

BIRDS OF PREY

Birds of prey are predators, meaning that they hunt other animals such as mice, insects and other rodents. Birds of prey are also known as raptors, this word comes from the Latin word 'rapere' meaning 'to capture'. Birds of prey are usually large and strong birds with sharp claws that help them scoop up their prey as they swoop down. Their great eyesight helps them to see their prey from far away. There are hundreds of birds that fall into the birds of prey category however, the major kinds of birds of prey include: Owls, Eagles, Hawks and Falcons. Let's take a closer look at the types of birds of prey and their characteristics.

HAWKS

Out of all of the birds of prey, the hawk is the most common. You may have heard their screeching, echoing call or have seen them soaring high in the sky! Hawks commonly place their nests on top of cliffs, or tall trees, these hawk made nests can be up to 90cm wide. That's a big enough nest for a human to sit in! Hawks have long, broad wings and short wide tails and are often spotted soaring over open fields.

A hawk's diet usually consists of small mammals including rodents and rabbits. They also eat birds, reptiles, fish and insects.



OWLS

If you have ever seen this nocturnal animal before, you would know that the owl has notably large eyes, a large flat face and loves to make a "hoot" sound. Owls can be found in all different types of habitats, and every continent except Antarctica contains species of owls. Owls are found in many places including deserts, forests and mountains.

Most owls like to eat insects, small mammals like mice and rabbits and other smaller birds. Owls cannot actually chew their food because they do not have teeth. They use their beak to tear apart their food and eat it.



BALD EAGLE

The Bald Eagle is a very large raptor with a dark brown body and wings and a white head and tail. Their legs and feet are bright yellow along with its eyes and large hooked bill. They have a wingspan of up to 2 metres wide! Eagles can fly up to 48km per hour and can dive at speeds up to 160km per hour.

Bald eagles feed on live fish that they snatch out of the water using their sharp beaks. They also feed on dead spawned salmon along the stream banks. Bald eagles also eat ducks and other birds along with small animals such as mice and rabbits.



FALCON

Just like a speeding bullet, the falcon attacks and snatches their prey in mid-air! Most of a falcon's diet consists of other birds! But the falcons aren't picky, and will eat all sorts of other creatures, including lizards, rodents, even bats. A falcon also uses its amazing eyesight for hunting and has an incredible diving speed. As the falcon performs a dive, it soars to an extreme height, then dives at a speed up to 323km per hour! While diving, the falcon is the fastest animal on Earth.



BIRD IS THE WORD

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FUN FACTS ABOUT BIRDS OF PREY



Owls can turn their heads as much as 270 degrees

Owls very rarely drink water – they get most of the hydration they need from the prey they feast on. It is quite rare to see an owl drinking water, but you might see them taking a bath.

A bald eagle's white head may make it look bald. But actually the name comes from an old English word "balde" meaning white



The female hawk is 25% heavier than the male hawk



Many birds of prey can do amazing tricks and flips in the air



The fastest bird on earth is the Peregrine falcon when in a dive