

EASTERN COASTAL RAPTOR SPECIES SUMMARY

The following information was presented by William S. Clark of the Cape May Raptor Banding Station at the Annual Meeting in Wilmington, N.C. 1978.

FALL ONLY

American Kestrel (See Reference 1)

MALE: Blue wings

Hatching Year: Back barred with black up to nape, no clear rufous areas. Breast heavily streaked. Crown Patch (if present) with black shaft streaks.

After Hatching Year: Upper 1/2 to 1/3 of back unbarred. Breast clear and usually with a pinkish wash. Crown Patch (if present) with no black shaft streaks. Check outer primaries for blood sheath.

FEMALE: Brown wings

Hatching Year: Last dark band in tail, (subterminal band), less than twice as wide as other dark bands in tail. DO NOT consider middle 2 and outer 2 tail feathers.

After Hatching Year: Presence of tail or primary molt.

Unknown: Subterminal band twice as wide or wider than other dark bands.

NOTE: Hatching year Kestrels have a post-juvenal molt from August through October. It includes all feathers except Tail and Primaries. Tail is NEVER an age character.

Merlin

MALE: Wing chord 197 mm or less*

Hatching Year: Back brown, light bars in tail mostly grayish.

After Hatching Year: Back blue.

FEMALE: Wing chord 205mm or greater*

Hatching Year: Rump brown, light bars in tail mostly buffy.

After Hatching Year: Rump grayish (check for molt of flight feathers)

* If wing chord is between 198 and 204 mm, check rump for grayish color, and check color of light bars in tail.

Reference 1. Parkes, Kenneth C. "Notes on the Molts and Plumages of the Sparrow Hawk", The Wilson Bulletin, 67:3, September 1955, pp. 194-199.

Peregrine

MALE: Wing chord 330 mm or less.

FEMALE: Wing chord 338 mm or more.

Hatching Year: Upper breast streaked. Brown back feathers have light brown tips. Cere-greenish-yellow or blue.

After Hatching Year: Upper breast clear, usually cinnamon wash. Back is bluish. Cere orange.

Sharp-shinned Hawk (See Reference 2)

MALE: Wing chord 160 mm to 178 mm.

FEMALE: Wing chord 191 mm to 214 mm

Hatching Year: Back brown, breast streaked longitudinally, eye yellow.

After Hatching Year: Back bluish, breast barred horizontally, eye orange to red.

Cooper's Hawk (See Reference 2)

MALE: Wing chord 226mm to 246 mm.

FEMALE: Wing chord 256 mm to 273 mm.

Age as in the Sharp-shinned Hawk.

Goshawk (See Reference 3)

MALE: Wing chord - 330 or less HY; 336 or less AHY

FEMALE: Wing chord-335 or more HY; 341 or more AHY

Hatching Year: Breast streaked in brown, back brown, eye yellowish OR grayish.

After Hatching Year: Breast bluish with light black bars, back bluish-gray, eye orange to mahogany red.

Reference 2: Storer, Robert W. "Sexual Dimorphism and Food Habits in three North American Accipiters", The Auk, 83: July 1966, pp. 423-436.

Reference 3: Mueller, Helmut C. & Daniel D. Berger, "Sex Ratios and Measurements of Migrant Goshawks", The Auk, 85: July 1968, pp. 431-436.

BUTEOS ARE NOT SAFE TO SEX BY SIZE

Red-tailed Hawk

Hatching Year: Eye yellowish, tail barred and not red,
breast clear white.

After Hatching Year: Eye brown(most of the time), tail red,
breast usually with reddish or brownish streaks.

Red-shouldered Hawk

4 notched primaries. Wing chord 305 mm or greater.

Hatching Year: Breast streaked longitudinally in brown,
Tail barred dark and light brown.

After Hatching Year: Breast barred horizontally in reddish, upper
wing coverts form red shoulder, tail brownish black
with narrow white bars.

Broad-winged Hawk

3 notched primaries. Wing chord less than 300 mm.

Hatching Year: Breast streaked longitudinally in brown.

After Hatching Year: Breast barred horizontally in red, tail with
one wide light band and a narrow light band above it.

Rough-legged Hawk

See reference: Hamerstrom, Frances and J.D. Weaver, "Aging and
Sexing Rough-Winged (Sic) Hawks in Wisconsin and
Illinois", Ontario Bird Banding, 4: pp. 132-138.

Harriers(Marsh Hawk)

MALE: Wing chord 360 mm or less

Hatching Year: Back brown, eye gray-brown

After Hatching Year: Back gray to silver, eye yellow.

FEMALE: Wing chord 370 mm or greater.

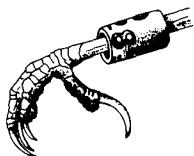
Hatching Year: Back brown, eye chocolate brown

After Hatching Year: Back brown, eye yellow.*

* See Hamerstrom, Frances. " Aging and Sexing Harriers", Inland Bird
Banding, 40:2, March-April 1968, pp. 43-46.

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