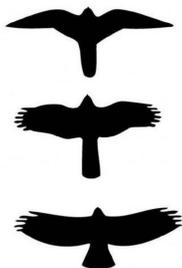




Talking Talons Youth Leadership Environmental Education Bird Basics 2: Families, Form & Function

HAWKS vs. FALCONS

All hawks and falcons are known as **raptors**. The word *raptor* is derived from the Latin word *raptare*, which means “to seize and carry away.” The *diurnal* (daytime) raptors (hawks, falcons, eagles) are grouped together in the major order, *Falconiformes*. The two major families of these raptors examined in Talking Talons are the **Hawks**, of the family *Accipitridae*, and the **Falcons**, of the family *Falconidae*. Though outwardly similar, hawks and falcons differ in their morphology and behavior in obvious and subtle ways.

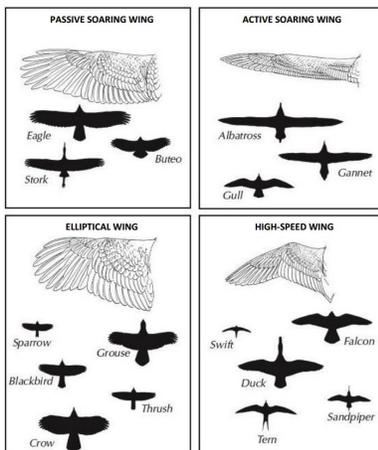


Falcons:
American Kestrel
Merlin
Peregrine Falcon

Accipiters:
Sharp-shinned Hawk
Cooper's Hawk
Northern Goshawk

Buteos:
Broad-winged Hawk
Red-tailed Hawk
Rough-legged Hawk
Red-shouldered Hawk

[pinterest.ie/pin/549087379556868362/](https://www.pinterest.ie/pin/549087379556868362/)



birds.cornell.edu/k12/rubys-birds/



<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/417005246716876003/>



focusingonwildlife.com



ornitho-soreltracy.org



rantpets.com mhwp.org www.flickr.com/photos/92308738@N03/25857124508

The **Peregrine Falcon** is the *fastest animal* on the planet, reaching a top speed of over **200 mph!** They reach these speeds when in a *stoop* (high-speed dive). They will soar high in the air, between **100 – 900 meters** above the ground, searching for prey with eyesight that is **8 times** better than a human's! When the falcon spots her prey (duck, pigeon), she will rapidly flap her wings to gain speed, then tuck her wings in (to become more aerodynamic) and appear to “fall” out of the sky (in a *stoop*), head-first. She will knock into her prey (usually on the wing to not harm herself) while they are both flying in the air and/or use her talons to grab it. They are truly impressive birds!!

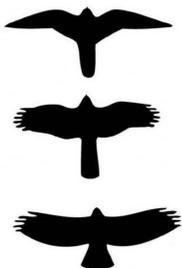
(Please Turn Over)



Talking Talons Youth Leadership Environmental Education Bird Basics 2: Families, Form & Function

HAWKS vs. FALCONS

All hawks and falcons are known as **raptors**. The word *raptor* is derived from the Latin word *raptare*, which means “to seize and carry away.” The *diurnal* (daytime) raptors (hawks, falcons, eagles) are grouped together in the major order, *Falconiformes*. The two major families of these raptors examined in Talking Talons are the **Hawks**, of the family *Accipitridae*, and the **Falcons**, of the family *Falconidae*. Though outwardly similar, hawks and falcons differ in their morphology and behavior in obvious and subtle ways.

