



Red-tailed Hawk

(*Buteo jamaicensis*)

Order: Falconiformes **Family:** Accipitridae

SIZE: 18-25 inches tall. Wingspan, 4-5 feet. Weight, 2-3 ½ lbs.

DESCRIPTION: A large, powerful hawk. Color varies. Brown to gray-brown above with varying amounts of streaking, and light colored below, sometimes with a dark belly band. Rust colored tail. Brown streaks on lower neck. Young birds are duller in color and lack the rust colored tail of the adult. Sharp, powerful beak and talons.

SENSES: Excellent binocular vision. Acute sense of hearing.

FLIGHT: Soars over open country for hours at a time in search of prey. Rather than flapping its wings to the point of exhaustion, it travels by riding thermals, gliding from one column of rising hot air to the next.

HABITS: Found in open country including tundra, plains and farmlands, mountain forests, deserts and riparian woodlands. Will often perch in a tree, watching for the slightest movement on the ground that could lead to a possible meal. Red-tailed hawks mate for life or until mate dies.

DIET: Rodents, rabbits, squirrels, reptiles, gophers, fish, small birds and carrion.

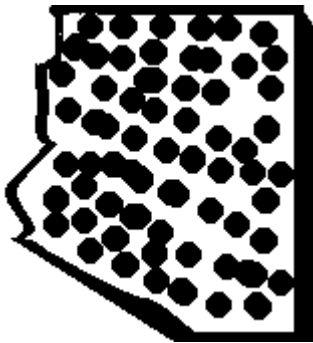
RANGE: Found throughout North America from Alaska to Nova Scotia and southward into Mexico.

FAMILY LIFE: Female lays 2-3 white eggs, sometimes spotted with brown. Incubation is mainly the responsibility of the female, and male brings her food while she is in the nest. Young learn to fly in about 45 days.

NESTING: Large, bulky nest of sticks lined with bits of green vegetation and bark. Usually nest is built in a tall tree, rock ledge or sometimes a cactus. Both male and female help build the nest.

DID YOU KNOW THAT...?

- The Red-tailed hawk is the most common and widespread American member of the Buteos, although their numbers are decreasing due to habitat loss and increasing human population.
- Their nests can measure 2 ½ - 3 feet across.
- Life expectancy in the wild is 10-15 years, 15-20 years in captivity.
- Raptors in North America are protected by both state and federal laws, which make shooting these birds illegal.



Range:
The Red-tailed Hawk is found
in most areas in Arizona.