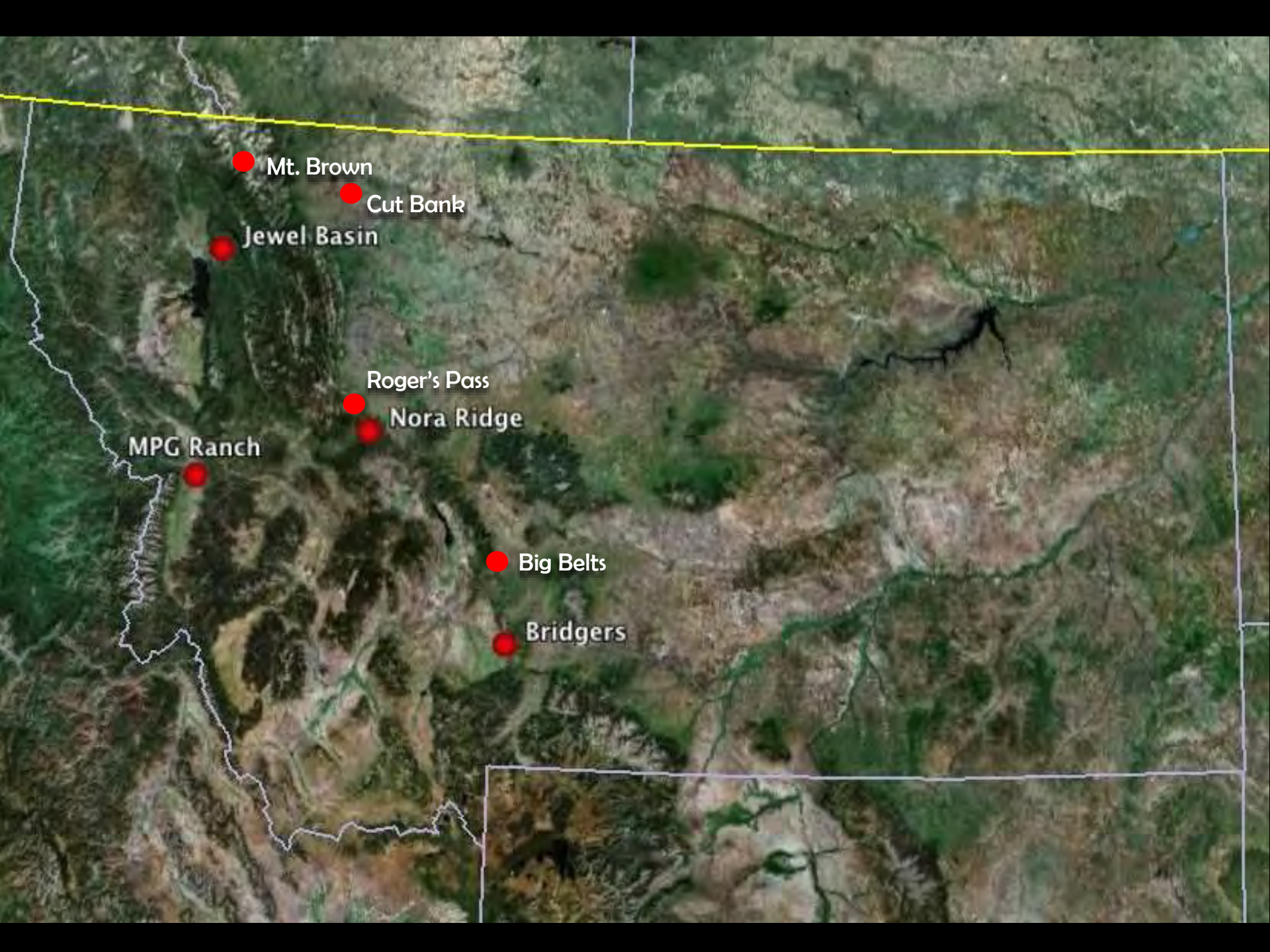


Montana Audubon Raptor ID



Amy Seaman, Director of Policy & Science;
aseaman@mtaudubon.org





Mt. Brown

Cut Bank

Jewel Basin

Roger's Pass

Nora Ridge

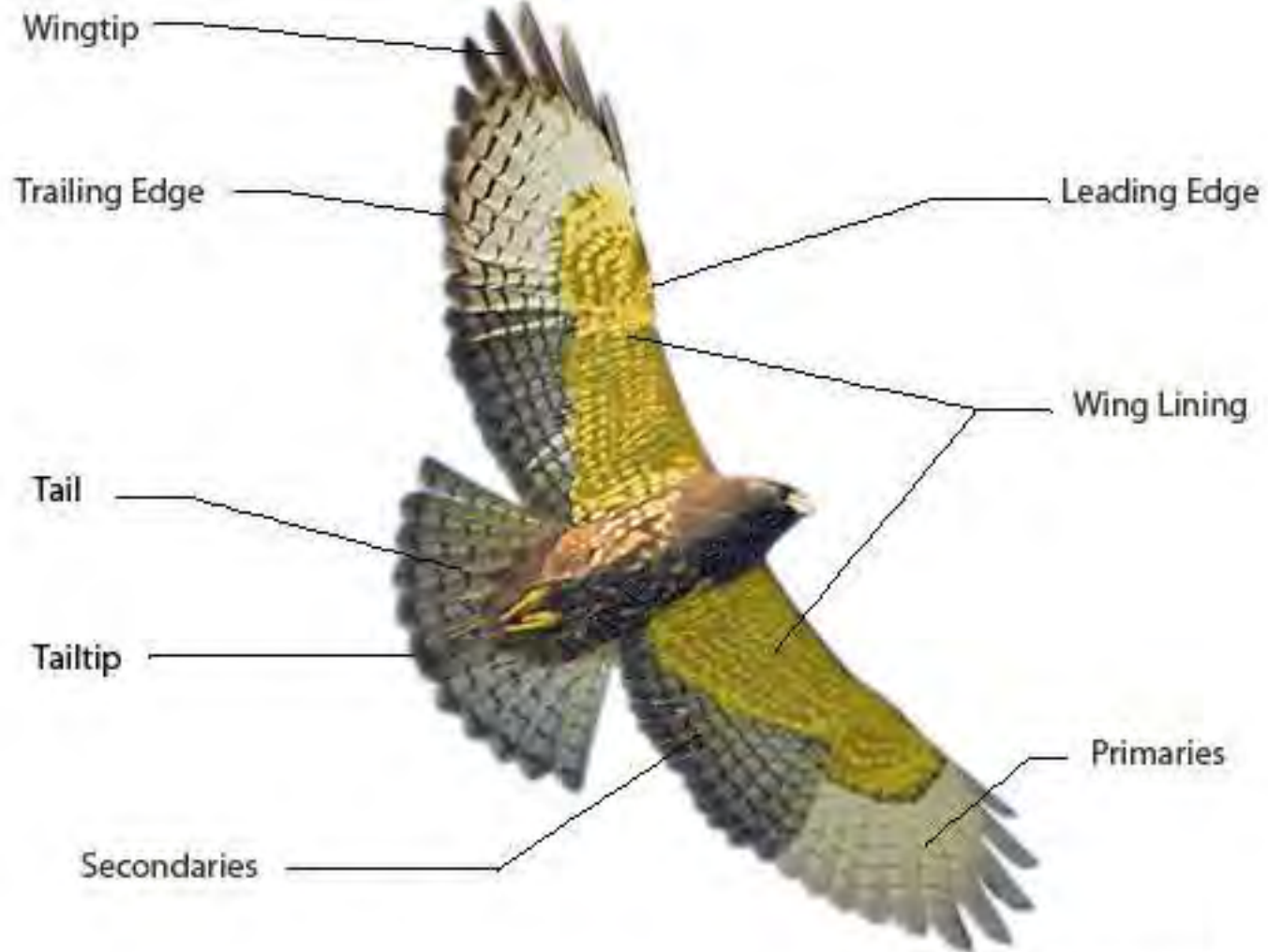
MPG Ranch

Big Belts

Bridgers

As widespread, apex predators, raptors are useful indicators of ecosystem health!





