

BAYOU CITY BIRDING

ZINE #2

HAWKS & OSPREYS

Hawks and ospreys are large, powerful birds that have hooked beaks, strong feet, and sharp talons that they use to capture their prey. Look for them as they soar on columns of rising air and as they perch on trees and other platforms. Birds are shown in order of size, with the largest ones first.

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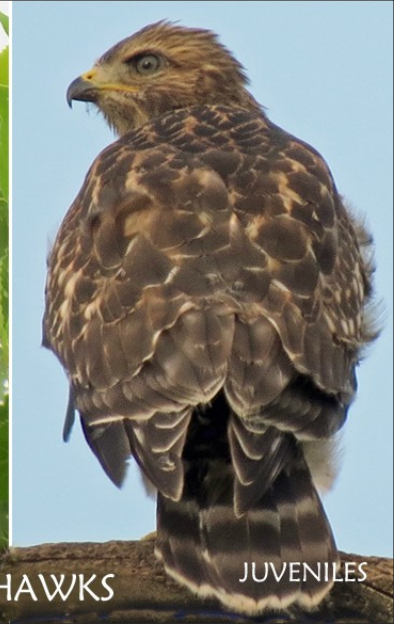


RED-SHOULDERED HAWKS

ADULTS

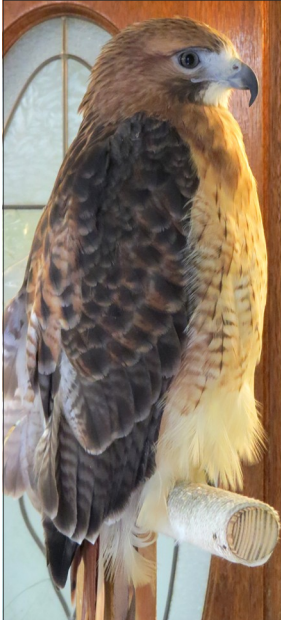


OSPREY



RED-SHOULDERED HAWKS

JUVENILES



RED-TAILED HAWKS
ADULT AT THE WILDLIFE CENTER
OF TEXAS ON LEFT, JUVENILE
AT ITS RELEASE ON RIGHT



BROAD-WINGED HAWKS
JUVENILE ON LEFT, ADULT ON RIGHT



SWAINSON'S HAWK



JUVENILE



COOPER'S HAWKS
ADULT

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A FREE APP: Merlin Bird ID

WEB SITES: HMANA.org/hawk-id-materials, AllAboutBirds.org, HoustonAudubon.org, JohnMuirLaws.org/drawing-birds, WildlifeCenterOfTexas.org, and ProjectWild.org

BOOKS: Birds of Prey of the South, A Field Guide to Hawks of North America, The Crossley ID Guide: Raptors, Hawks in Flight, and The Laws Guide to Drawing Birds

Download more of the Bayou City Birding Zines at WhiteOakBayou.org

OSPREY

WHEN: September to May

LOOK FOR: White head with a broad brown stripe to the shoulder, brown back/wings/tail, and white breast/belly (females wear a brown necklace and juveniles have white tips on their brown feathers)

FIELD NOTES: Ospreys dive feet first into water to catch fish. Ospreys, eagles, and other raptors began to die off in the 1950s due to pesticide use. Silent Spring - a book by Rachel Carson - then sparked the environmental movement that saved these birds.

1st SEEN ON AT

RED-TAILED HAWK

WHEN: Year round, but uncommon in summer

LOOK FOR: Brown head/back/wings with a blurry white "V" down the back, white throat/breast, white belly streaked with brown, and rusty-red tail (coloring varies greatly)

FIELD NOTES: Looks for prey while soaring above fields or perched on a fence or tree branch. Juveniles have barred brown tails. Want to see more? Visit The Wildlife Center of Texas and meet raptors who serve as education ambassadors and/or attend a release!

1st SEEN ON AT

SWAINSON'S HAWK

WHEN: Common during spring and fall migration, less common in summer

LOOK FOR: Brown head/back/wings, white throat, brown "bib" on breast, white belly with brown markings, and brown tail with many narrow light/dark bands (coloring varies)

FIELD NOTES: Soars while hunting for small mammals, but like many hawks, also eats insects, amphibians, reptiles, and birds. Juveniles have white markings on brown backs/wings.

1st SEEN ON AT

RED-SHOULDERED HAWK

WHEN: Year round

LOOK FOR: Brown head/back/wings mixed with white, reddish "shoulders," rusty-orange bars on white breast/belly, and brown tail with several thin white bands (coloring varies)

FIELD NOTES: Red-shoulders usually hunt for small prey in swampy areas, pouncing from perches. A family is pictured on two pages, with the juveniles marked with streaks. As with most hawks, the adult female is larger than the male.

1st SEEN ON AT

HAWK IDENTIFICATION is challenging, with coloring varying across most species and with the juveniles of most species looking different than the adults. So why feature hawks in a beginning birders' guide? Well, because they are magnificent birds, and once you see one, you'll want to see more.

To find hawks, look up at trees and to the sky, especially when around water, woods, fields and highways (see Zine #3 for flight photos). And listen for the scolding of Blue Jays and Mockingbirds - if you see them diving at something in a tree, there's a chance you'll find a hawk below!

BROAD-WINGED HAWK

WHEN: Common during fall migration, less common in summer

LOOK FOR: Brown head/back/wings, rusty-brown markings across a white breast/belly, and brown tail with a broad white center band (markings vary)

FIELD NOTES: Broad-wings hunt mainly from perches in trees, swooping to the ground to catch rodents, amphibians, birds, and insects. Juveniles have dark streaks down their breasts/bellies, some white on their backs/wings, and a light, narrowly banded tail.

1st SEEN ON AT

COOPER'S HAWK/SHARP-SHINNED HAWK

WHEN: Mostly August to May

LOOK FOR: Blue-gray top of head/back/wings, rusty-orange bars on a white breast/belly, and very long tail with broad gray and dark bands

FIELD NOTES: The Cooper's Hawk and "Sharpie" look very similar and are just a bit bigger than the largest songbirds. Both are sprinters, swooping in from hidden perches to capture birds and rodents. Juveniles are brown and white instead of blue-gray and orange, and have streaked breasts/bellies.

1st SEEN ON AT