG ROWING WING BEATS; LOSE SOME OF THEIR POINTED WING & TAPERED TAIL LOOK WHEN NOT IN DIRECT FLIGHT.



### Accipiters

SHORT, WIDE, ROUNDED WINGS; LONG TAILS: FLAP, FLAP, FLAP-SAIL FLIGHT.

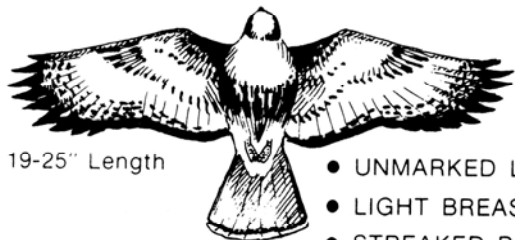


# BUTEOS

BELOW

EYE LEVEL

## RED-TAILED HAWK



19-25" Length

- UNMARKED LIGHT TAIL.
- LIGHT BREAST.
- STREAKED BELLY BAND.

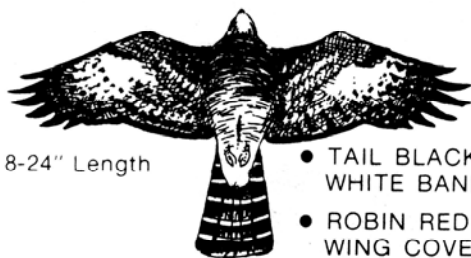


- BEST MARK IS CONSPICUOUS RED TAIL.

Only Buteo with red tail and white chest.

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## RED-SHOULDERED HAWK



18-24" Length

- TAIL BLACK WITH NARROW WHITE BANDS.
- ROBIN RED BREAST AND UNDER WING COVERTS.
- WINDOWS TOWARD TIP OF WING (Not a Good Mark Alone.)



- TAIL LONGER THAN RED-TAILED OR BROAD-WINGED.
- NOT AS CHUNKY AS OTHER BUTEOS.
- FLIGHT FEATHERS HAVE BLACK & WHITE STRIPED PATTERN.
- HAS A REDDISH BROWN LOOK, ESPECIALLY ON SHOULDERS.

Only Buteo with combination black banded tail, and reddish brown under wing coverts.

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## BROAD-WINGED HAWK



14-18" Length

- SMALLEST BUTEO, CROW SIZE.
- WHITE & BLACK BANDS ON TAIL.
- SHAPED LIKE SMALL RED-TAIL.
- UNDER WINGS LIGHTER THAN RED-SHOULDERED.



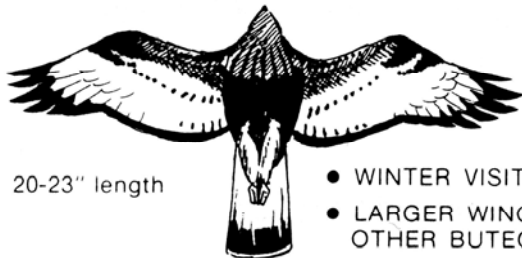
- SHAPED LIKE SMALL RED-TAILED.
- NOT LARGER THAN CROW.
- LOOK FOR BOLD TAIL PATTERN.

Only Buteo with black & white bands on tail.

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## ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK

A DARK PHASE ALSO OCCURS.



20-23" length

- WINTER VISITOR.
- LARGER WINGS & TAIL THAN OTHER BUTEOS.
- TAIL WHITE WITH BLACK BAND.
- BLACK BELLY, BLACK WRIST MARKS.



- WHITE UPPER TAIL.
- BUFFY HEAD, NECK AND BACK.
- BLACK BELLY.

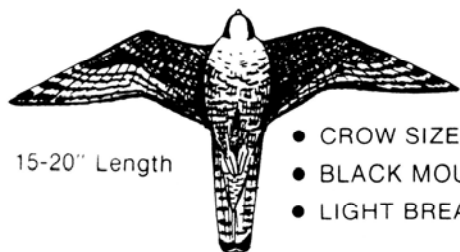
Only Buteo with black belly and white tail with broad black band.