Head-on Profiles of Selected Species



Red-tailed Hawk soaring



Red-tailed Hawk shallow glide



Red-tailed Hawk steep glide



Accipiter gliding



Falcon gliding



Black Vulture soaring



Turkey Vulture soaring



Northern Harrier gliding



Ferruginous Hawk gliding



Rough-legged Hawk gliding



Swainson's Hawk gliding



Red-tailed Hawk gliding



Red-shouldered Hawk gliding



Broad-winged Hawk gliding



Osprey gliding



Bald Eagle gliding



Golden Eagle gliding

head – on
Soaring
gliding

wing - on



Tail - away





Vulture



Eagle



Osprey



Harrier



Buteo



Accipiter



Falcon

Red-tailed Hawk



Rough-legged Hawk



Swainson's Hawk



Ferruginous Hawk



Broad-winged Hawk

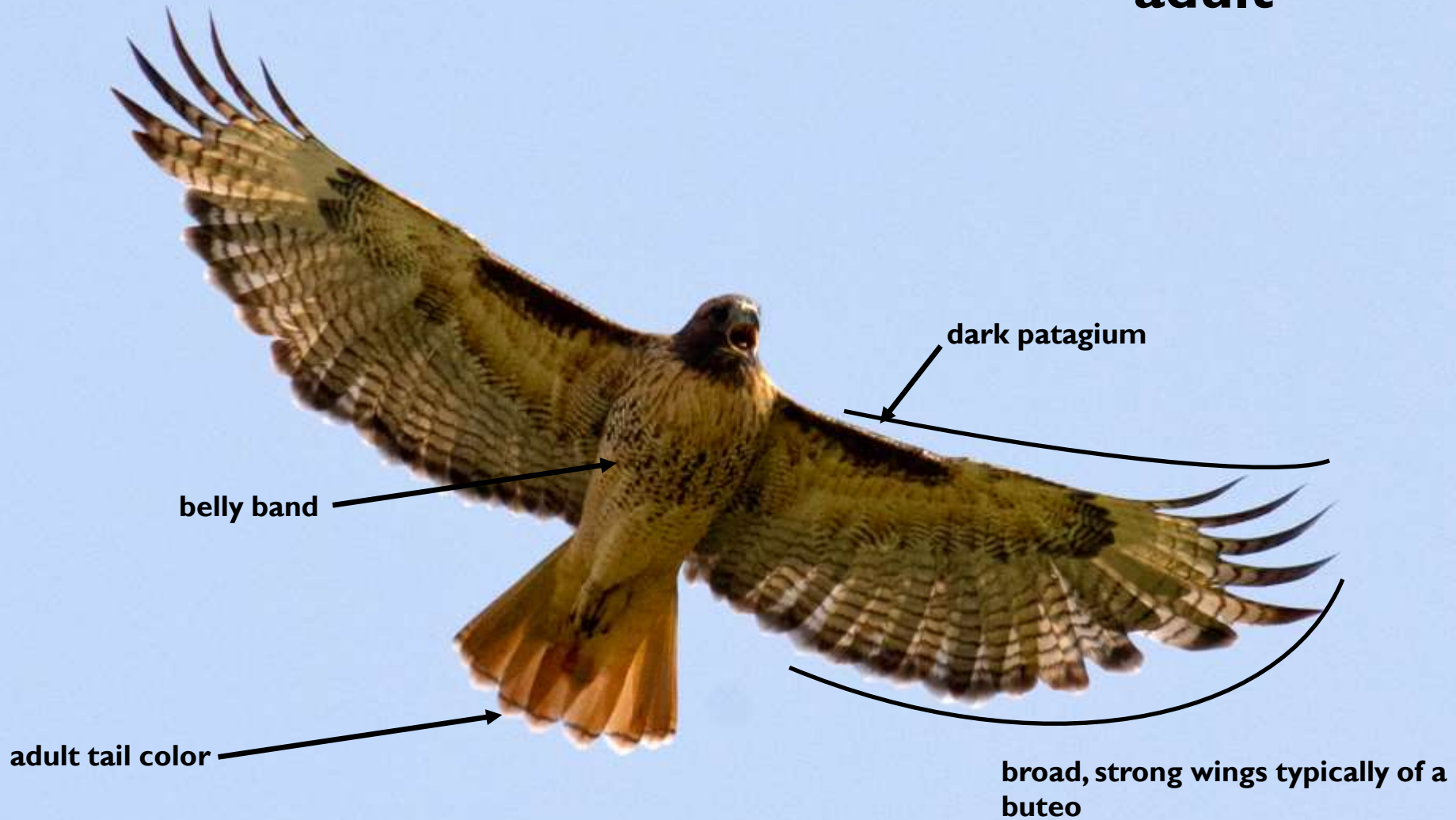


Wiki commons

Red-tailed Hawk adult



Red-tailed Hawk adult



Dark

Light

Dark

mottled scapulars

belly band

Bob Martinka photo

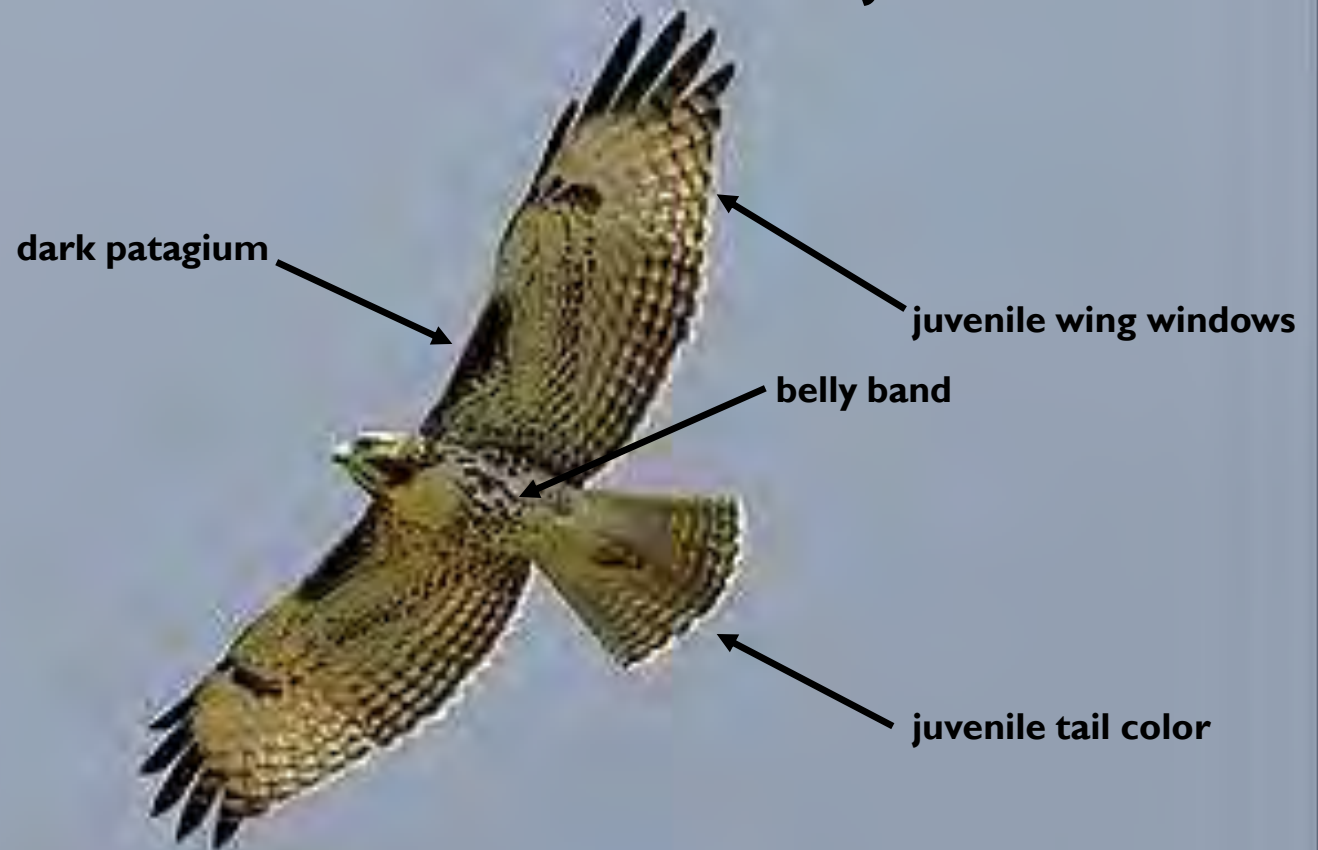


Red-tailed Hawk juvenile



© Bob Steele

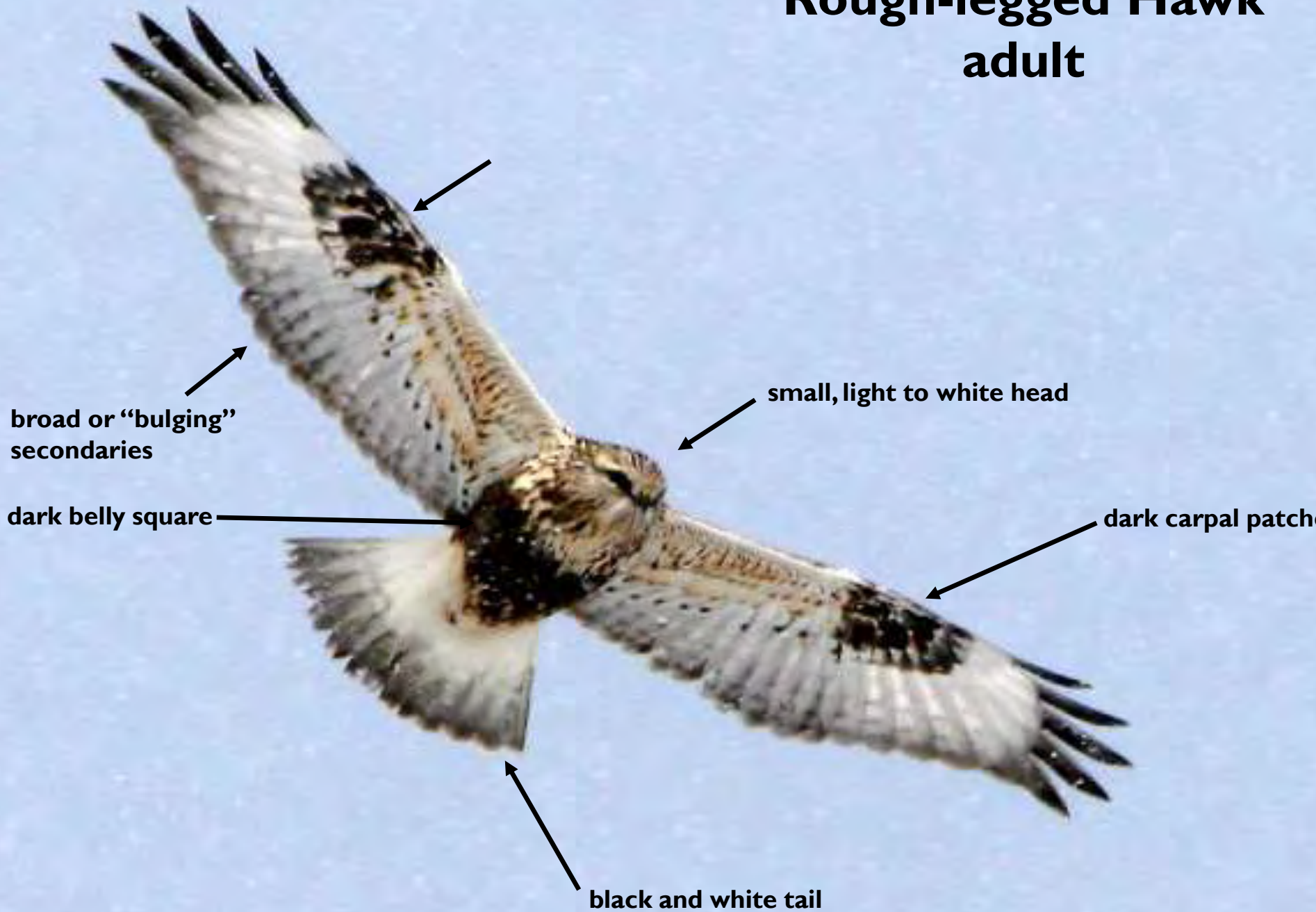
Red-tailed Hawk juvenile



Rough-legged Hawk adult



Rough-legged Hawk adult





Light

Light

Dark

Rough-legged Hawk juvenile

juvenile wing windows

