

# Raptors of Boulder County

## Eagles

### Bald Eagle

(*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)

- Large head, massive bill
- White head and tail on adults
- Large, broad, plank-like wings
- Wings held “flat” in flight
- White axillaries (armpits) in non-adults

### Golden Eagle

(*Aquila chrysaetos*)

- Small head
- Golden sheen on nape
- Legs feathered to toes (booted)
- Wings slightly uplifted in flight
- White on underwing at base of primaries and white tail with dark terminal band in non-adults

\*\*\*\*\*

## Accipiters

### Sharp-shinned Hawk

(*Accipiter striatus*)

- Small head barely projects beyond wrists in flight
- Stick-like legs
- Shorter, square-tipped tail

### Cooper’s Hawk

(*Accipiter cooperii*)

- Large head projects well beyond wrists in flight
- Stout legs as compared to Sharp-shinned hawk
- Longer, rounded tail

### Northern Goshawk

(*Accipiter gentilis*)

- Blackish head with wide, white eyebrow
- Back and upper wing coverts slate blue
- Under parts pale blue-gray
- Undertail coverts white and fluffy

\*\*\*\*\*

## Buteos

### Ferruginous Hawk

(*Buteo regalis*)

- Our largest buteo
- Adults have reddish (ferrous) leggings that make a “V” against the body when flying
- Tail can look reddish
- Feathered legs (booted)

### Red-tailed Hawk

(*Buteo jamaicensis*)

- Dark brown head
- Belly band often noticeable
- Pale mottling on back often forms broad-sided “V” when perched
- Dark bar on leading edge of underwings
- Red tail only on adults

### Swainson’s Hawk (\*)

(*Buteo swainsoni*)

- Dark head with large white throat patch
- Smaller bill
- Chocolate bib
- Long, narrow, pointed wings
- Two-toned underwing

### Rough-legged Hawk

(*Buteo lagopus*)

- Pale head contrasts with darker back-dark belly band
- Small bill
- Dark wrist (carpal) patches
- Broad, dark band on tail
- Feathered legs

\*\*\*\*\*

### Northern Harrier

(*Circus cyaneus*)

- Facial disk
- Dark hood
- White patch on upper tail coverts
- Slow, tippy flight low over ground

## Falcons

### Peregrine Falcon (\*)

(*Falco peregrinus*)

- Round head
- Crown and nape black, helmeted appearance
- Dark moustache extends below eye
- Adults are blue-gray above, barred below, and white chested

### Prairie Falcon

(*Falco mexicanus*)

- Crown is streaked
- Facial markings narrower
- Dark axillary feathers (dirty armpits)
- White marks directly behind eyes
- Pale brown above; creamy white and heavily spotted below

### Merlin

(*Falco columbarius*)

- Adult male blue-gray above
- Female and juveniles dark brown
- Lack strong facial markings
- In flight, strongly barred tail
- Underparts and underwings darker than Kestrels

### American Kestrel

(*Falco sparverius*)

- Smallest, most common falcon
- White face with double black marks
- Russet back and tail; pale underwings
- White dots on trailing edge of underwings of males; tan in females
- Male has solid dark band on tail
- Female has many small bands on tail

\*\*\*\*\*

### Osprey (\*)

(*Pandion haliaetus*)

- White head with dark eye-line
- Long, narrow, crooked wings
- White body and coverts below with dark black wrist (carpal) patches

\*\*\*\*\*

(\*) – Usually found in Boulder County during *summer only*.