# FALCONS (TOP 3)

BELOW

EYE LEVEL

## PEREGRINE FALCON (Duck Hawk)



15-20" Length

- CROW SIZE.
- BLACK MOUSTACHE.
- LIGHT BREAST & THROAT.



- BACK SLATE GRAY.
- LIGHT BREAST.
- BLACK CAP & MOUSTACHE.

Only crow-sized Falcon with head pattern. (See Gyrfalcon.)

## MERLIN (Pigeon Hawk)



10-13" Length

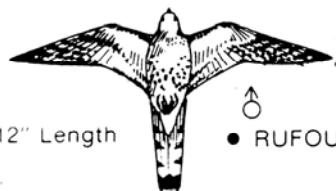
- BLACK BANDED GRAY TAIL.
- STREAKED BREAST.



- BANDED TAIL (Not Red.)
- NO HEAD PATTERN.
- MALE: BLUE GRAY BACK.
- FEMALE: CHOCOLATE BROWN BACK.

Only small Falcon with no red in tail and no outstanding head pattern.

## KESTREL (Sparrow Hawk)



9-12" Length

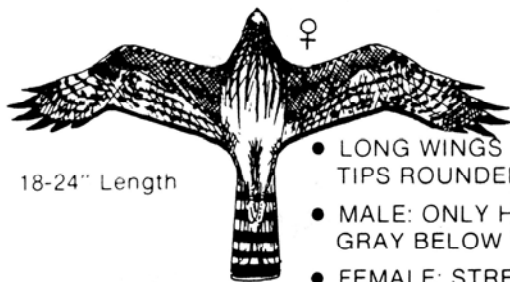
- RUFIOUS OR LIGHT BROWN TAIL.



- FEMALE: LIGHT BROWN BACK & TAIL.
- BOLD BLACK & WHITE FACE PATTERN ON BOTH SEXES.
- RUFIOUS TAIL, MALE.

Only Falcon with rufous or light brown tail.

## MARSH HAWK



18-24" Length

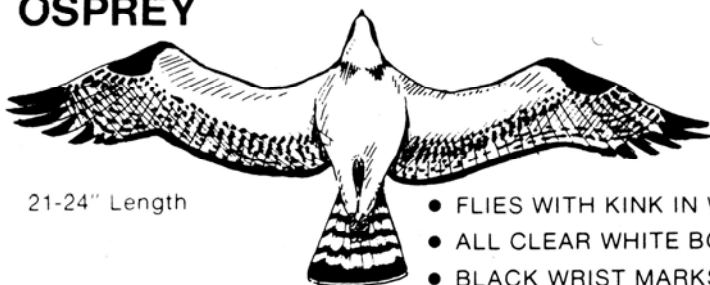
- LONG WINGS AND TAIL, WING TIPS ROUNDED NOT POINTED.
- MALE: ONLY HAWK OVERALL LIGHT GRAY BELOW WITH BLACK WING TIPS.
- FEMALE: STREAKED BROWN BELOW.



- LOOK FOR WHITE RUMP IN ALL PLUMAGES.
- WINGS HELD SLANTED UPWARD FROM SHOULDER WHEN SAILING.

Only Hawk with Flicker-like white rump. (Not tail as Rough-legged.) Shape is best field mark.

## OSPREY



21-24" Length

- FLIES WITH KINK IN WINGS.
- ALL CLEAR WHITE BODY.
- BLACK WRIST MARKS.
- VERY LONG WINGS, NEAREST EAGLE SIZE OF ALL HAWKS.



- DARK ABOVE, CLEAR WHITE BELOW.
- FLAPS RATHER SLOWLY.
- BLACK STRIP THROUGH EYE.