even trailing edge
in fall

juvenile
tail color



adult tail color



Extreme variability in density of dark patches



Rough-legged

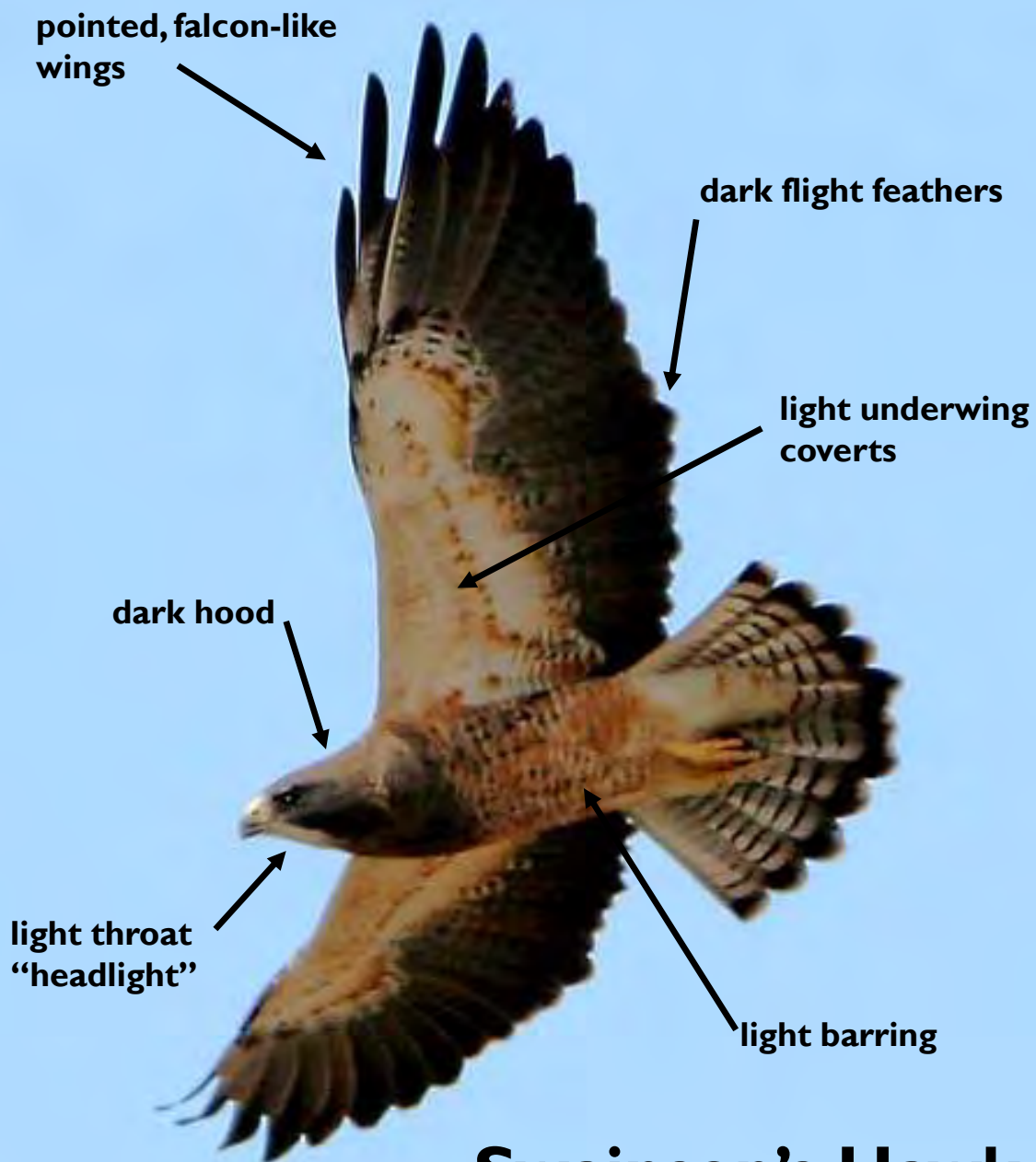


Red-tail





Swainson's Hawk
adult



**Swainson's Hawk
adult**

Dark

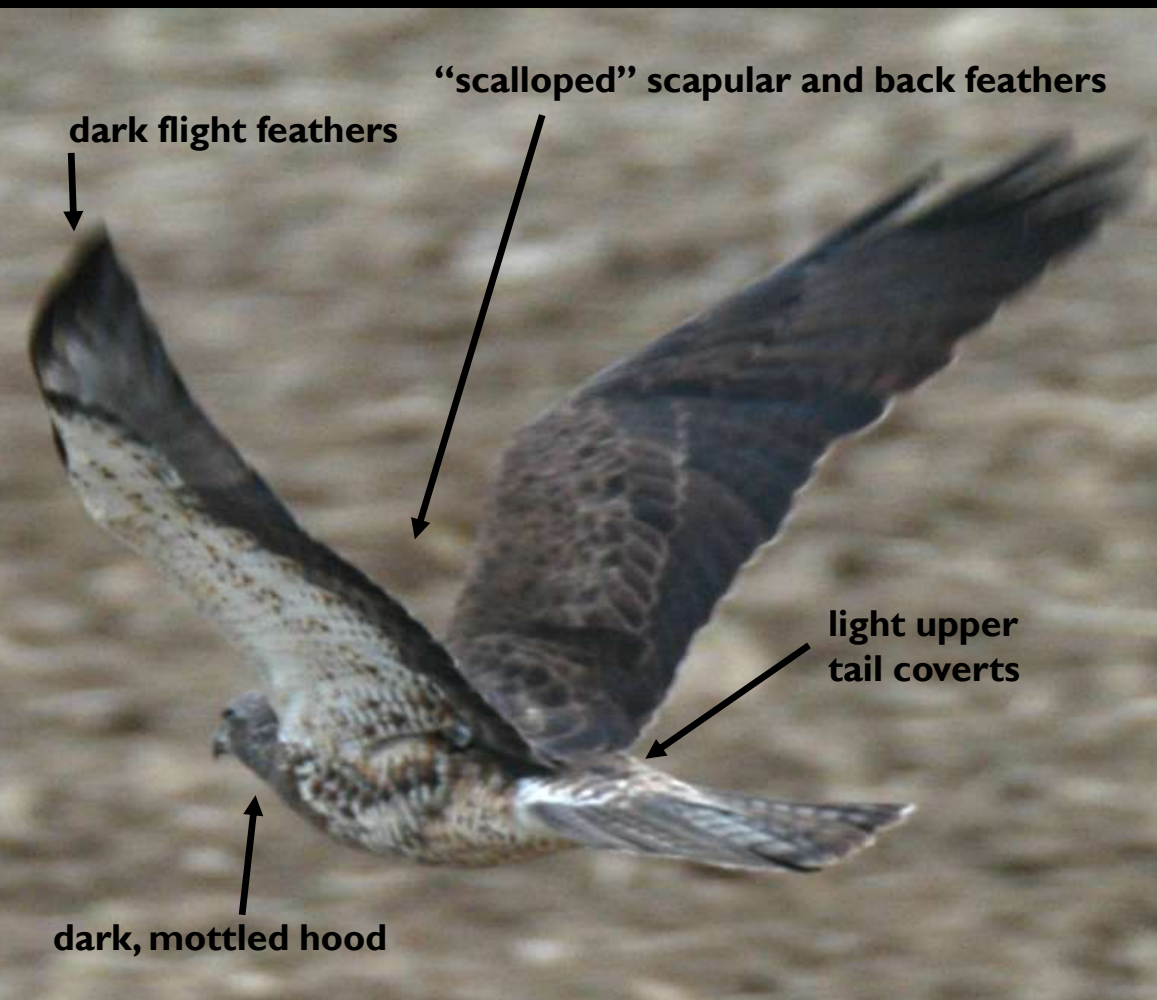
Dark

Light



clean scapulars





dark flight feathers

“scalloped” scapular and back feathers

light upper
tail coverts

dark, mottled hood

Swainson's Hawk juvenile



“scalloped” feathers

streaked vs. barred

**Swainson's
Hawk**



Red-tail



Ferruginous Hawk (Adult)



Ferruginous Hawk (Adult)

