

## Red-Tailed Hawk

### COOL FACTS:

<b>Scientific name:</b>	Buteo jamaicensis
<b>Average weight:</b>	female: 31-51 ounces; male: 25-45 ounces
<b>Average length:</b>	female: 19-25 inches; male: 17-22 inches
<b>Average wing span:</b>	44-52 inches both sexes (3.5- 4.5 feet)
<b>Did you know?</b>	Most common hawk in North America.

### PHYSIOLOGY

This is one of the largest birds you will see in North America. Even though the female of the species is larger than the male, the biggest female's weight is only about 3 pounds. The oldest known Red-Tailed Hawk was 28 years and 10 months old.

This species is blocky and broad in shape. A whitish underbelly with a dark brown band formed by horizontal streaks in feather patterning is present in most colour variations. The red tail, which gives this species its name, is uniformly brick-red above and light buff-orange below. The beak is short and dark and in the hooked, raptor shape. The head can sometimes appear small in size against the thick body frame. They have relatively short, broad tails and thick, chunky wings. The legs and the feet of the Red-Tailed Hawk are all yellow.

The cry of the Red-Tailed Hawk is a two to three second hoarse, rasping scream, described as kree-eee-ar. This cry is often described as sounding similar to a steam whistle.

This hawk soars; flapping its wings as little as possible to conserve energy. Active flight is slow and deliberate, with deep wing beats. When soaring or flapping its wings, it typically travels from 32 to 64 km/hr, but when diving it may exceed 190 km/hr.

### HABITAT/BEHAVIOUR

The Red-Tailed Hawk can be found along fields perched on telephone poles or fenceposts, in lone trees or along the edge of a field.

The Red-Tailed Hawk commonly employs a variety of hunting techniques. They scan for prey from an elevated perch, swooping down from the perch to seize the prey. They may also watch for prey while flying, either capturing a bird in flight or pursuing prey on the ground until they can pin it down in their talons. Their diet consists mainly of rodents including mice, gophers, voles, chipmunks and squirrels.

Red-Tailed Hawks are monogamous and may mate for life. They construct a nest with twigs and line it with bark, pine needles, or corn husks. The nests are built high above the ground. The female lays one to five eggs each year in March or April. Both sexes incubate the eggs for four to five weeks, and feed the young from the time they hatch until they leave the nest about six weeks later.

### MORE COOL FACTS:

In 2015, the Royal Canadian Mint released a Red-Tailed Hawk coin in silver (1 troy ounce). This is the third release in the new Birds of Prey series, and depicts the Red-Tailed Hawk in flight.