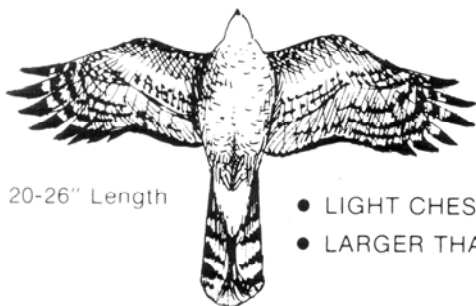
Only Hawk with black wrist marks, and all white body.

# ACCIPITERS

BELOW

EYE LEVEL

## GOSHAWK



20-26" Length

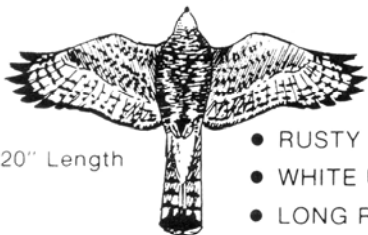
- LIGHT CHEST.
- LARGER THAN CROW.



- BLUE GRAY BACK.
- LIGHT UNDER PARTS.
- WHITE UNDER TAIL COVERTS.
- LARGER THAN CROW.
- WHITE EYE LINE.

No other Accipiter has a light chest.

## COOPER'S HAWK



14-20" Length

- RUSTY CHEST.
- WHITE UNDER TAIL COVERTS.
- LONG ROUNDED TAIL.



- DARK BLUE GRAY BACK.
- RUSTY CHEST.
- WHITE UNDER TAIL COVERTS.
- LONG ROUNDED TAIL.

No other Accipiter has a combination rusty chest and rounded tail.

## SHARP-SHINNED HAWK



10-14" Length

- RUSTY CHEST.
- WHITE UNDER TAIL COVERTS.
- LONG SQUARE OR NOTCHED TAIL (Closed.)
- BLUEJAY SIZE (Females Larger.)



- DARK BLUE GRAY BACK.
- RUSTY CHEST.
- WHITE UNDER TAIL COVERTS.
- LONG SQUARE OR NOTCHED TAIL.
- BLUEJAY SIZE.

No other Accipiter has a combination rusty chest and square or notched tail.

## GYRFALCON



24" + Length

- DARK PHASE ALSO OCCURS.
- LARGER THAN PEREGRINE.
- RARE MIGRANT.