long wings

dark comma

rufous feathered legs

adult tail color

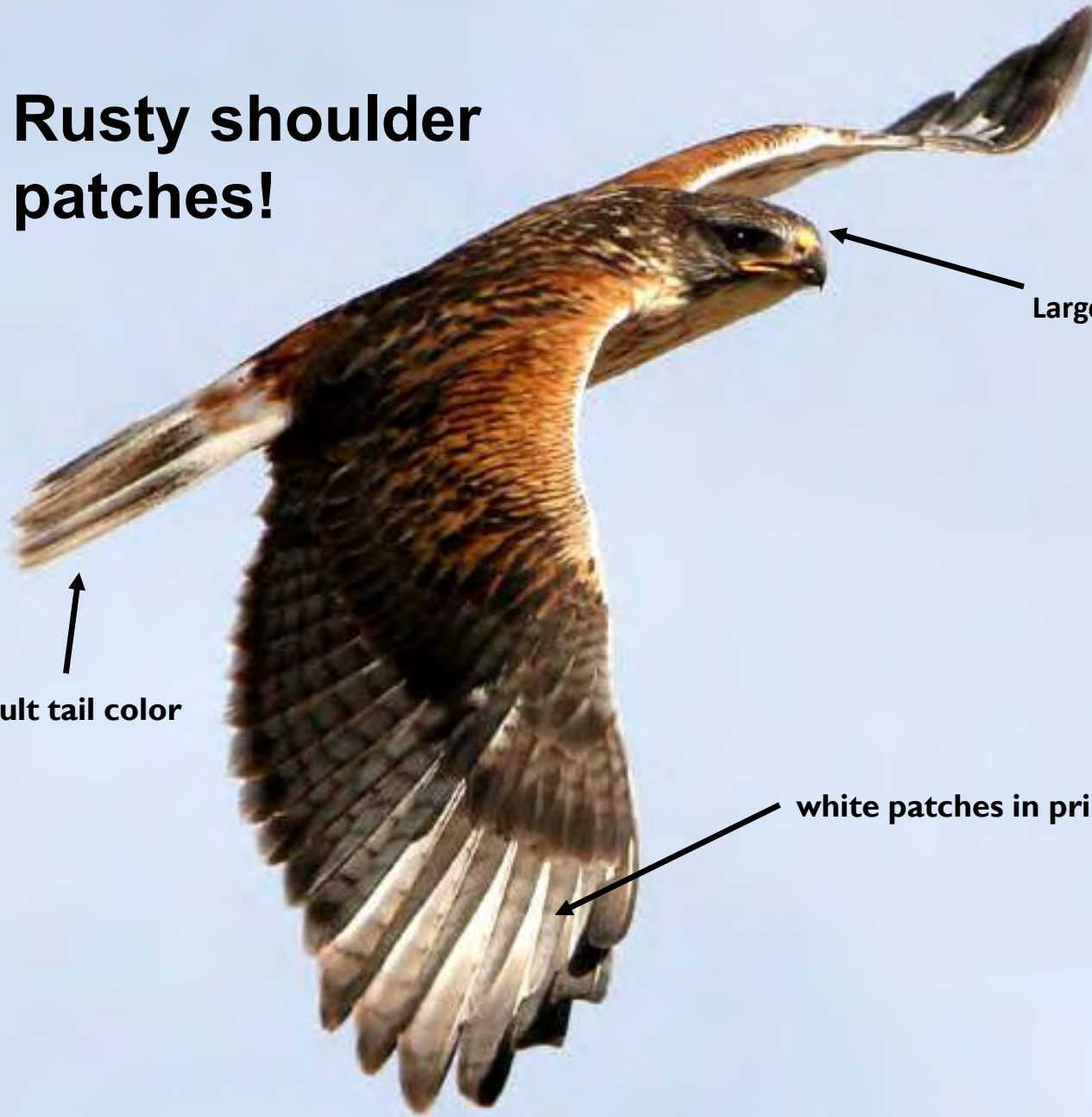


Rusty shoulder patches!

