



HAWKS, EAGLES, FALCONS, OWLS, OSPREY, VULTURES

KEY FACTS

- Raptors are hunting birds and are known for their sharp talons, sharp curved bills and excellent eyesight. They are carnivorous, eating small mammals and birds, while some specialize in hunting fish, amphibians and snakes.
- Raptors are usually hunt alone to avoid competition with other birds and do not flock together.
- Hawks, eagles and falcons hunt during the days while owls usually are nocturnal hunters.
- The average life span is about 5-6 years. They migrate in fall, and back again in spring, build nests and raise their young in the summer.
- Females stay on the nest and lay between 2-6 eggs usually depending on the species, with larger raptors laying fewer eggs. Males hunt for food and feed the female.
- Incubations lasts between 4 and 7 weeks. Larger birds have a longer incubation period.



Wildlife Rehabilitators' Association of Massachusetts

Nests

Raptor nests are usually in tall trees or on platforms made for them, such as osprey poles. Nests are large and consist of large sticks.

Hatchlings are small, featherless with eyes closed. Place them back in the nest if they appear uninjured and the nest is available.

Nestlings have their eyes open, they have a few feathers, but they cannot walk or fly, and are not agile. **Fledglings** spend a lot of time on the ground. They hop from branch to branch and they are often seen on the ground. They should be left alone if they seem healthy and if the parents are around.

In all cases, renesting is the best option if a bird has fallen out of the nest or if the nest has fallen out of the tree.

Replacement nests can be made from laundry baskets or wicker baskets hung into the trees. Bungy cords can be used to secure the nests.



Raptors in trouble

Grounded raptors are often found looking weak, emaciated and dehydrated. They may appear to have drooping wings, respiratory distress, a head tilt or other neurological issues. There are several causes that can be lethal for these birds.

Rodenticide poisoning – If a bird eats a mouse or other prey that has been poisoned with rat poison or other exterminator products, the raptor will also become sick. These birds need immediate attention and will certainly die if not treated.

Lead toxicity – raptors can get lead poisoning from eating game or carcasses that have been shot. Or if the raptor has been shot itself. These birds need immediate attention.

Keep the bird warm and quiet and contact a **Federally Permitted** wildlife rehabber or wildlife hospital immediately.