

Red-tailed Hawk

Buteo jamaicensis



Photo by Jason Karp, 2013



Photo by Rob Alvey, 2002



Photo by Mike Carsey, 2014

The Red-tailed Hawk is one of the most commonly encountered raptors in the United States. They have a bright red tail and are known to fly high in the sky in circles while waiting for their prey. They are highly adapted for life in the sky—the biggest female only weighs about 3 pounds.

Description

Size and Shape- The Red-tailed hawk is a broad hawk with rounded wings, large down-curving beaks, sharp talons, and a short tail.

Color Pattern- rich spotted, dark brown, black and white head, body, and wings. Yellow and black beak and red tail

Behavior- Red-tailed hawks are territorial and aggressive. Can be found soaring in circles in the air or perched on a high perch waiting for prey

Song- Coarse, high-pitched descending *keer*

Habitat- Widely scattered; lives in nearly every open habitat in North America—deserts, open woodlands, mixed forests, open fields, grasslands (and golf courses!)

Range- US and Mexico year-round, Canada during the summer and the border of Mexico during winter. Several nest in Garden City.

Diet- Carnivorous—eats mammals such as squirrels, voles, rabbits, chipmunks, shrews, small birds, and fish

Bird Statistics

Scientific name- *Archilochus colubris*

Family- Accipitridae

Conservation Status- Least concern

Male

Length- 17.7-22 in (45-56 cm)

Wingspan- 44.9-52.4 in (114-133 cm)

Weight- 24.3-45.9 oz (690-1300 g)

Female

Length- 19.7-25.6 in (50-65 cm)

Wingspan- 44.9-52.4 in (114-133 cm)

Weight- 31.7-51.5 oz (900-1460 g)

Egg Statistics

Color- White with brown spots

Nest- Nest on crowns of tall trees where there is a large view on surroundings

Clutch size- 1-5 eggs

Number of broods- 1

Length- 2.2-2.7 in (5.5-6.8 cm)

Width- 1.7-2 in (4.3-5 cm)

Incubation period- 28-35 days

Nestling period- 42-46 days

Additional Information

<http://www.audubon.org/field-guide/bird/red-tailed-hawk>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red-tailed_hawk