

RED-TAILED HAWK

Buteo jamaicensis

The most common and widespread hawk



in North America. Found in North America all year around but during the summer can be found as far North as Alaska and as far South as Panama. Red-tailed Hawks can reach 18-26 inches tall and a wingspan of 45-52 inches and weighs 35-62 ounces. Adults have chestnut red color on the topside of the tail which gave this bird its name. They are found in dark and light morphs. Adults have a darkish brown head, the throat dark or white and chest is white or with rusty streaks. The streaks across the belly can vary considerably from very dark to nearly absent. Dark patches at leading edge of wing. Their back is dark brown with white motting. The females are larger than the males. **Immature** Red-tailed Hawks are similar to adult but more streaked and the tail is brown with several dark bars across it.

Their broad wings and tail aid in soaring while hunting. They have excellent binocular vision that enables them to spot prey from very great distances. Pairs claim and defend their territory year after year. They will mate for life or until the death of their mate. In courtship display a pair of Red-tailed Hawks soar in wide circles at great heights. The male dives down in a steep drop, and then shoots up again at nearly as steep an angle. He repeats this maneuver several times, and then approaches the female from above. He extends his legs and touches or grasps her briefly. The pair may grab onto one another and may interlock their talons and spiral toward the ground. These courtship flights may happen any time of the year.

A Red-tailed hawk life span is about 18 years in the wild and 29 years in captivity. Eggs are laid between February-June, incubate in 30+ days, and fledge about 45 days later. The female incubates the eggs, which are white with brown blotches, and the male brings her food. The babies are covered in white down and helpless. There will be 1-5 chicks. The nest is large and bulky, 2.5 to 3 feet across, built of sticks, twigs and bark, and usually 15-70 feet up in the crotch of branches near the truck of the tree.

They have the widest tolerance of ecological habitats than other hawks. They prefer mixed country with open pastures and some woods. Red-tailed Hawks are **sit & wait** predators, usually watching from an elevated perch such as light poles, towers or tall trees. They are

beneficial in rodent control since mice, rats and squirrels are a big part of their diet. They eat small-medium mammals birds and reptiles.



Juv. & first year tail feathers.



Five year feathers.

COOL FACTS

- The raspy cry of the Red-tailed Hawk is used in movies to represent any eagle or hawk anywhere in the world.
- There are more pounds of pressure per square inch in their talons than their beak.

“KOLA WAKON OF WILDLIFE”

Roughly translated it means “Sacred Friend of Wildlife”. This is what every Wildlife Rehabilitator, every person who rescues wildlife, everyone who transports and every Veterinarian that works with wildlife are to the wild kingdom.

What is a Wildlife Rehabilitator?

They wear many hats. They are a nurse, a caregiver, a janitor, a teacher and much more! They are NOT paid. Everything they do comes out of their own pocket. Their oath is to help wildlife that has been injured, orphaned or sick due to storms, cycle of life or humans. Our ultimate goal is to return them back to the wild.

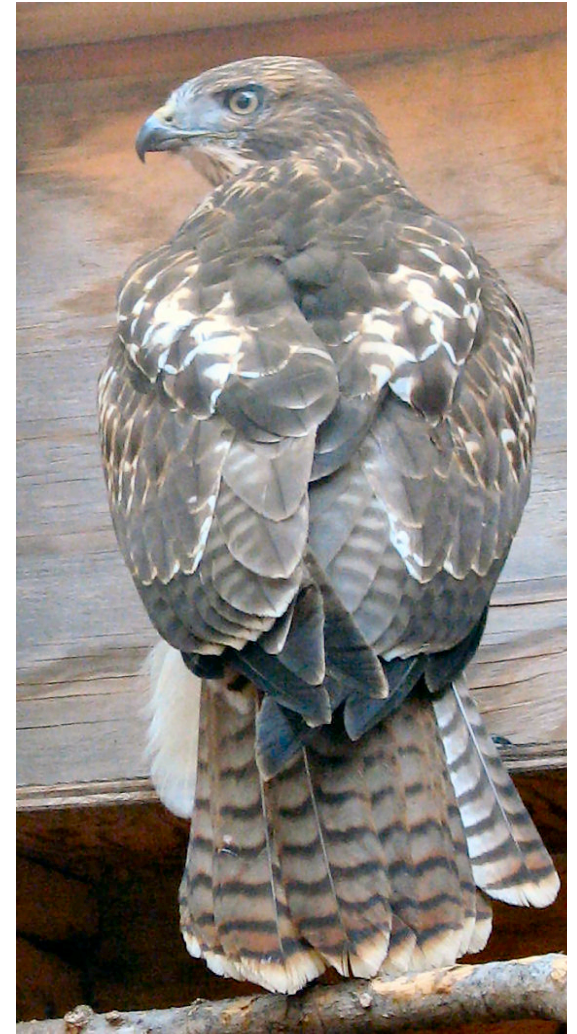
How you can help your local rehabbers:

Call them and ask what things they need. Give them a gift certificate to a place where they get supplies.

In any State, you can call your local Game & Inland Fisheries, local Veterinarian, or animal shelter and they might have some phone numbers for local Wildlife Rehabilitators.

<http://www.dgif.virginia.gov/wildlife/injured/rehabilitators.asp?location=all>

If you have any questions you may call Pearl Beamer, State & Federally licensed Wildlife Rehabilitator within the state of Virginia about wildlife. Pearl specializes in Raptors. 757-855-2922 (7am-7pm)



Red-tailed Hawks

“WAKON”

is a Red-tailed Hawk and is an ambassador for Hawks and all other wildlife. She was born with arthritis and non-releasable. She is about 3-4 months old in the above picture. “Wakon” means “Sacred” in Lakota language. This is how all our wildlife should be treated.