adult tail color

Large head, yellow gape

white patches in primaries



Ferruginous Hawk

Light

Light

Light





buffy chest



spotted crown
and flanks

juvenile tail

**Ferruginous Hawk
(Juvenile)**



Ferruginous

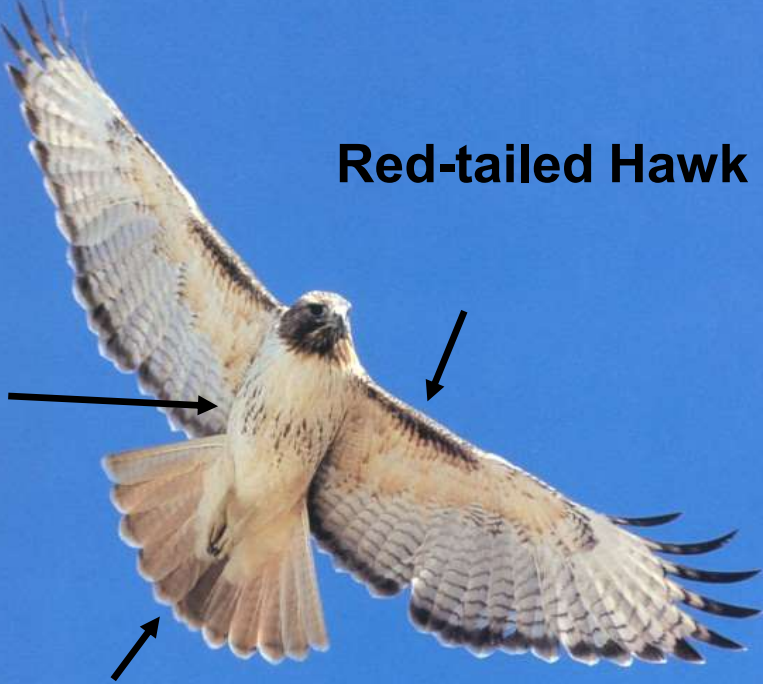


Redtail

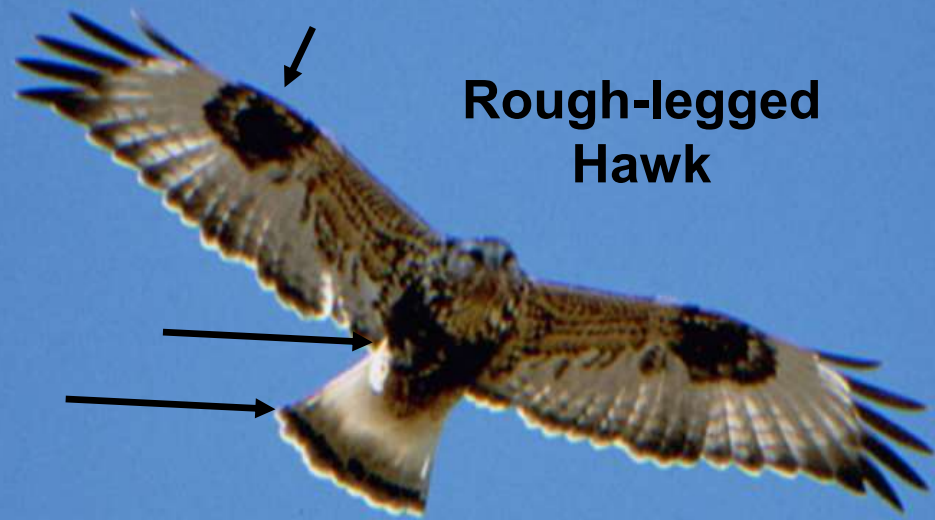




Red-tailed Hawk



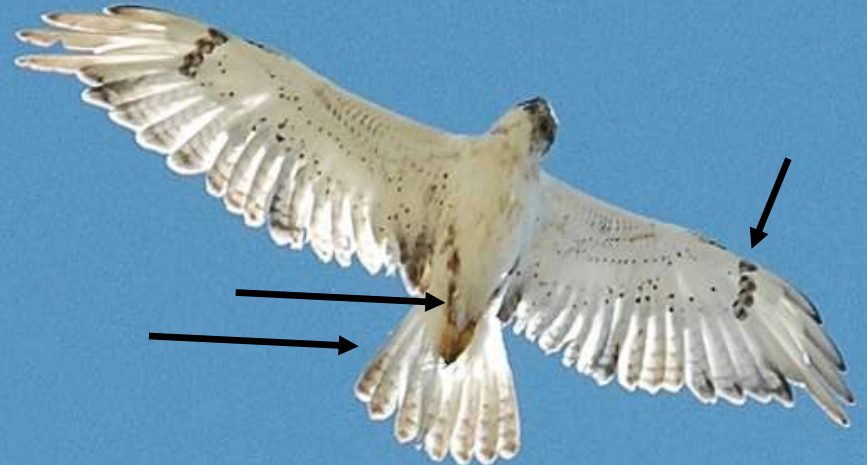
Rough-legged Hawk



Swainson's Hawk



Ferruginous Hawk



Broad-winged Hawk **(spring & fall migrant)** **crow-sized**



Adult



Juvenile



Red-tailed Hawk color morphs light, intermediate (rufous), and dark



Harlan's Hawk



**Red-tailed Hawk
(western subsp.)**



Harlan's Hawk



Harlan's Hawk variation

dark trailing edge
