

A GUIDE TO HAWKS SEEN IN NORTH AMERICA

These are migrants seen in most of North America. Because many species differ in appearance due to age and various light and dark morphs, especially in the west, only the adult of the most common form is illustrated.

KNOW YOUR SILHOUETTES



FALCONS

Streamlined - long, pointed wings; long, tapered tail; strong rowing wing beats; wings look less pointed and tail less tapered when not in direct flight.



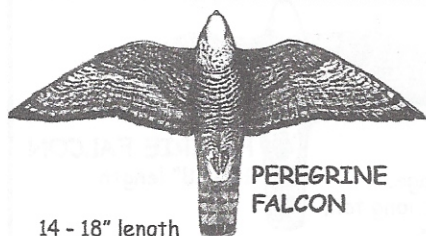
ACCIPITERS

Short, wide, rounded wings; long tail; flap-flap-flap-glide flight.



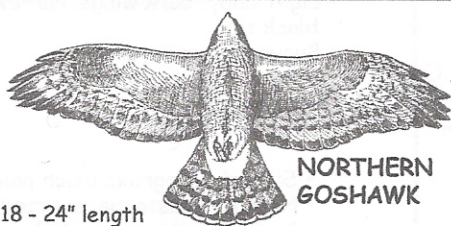
BUTEOS

Broad wings and broad, rounded tail; often seen soaring in wide circles high in the air.



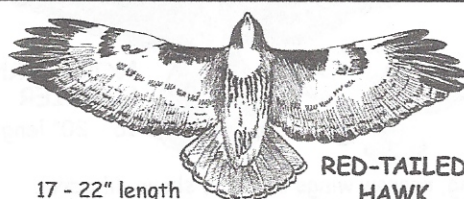
PEREGRINE
FALCON

- 14 - 18" length
- Light breast and throat.
- Crow size.
- Quick, powerful wingbeats.



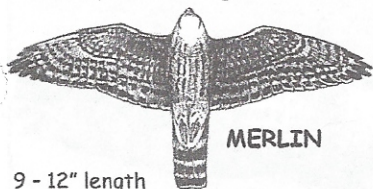
NORTHERN
GOSHAWK

- 18 - 24" length
- Pale underbody; gray upperparts.
- Prominent white undertail coverts.
- Heavy body; larger than crow.



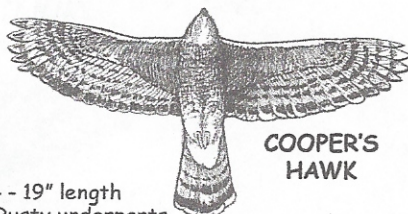
RED-TAILED
HAWK

- 17 - 22" length
- Unmarked light-to-red tail; 9 morphs.
- Light breast; variably streaked belly band.
- Dark leading edge to wing; shallow dihedral.



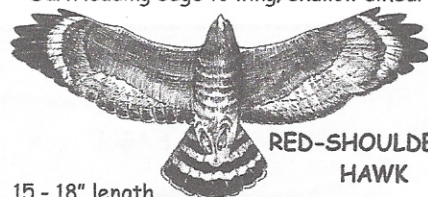
MERLIN

- 9 - 12" length
- Banded tail.
- Dark; heavily streaked underneath.
- Fast, direct flight.



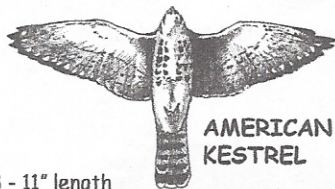
COOPER'S
HAWK

- 14 - 19" length
- Rusty underparts.
- Round-tipped, long tail.
- Near size of crow; stiff wing beats.



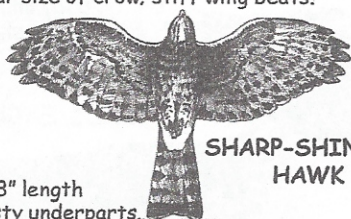
RED-SHOULDERED
HAWK

- 15 - 18" length
- Black tail with narrow, white bands.
- Dark wing linings.
- Crescent "windows" near tip of wing.



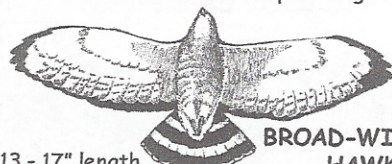
AMERICAN ♀
KESTREL

- 8 - 11" length
- Light underneath; size of jay; buoyant flight.
- Tail: rufous - male; reddish, barred brown - female.
- Wings above: blue - male; barred brown - female.



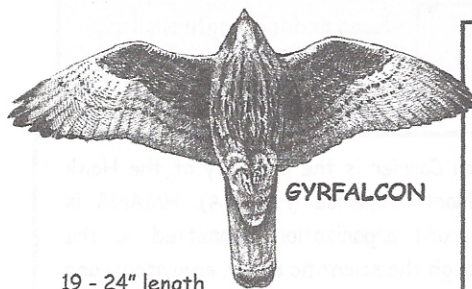
SHARP-SHINNED
HAWK

- 9 - 13" length
- Rusty underparts.
- Square or notched tail tip.
- Near size of jay; floppy wing beats.



BROAD-WINGED
HAWK

- 13 - 17" length
- Smallest buteo; crow size.
- Short tail with equal black and white bands.
- Whitish underwings with dark trailing edge.

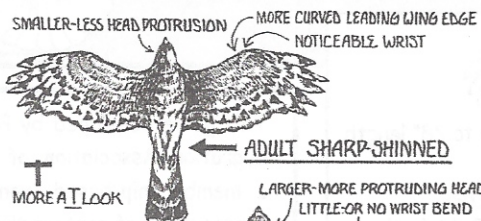


GYRFALCON

- 19 - 24" length
- Robust body; larger than Peregrine.
- 3 color morphs.
- Rare Arctic visitor.

NOTE: Some hawks soar and glide with their wings raised above the horizontal, called a dihedral.

SHARP-SHINNED vs COOPER'S



↑
MORE A T LOOK

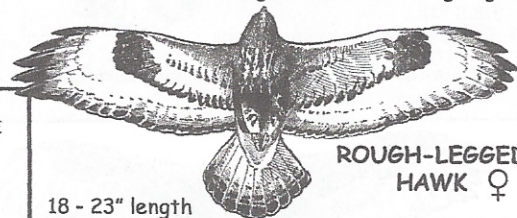
ADULT COOPER'S →

LONGER LOOKING TAIL →

PAUL CARRIER'S SKETCHBOOK

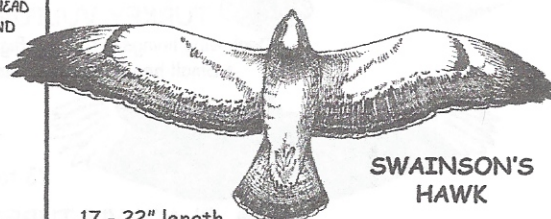
↑

MORE A CROSS LOOK



ROUGH-LEGGED
HAWK ♀

- 18 - 23" length
- Dark belly (most); dark wrists; strong dihedral.
- Tail white; 1 or more dark subterminal bands.
- Dark morph: dark body and wing linings.



SWAINSON'S
HAWK

- 17 - 22" length
- Dark breast and flight feathers.
- White belly and wing linings; 3 morphs.
- Soars with strong dihedral.