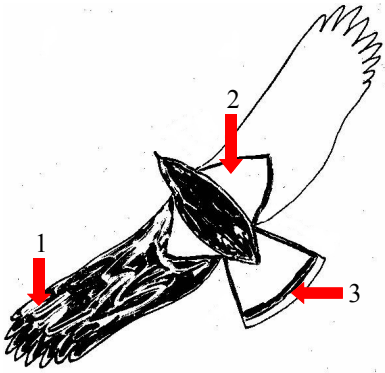


## Eagles

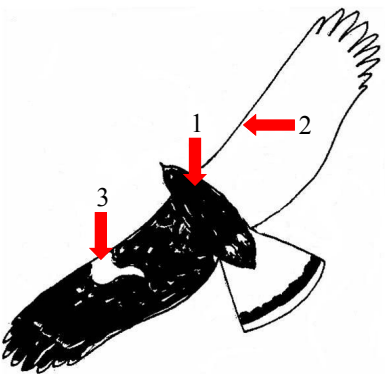
- Largest raptors in Iowa
- Young eagles can be mistaken for hawks because of their mottled, mostly brown coloring

### Bald Eagle (immature)



1. Body & most of wings mottled black & white.
2. White axillaries.
3. In birds with white tails, edges are black.

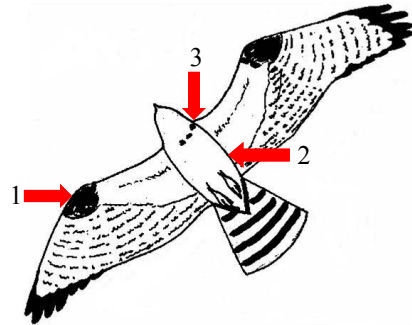
### Golden Eagle (immature)



1. Body & wings more uniformly colored than Bald Eagle.
2. Light/golden patagium ("shoulder").
3. 1st year juveniles can have white "swoosh."

## Osprey

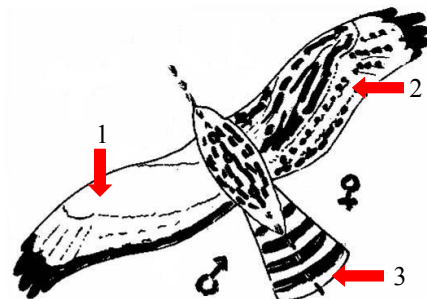
- In flight, wings are narrow & bent, like a gull
- Hunt over water; only raptor to dive fully into water to catch fish



1. Dark wrist patch.
2. White body & coverts.
3. Can have speckled "necklace."

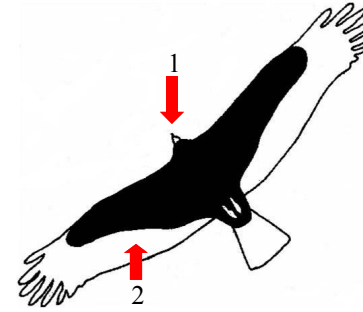
## Northern Harrier

- Slim bird with narrow wings
- Long tail
- Favor open country
- Flight: Low & leisurely with wings in a shallow 'V'
- Males gray & white; females brown



1. In males, underside is mostly white. Wing tips & secondary tips black.
2. In females, wings are boldly barred with dark tips. Body is streaked brown.
3. Both sexes have a long, lightly banded tail.
4. White rump in both sexes.

## Turkey Vulture



1. Red, featherless head with white beak in adults; immature have gray head.
2. Light primary & secondary wing feathers.
3. Commonly seen soaring & circling high in the sky.

Thanks to Mike Havlik for the bird outlines.

*Federal and State law prohibits employment and/or public accommodation (such as access to services or physical facilities) discrimination on the basis of age, color, creed, disability (mental and/or physical), gender identity, national origin, pregnancy, race, religion, sex or sexual orientation. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity or facility as described above, or if you desire further information, contact the Iowa Civil Rights Commission at 1-800-457-4416, or write to: Director, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Wallace State Office Building, 502 E. 9th, Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0034.*



Iowa Department of Natural Resources

1436 255th St.  
Boone, IA 50036  
(515) 432-2823

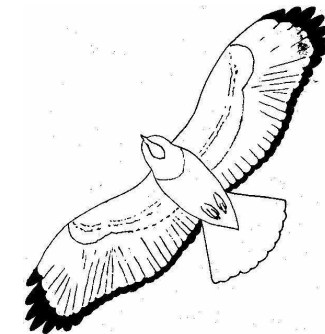
Revised by: Jenni Dyar, AmeriCorps, 2008

# IDENTIFYING IOWA'S RAPTORS

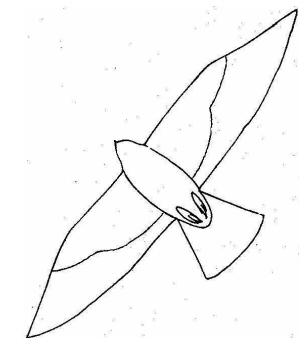
Below are the general shapes of the groups of hawks, when seen in flight from below. Using these diagrams, choose the one that most looks like the bird you saw and go to that section of this pamphlet to compare species. If it did not look like any of these, open up the back to see other possible raptor species.