of wings



dark patagium



belly band



A

B

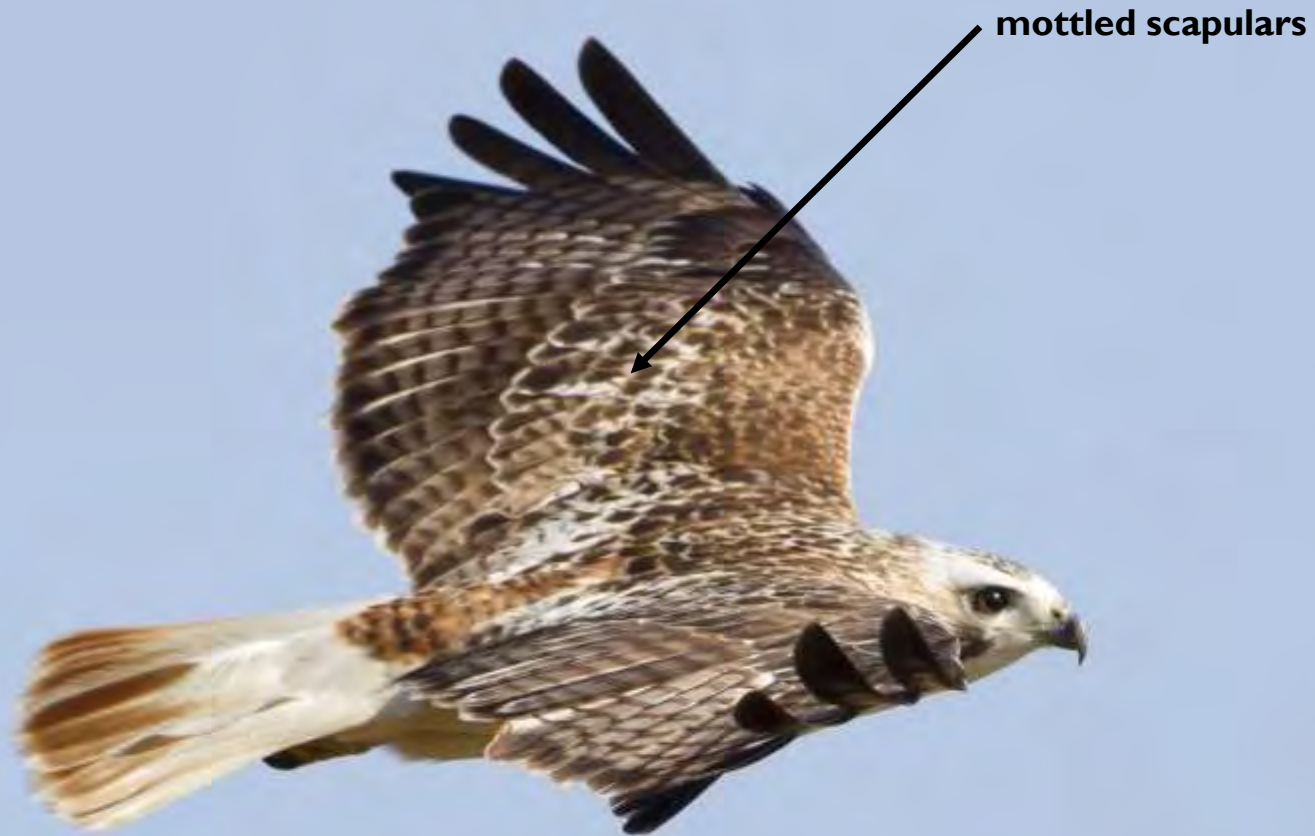
light, barred tail



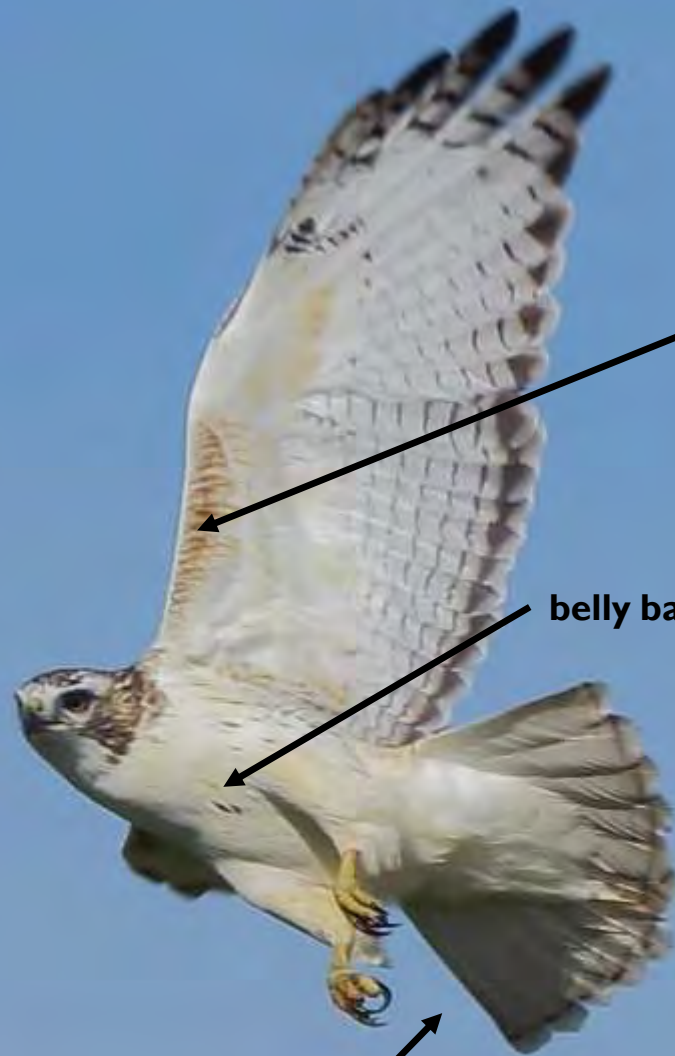
C



Krider's Hawk



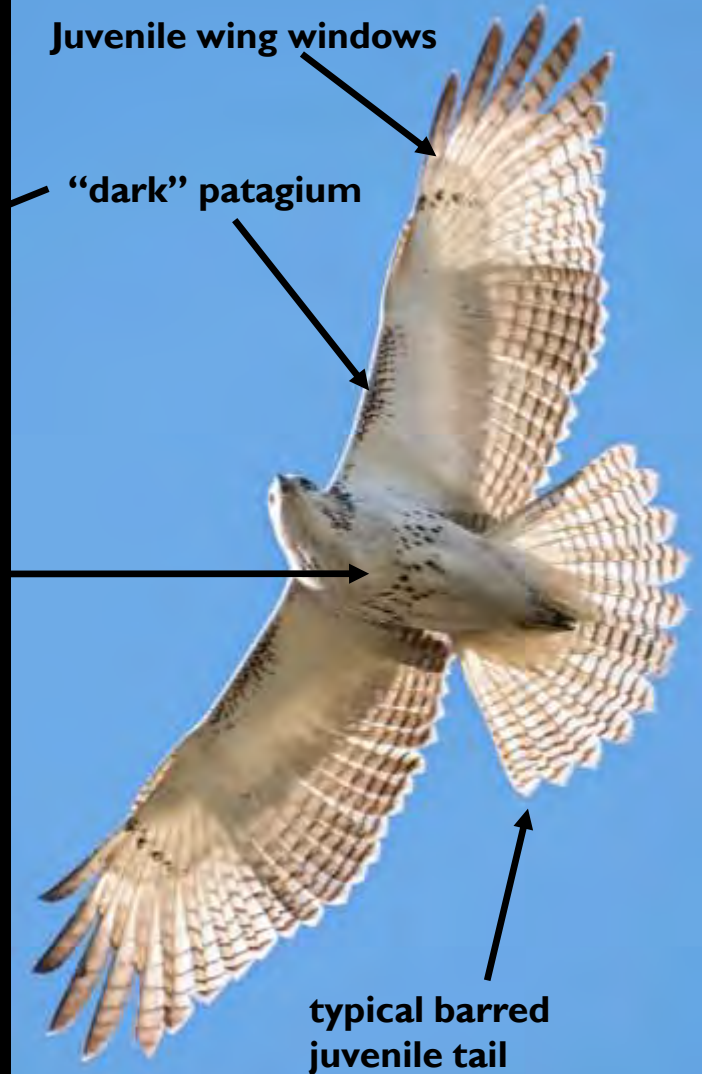
Krider's Hawk



adult tail color

belly band

Steven Mlodinow photo



Juvenile wing windows

"dark" patagium

typical barred
juvenile tail

© 2016 eloise_photos@yahoo.com

Swainson's Hawk color morphs

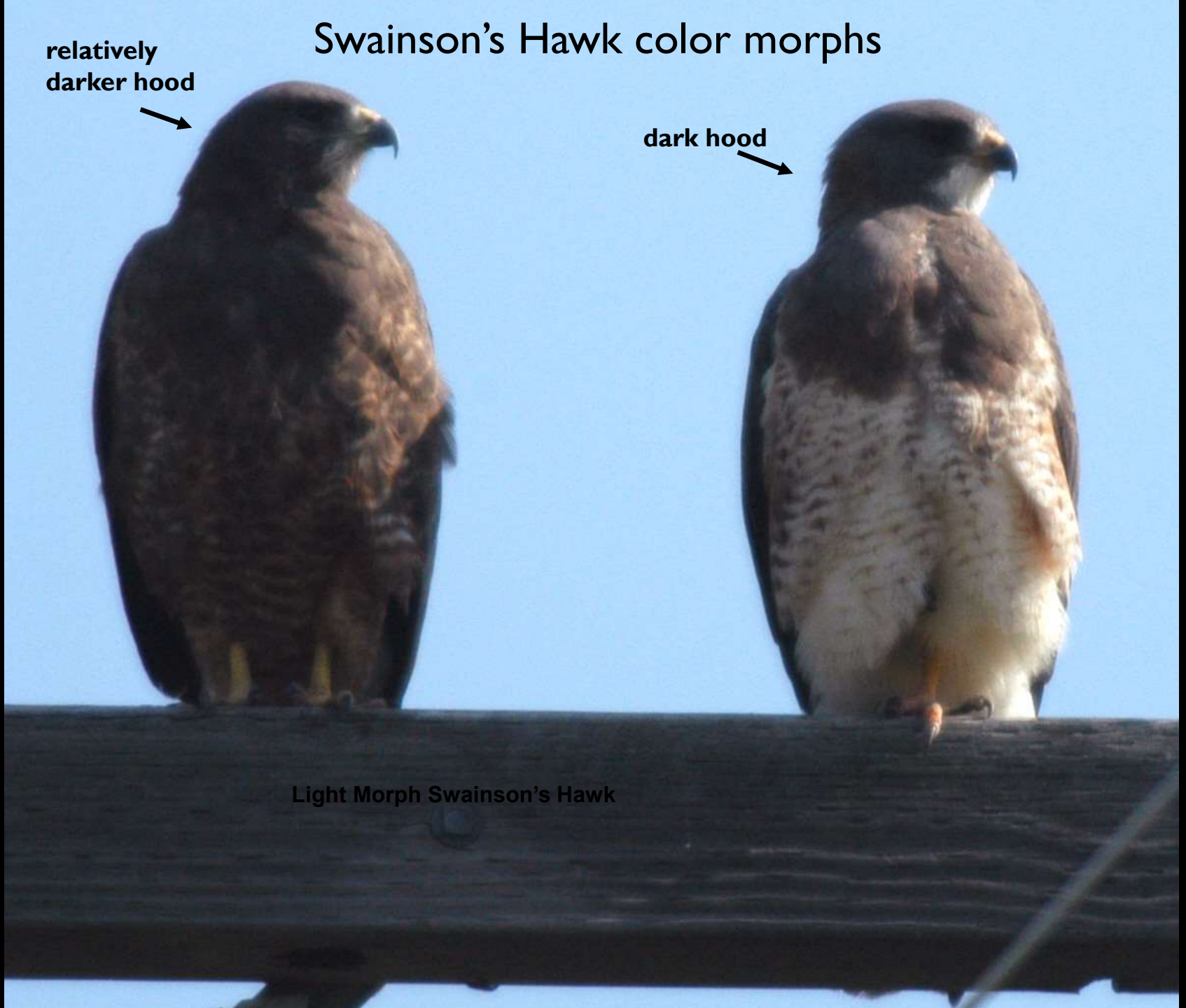
relatively
darker hood



dark hood



Light Morph Swainson's Hawk



Swainson's Hawk Color Morphs

Rufous



dark flight
feathers

Dark



Light



pointed, falcon-like
wings



**Swainson's Hawk
Dark Morph**



Dark morph Ferrugs are rare!