## TURKEY VULTURE



27-32" Length

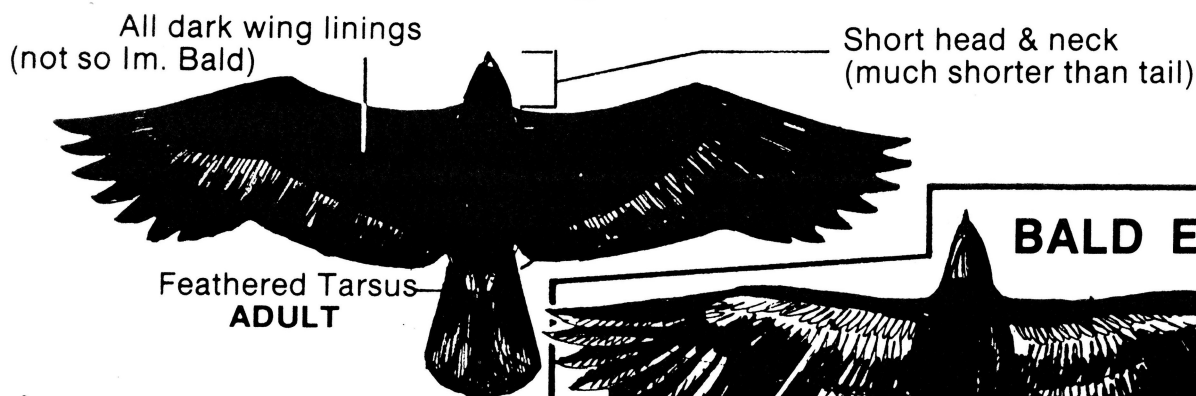
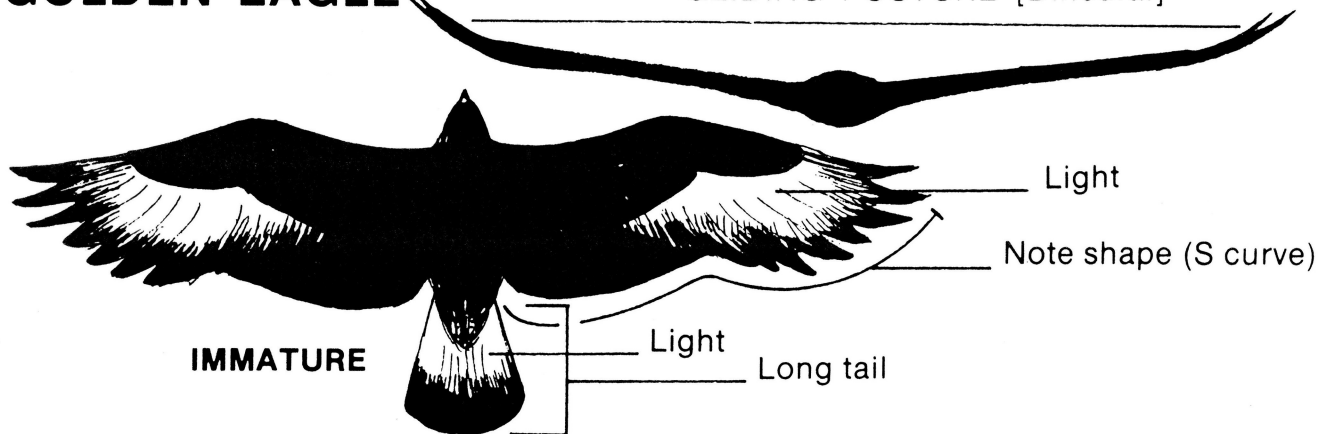
- HEAD AND NECK BARE — RED.
- EAGLE SIZE — SMALL HEAD
- UPPER WINGS AND BODY DARK BROWN TO BLACK — UNDERWING GREY.



- SHARP DIHEDRAL SET TO WINGS
- ROCKING FLIGHT.

# GOLDEN EAGLE

GLIDING POSTURE [Dihedral]



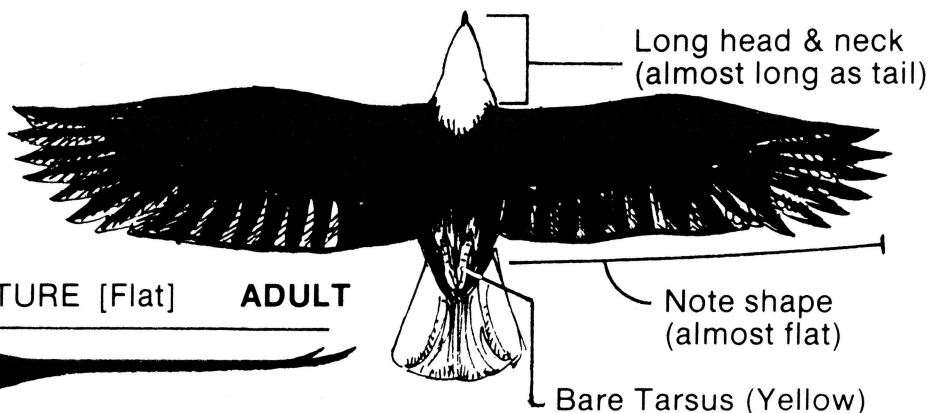
Short head & neck  
(much shorter than tail)

# BALD EAGLE

Some light in wing linings

**IMMATURE**

Short tail



GLIDING POSTURE [Flat] **ADULT**

Graphic Design and Illustration by Paul Carrier

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