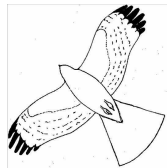
Accipiters



Buteos



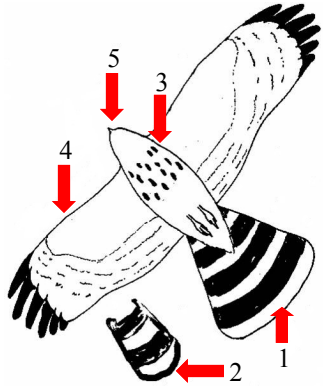
Falcons



## Accipiters

- Short, broad, round wings
- Long, narrow tail
- Favor woodlands
- Flight: several quick beats, then glide

## Cooper's Hawk

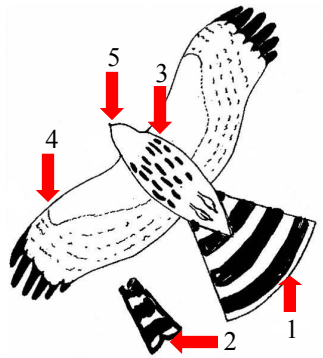


1. Last band on tail is white.
2. No notch in tail when folded.
3. "Clean" chest in immature.
4. Wings generally

straight when soaring.

5. Head can easily be seen in flight.

## Sharp-shinned Hawk



1. Last band on tail dirty, gray, or not visible.
2. Notch in folded tail.
3. "Dirty" chest in immature.
4. Wrist

forward when soaring.

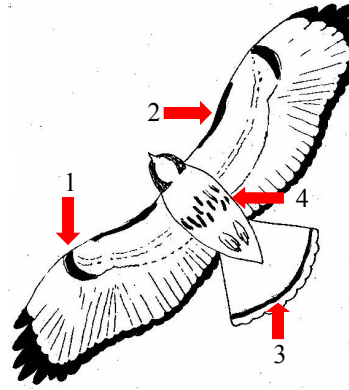
5. Head small; almost even with wings in flight.



## Buteos

- Short, fan-like tail
- Blunt wing tips
- Flight: 3-5 slow, deliberate wing beats then glide
- Hunt most often from perches

## Red-tailed Hawk

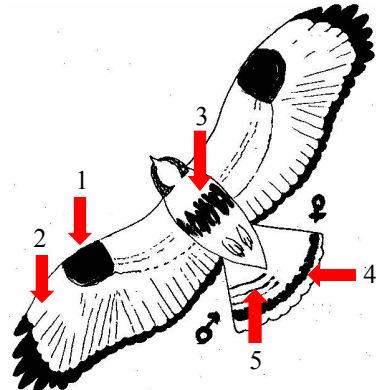


1. Dark "comma."
2. Dark patagium.
3. Thin tail band.
4. Belly band (darkness varies—can be almost absent in some).

5. In adults, tail is red.

\*Most common hawk in Iowa.

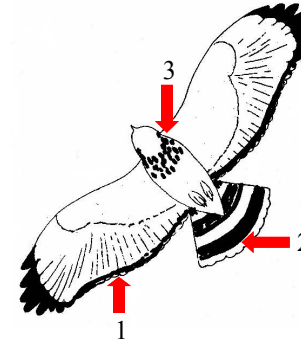
## Rough-legged Hawk



1. Dark wrist patch.
2. Primaries "clean" & white.
3. Dark belly band.
4. Thick tail band in both sexes.
5. In males, tail is fully banded.

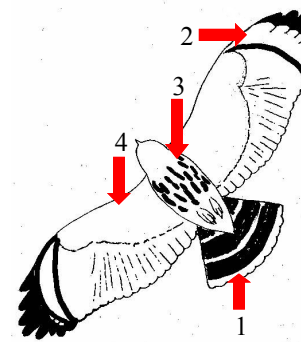
## more Buteos

## Broad-winged Hawk



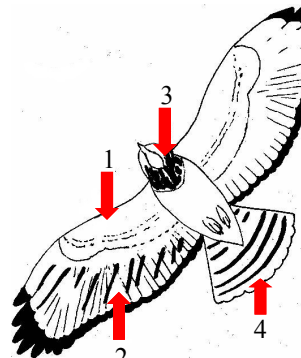
1. Primaries & secondaries pale with dark edge.
2. Thick, even tail banding.
3. In light adult, cinnamon "bib."

## Red-shouldered Hawk



1. Narrow white bands & thick dark bands on tail.
2. Pale "crescent."
3. Cinnamon streaks on chest.
4. Rusty "shoulders."

## Swainson's Hawk



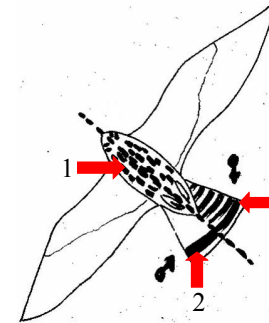
1. White coverts.
2. Gray primaries & secondaries.
3. White throat with dark "bib."
4. Gray tail with subtle bands.



## Falcons

- Long, pointed wings
- Long tail
- Direct, rapid wingbeats; usually do not soar

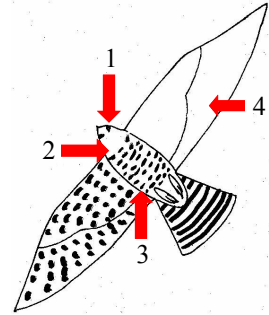
## American Kestrel



1. Brown streaks/speckles on chest & wings (male is darker than female).
2. In males, tail is rusty colored with one thick dark band at tip.

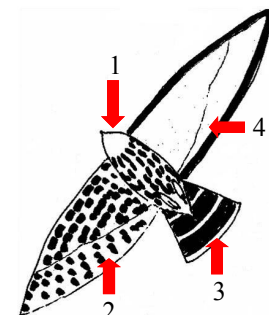
3. In females, tail dark with subtle bands.

## Peregrine Falcon



1. Dark "mustache."
2. White breast.
3. Chest & wings uniformly spotted or barred.
4. Wings long in relation to body.

## Merlin



1. "Mustache" pale or absent.
2. Checkered wings.
3. Thin white tail bands.
4. Wings shaped like an isosceles triangle (2 sides are the same length).