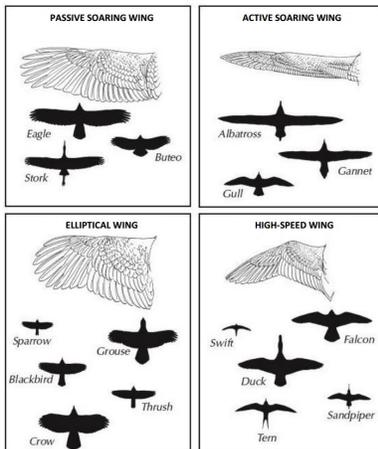


Falcons:
American Kestrel
Merlin
Peregrine Falcon

Accipiters:
Sharp-shinned Hawk
Cooper's Hawk
Northern Goshawk

Buteos:
Broad-winged Hawk
Red-tailed Hawk
Rough-legged Hawk
Red-shouldered Hawk

<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/417005246716876003/>



rantpets.com mhwp.org www.flickr.com/photos/92308738@N03/25857124508

The **Peregrine Falcon** is the *fastest animal* on the planet, reaching a top speed of over **200 mph!** They reach these speeds when in a *stoop* (high-speed dive). They will soar high in the air, between **100 – 900 meters** above the ground, searching for prey with eyesight that is **8 times** better than a human's! When the falcon spots her prey (duck, pigeon), she will rapidly flap her wings to gain speed, then tuck her wings in (to become more aerodynamic) and appear to “fall” out of the sky (in a *stoop*), head-first. She will knock into her prey (usually on the wing to not harm herself) while they are both flying in the air and/or use her talons to grab it. They are truly impressive birds!!

(Please Turn Over)

HAWKS (Accipitridae)

- Generally larger, but not always; broader, wider, bulkier body
- Broader wings to accommodate soaring, low energetic mode of flight (Buteos: 15 to 20mph)
- Shorter, thicker, more powerful talons capable of crushing / seizing; hawks kill primarily with the feet
- Presence of **supra-orbital process**, a bone above the eye that shields it from glare
- Lacks tomial notch on beak
- Possess broad, muscular tongues
- Tend to hold prey items against perch with both feet and tear with the beak
- Oblong, slit type nostrils in the cere
- Strong nest building instinct / behavior
- Excrement is projected beyond nest edge; known as a “**slice**”



Hawk

Falcon

birdeden.com/distinguishing-between-hawks-falcons



Hawk

Falcon

birdeden.com/distinguishing-between-hawks-falcons



Red-tailed Hawk

Peregrine Falcon

www.audubon.org/news/talon-talents

FALCONS (Falconidae)

- Generally smaller but not always; narrow, streamlined body shape
- Narrower, pointed wing shape to accommodate energetic, flapping, speed flying (50 to 70mph)
- Longer, skinnier, less powerful toes / talons. May use momentum and “punch” prey with the feet.
- No supra-orbital process present
- Presence of a **tomial notch** on the beak used to dislocate cervical (neck) vertebrae on prey
- Short, fleshy tongues
- Often hold prey items in one foot and tear with the beak
- Round nostrils with bony tubercle in the center
- Little to no nest building; inaccessible aeries
- “**Mute**” excrement that drops straight down
- Extra tail vertebrae that supports the tail

HAWKS (Accipitridae)

- Generally larger, but not always; broader, wider, bulkier body
- Broader wings to accommodate soaring, low energetic mode of flight (Buteos: 15 to 20mph)
- Shorter, thicker, more powerful talons capable of crushing / seizing; hawks kill primarily with the feet
- Presence of **supra-orbital process**, a bone above the eye that shields it from glare
- Lacks tomial notch on beak
- Possess broad, muscular tongues
- Tend to hold prey items against perch with both feet and tear with the beak
- Oblong, slit type nostrils in the cere
- Strong nest building instinct / behavior
- Excrement is projected beyond nest edge; known as a “**slice**”



Hawk

Falcon

birdeden.com/distinguishing-between-hawks-falcons



Hawk

Falcon

birdeden.com/distinguishing-between-hawks-falcons



Red-tailed Hawk

Peregrine Falcon

www.audubon.org/news/talon-talents

FALCONS (Falconidae)

- Generally smaller but not always; narrow, streamlined body shape
- Narrower, pointed wing shape to accommodate energetic, flapping, speed flying (50 to 70mph)
- Longer, skinnier, less powerful toes / talons. May use momentum and “punch” prey with the feet.
- No supra-orbital process present
- Presence of a **tomial notch** on the beak used to dislocate cervical (neck) vertebrae on prey
- Short, fleshy tongues
- Often hold prey items in one foot and tear with the beak
- Round nostrils with bony tubercle in the center
- Little to no nest building; inaccessible aeries
- “**Mute**” excrement that drops straight down
- Extra tail vertebrae that supports the tail