A GUIDE FOR HAWKS SEEN IN THE NORTHEAST

Because many hawks differ in appearance due to age and various dark and light morphs, only the adult of the most common form is illustrated.

KNOW YOUR SILHOUETTES

FALCONS
Streamlined - Long pointed wings; Long compressed tapered tails; Strong rowing wing beats; lose some pointed wing and tapered tail look when not in direct flight.

Peregrine Falcon
14 - 18" length
• Light breast and throat.
• Crow size, falcon shape.
• Quick, powerful wingbeats.

Merlin
9 - 12" length
• Banded gray tail.
• Dark-looking underside.
• Streaked body.

American Kestrel
8 - 11" length
• Tail: rufous-male, barred brown -female
• Light underneath.
• Near size of Blue Jay.

GYRFALCON
19 - 24" length
• Robust - larger than Peregrine.
• Body uniformly colored-4 color morphs.
• Rare Arctic visitor.

ACCIPITERS
Short, wide rounded wings; long tails.

• flap, flap, flap - sail flight.

Northern Goshawk
18 - 24" length
• Pale gray underbody.
• White undertail coverts.
• Larger than crow.

Cooper’s Hawk
14 - 19" length
• Rusty underparts.
• Round tipped, long tail.
• Near size of crow.

Sharp-shinned Hawk
9 - 13" length
• Rusty underparts.
• Square or notched tail tip.
• Near size of Blue Jay.

Red-tailed Hawk
17 - 22" length
• Unmarked light to red tail.
• Light breast and dark leading edge to wing.
• Streaked, variably dark belly band.

Red-shouldered Hawk
15 - 18" length
• Black tail with narrow white bands.
• Dark underwing coverts.
• Crescent windows near tip of wing.

Broad-winged Hawk
13 - 17" length
• Smallest Buteo, crow size.
• Equal white and black on tail.
• Whitish wing linings.

Rough-legged Hawk
18 - 23" length
• Winter visitor.
• Dark belly, wrist patch and terminal tail band.
• Dark morph: body, wing linings solid dark

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

SWAINSON’S HAWK
17 - 22" length
• Dark chest.
• Light underwing coverts, dark flights.
• Uncommon western visitor in northeast.

SHARP-SHINNED vs COOPER’S

**OSPREY**
- 21 - 26" length
- Flies with kink (W) in wings.
- Eagle sized; clean white body.
- Black wrist marks.

**NORTHERN HARRIER**
- 16 - 20" length
- Long, narrow wings and tail.
- Brown above, streaked brown below—female.
- Gray above, pale below with black wing tips—male.

**BALD EAGLE**
- Long, straight wing extension.
- Tail and head length similar.
- Straight wing profile.

**GOLDEN EAGLE**
- Like large buteo, curvy wings.
- Less head protrusion than tail.
- Slight dihedral to wing profile.

**SUB-ADULT GOLDEN EAGLE**
- 27 to 35" length
- Like large buteo, curvy wings.
- Less head protrusion than tail.
- Slight dihedral to wing profile.

**TURKEY VULTURE**
- Dark wings with lighter feathers
- Flies with uplifted wings—V shaped
- 24 to 28" length

**BLACK VULTURE**
- Wings & tail shorter than TV
- Whitish tips on wings
- 23 to 28" length

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