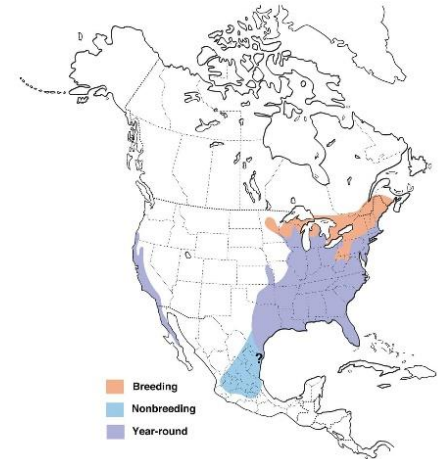


Red-shouldered Hawk



Classification

Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Class: Aves
Order: Accipitriformes
Family: Accipitridae
Genus: *Buteo*
Species: *lineatus*



Range, Habitat, Conservation Status

- **Range:** Eastern half of North America from southern Canada to Florida. There is also a subspecies in California.
- **Habitat:** Mainly deciduous forests and tend to live in stands with open subcanopy often near rivers and swamps. Also found in suburban areas where buildings are mixed into woodlands.
- **Conservation Status:** Low Concern. Biggest threat is the clearing of wooded habitats.

Physical Characteristics

- **Body Length:** 17 to 24 inches (43-61 cm)
- **Wingspan:** 3 to 4 feet (91-121 cm)
- **Weight:** 1 to 1.5 pounds (453-680 g)
- **Lifespan:** Average in the wild is 2 to 3 years, but they can live over 20 years in human care.
- **Identifying Traits:** Medium-sized with slim body, small head, and medium-length tail. Barred reddish-brown underside with a black and white banded tail. The upper wing has a reddish-brown color, which gives this species its name. Translucent crescents near the wingtips help to identify the species when in flight. Noticeably larger than a broad-winged hawk and smaller than a red-tailed hawk.



Behaviors

- **Feeding:** Hunt small mammals, birds, insects, crayfish, amphibians, and reptiles, including snakes. Watches from perch, then swoops down when prey is located.
- **Breeding:** Males do a "sky dance" as a mating display where they soar while calling, then make a series of steep dives toward the female before climbing back up in wide spirals. It ends when the male rapidly dives and perches upon the female's back.
- **Nesting:** Typically, both sexes build stick nests in a broad-leaved tree below the forest canopy but towards the top of the tree in a crotch of the main trunk. They often nest near a body of water. May reuse nests from previous years. Lay 2 to 5 eggs, which incubate for around 33 days.
- **Migration:** In the Northeast and northern Midwest, these birds migrate to more southerly states for the winter. Migrations are between 185 to 930 miles (300-1,500 km). In central and southern states, they don't tend to migrate. Birds on the West Coast are also mostly nonmigratory.
- **Call:** Shrill scream, "kee-rah" or "kee-yer".

Resident Bird(s)

Name: Hagen

- **Age:** Hatched in 2017
- **Sex:** Male
- **Background:** Has microphthalmia, a congenital condition in which one or both eyes are abnormally small.*
- **Unique Individual Traits:** Like other hawks, he shoots his poop, which staff and volunteers are gracious enough to clean up.

Name: Lakota

- **Age:** Hatched in 2003
- **Sex:** Female
- **Background:** Blind in left eye.** Unknown cause. See during Meet a Raptor, private programs, or special events.
- **Unique Individual Traits:** Has been known to communicate with the Red-shouldered hawks in the wild.

Fun Facts!

- While the American Crow has been known to mob Red-shouldered Hawks, there have also been examples observed of the two species working together. Both species have been seen joining forces to attack or chase an owl out of the hawk's territory.
- This species returns to the same nesting territory each year. One individual was documented returning to the same area 16 years in a row!
- In the East, Blue Jays imitate the call of a Red-shouldered Hawk.



- Some researchers consider this species to be the diurnal counterpart of the Barred Owl as both species occupy the same range in the eastern United States.
- Buteo hawks are referred to as buzzards in other parts of the world, but the name was mistakenly applied to vultures in North America by early settlers.

Importance

- Red-shouldered Hawks' prey on animals, especially rodents, that are agricultural pests.

Sources

- <https://www.audubon.org/field-guide/bird/red-shouldered-hawk>
- http://www.biokids.umich.edu/critters/Buteo_lineatus/
- <https://www.chattnaturecenter.org/visit/experience/wildlife/animal-facts/red-shouldered-hawk/>
- <https://peregrinefund.org/explore-raptors-species/hawks/red-shouldered-hawk>
- https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Red-shouldered_Hawk/overview

*This bird has a congenital condition that limited his vision. Hawks depend on their eyesight to survive, so without full vision, he wouldn't be able to hunt and locate prey in the wild.

**This bird blind in her left eye. Hawks depend on their eyesight to survive, so without full vision, she wouldn't be able to hunt and locate prey in the wild.