wing “comma” appears white



contrasting leg color vanishes



white patches in primaries

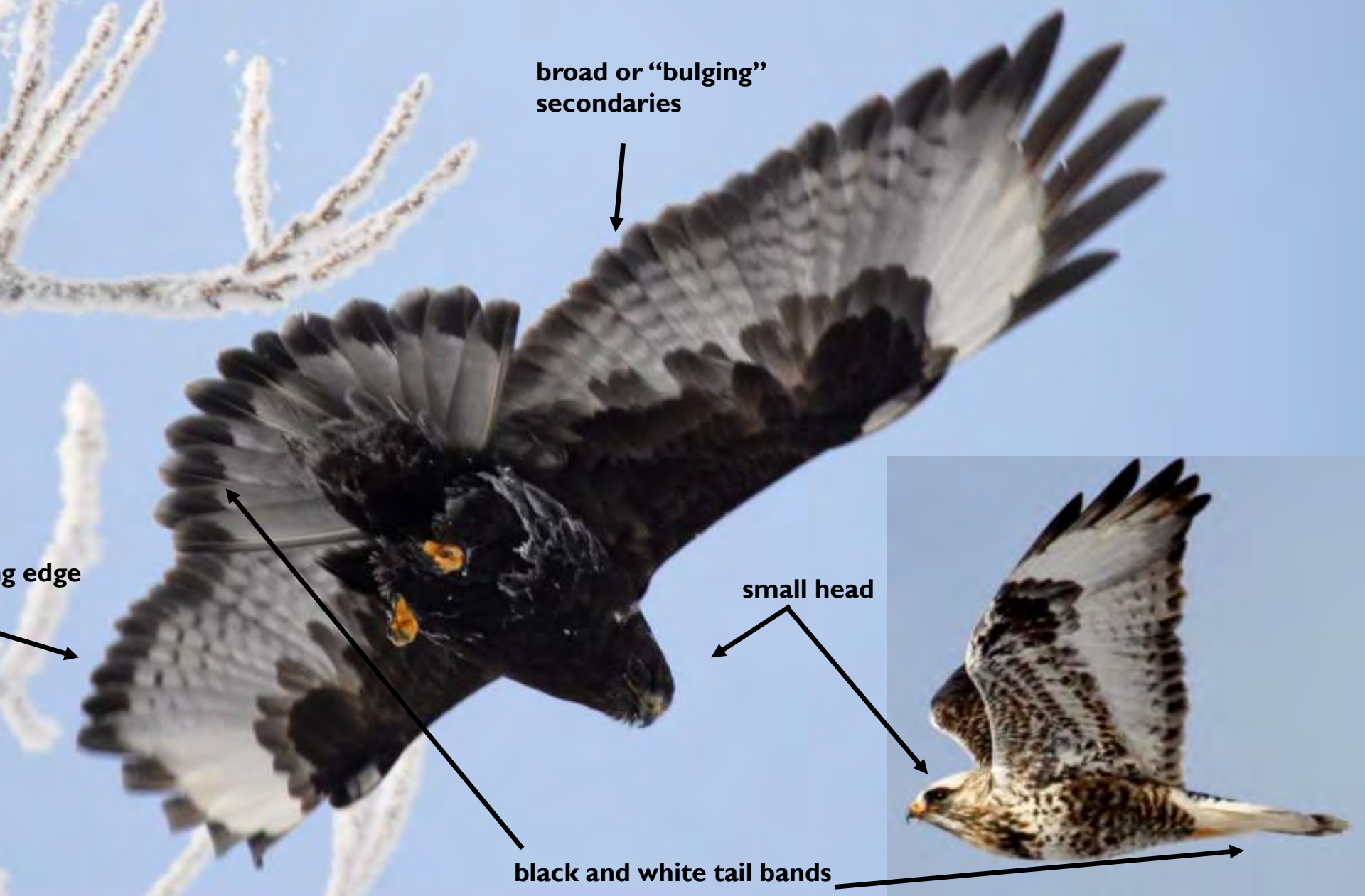
Large head, yellow g

adult tail color, though dark

Rough-legged Hawk color morphs



Rough-legged Hawk color morphs – dark and intermediate



Light morphs



RTHA



FEHA



RLHA



SWHA



BWHA

Dark morphs



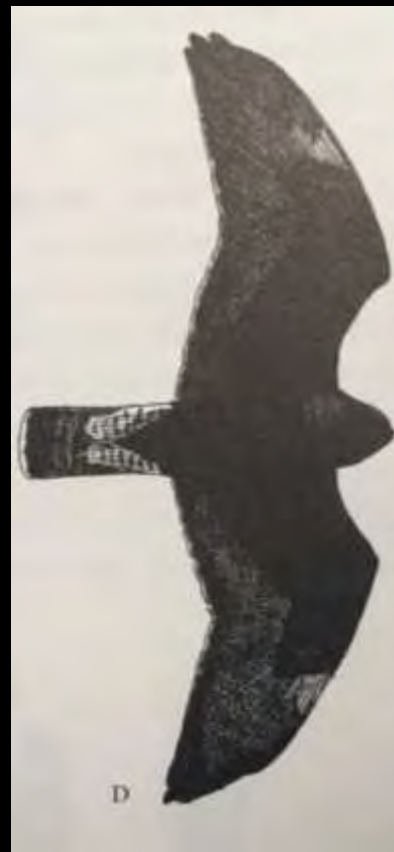
RTHA



FEHA



RLHA



SWHA



BWHA

Aberrant or leucistic feathers – Red Tail



Bill Schmoker photo



Janet Hug – MI - photo



Vulture



Eagle



Osprey



Harrier



Buteo



Accipiter



Falcon

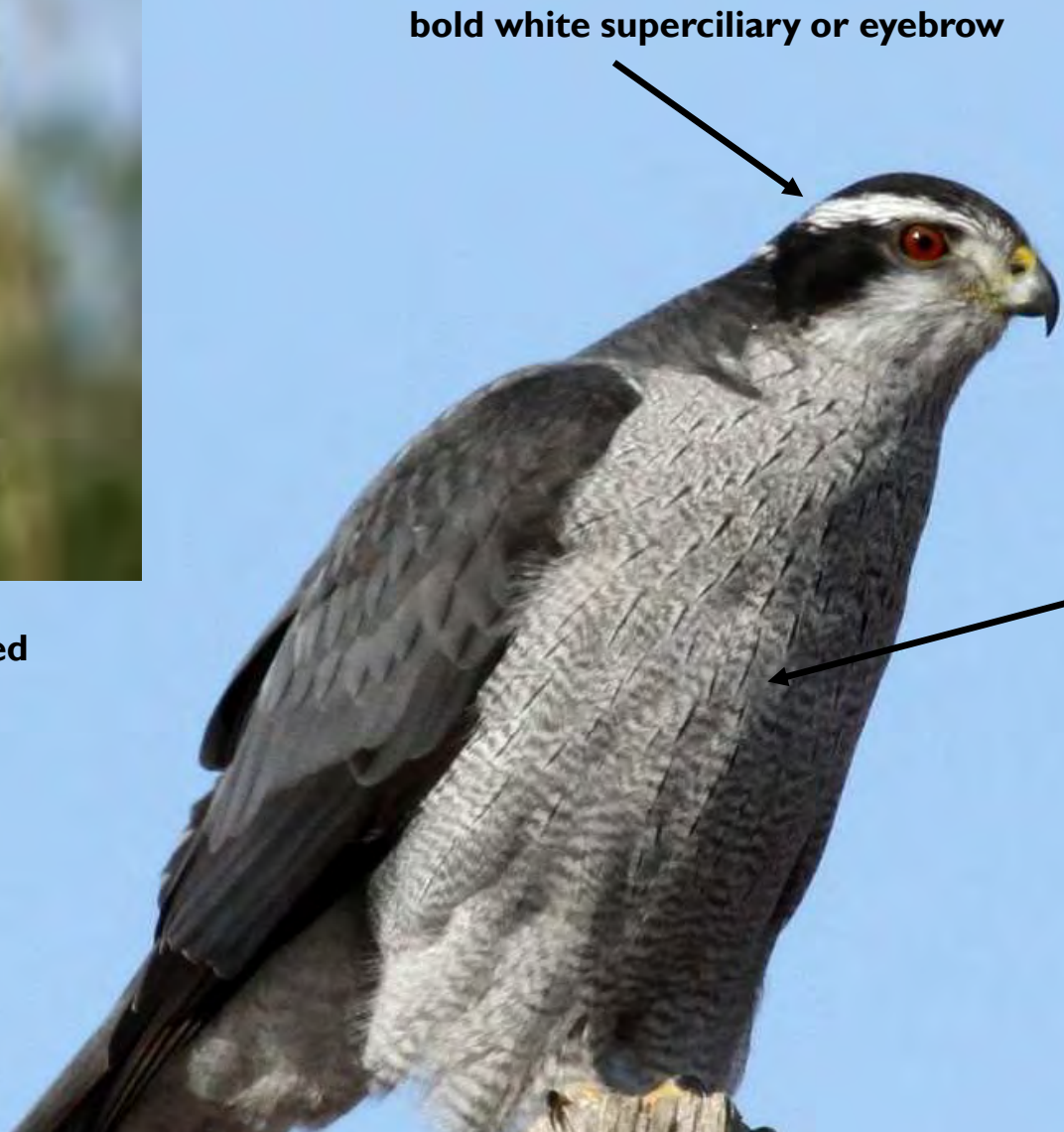
**Northern Goshawk
(adult)**





**Broad, wedge-shaped
tail (in flight)**

**dark eyeline
uniform slate blue/gray back**



bold white superciliary or eyebrow

**fine barring
and streaking**



juvenile

bold white superciliary or eyebrow

Northern Goshawk (juvenile)



“scalloped” scapular and back feathers



Cooper's Hawk (adult)



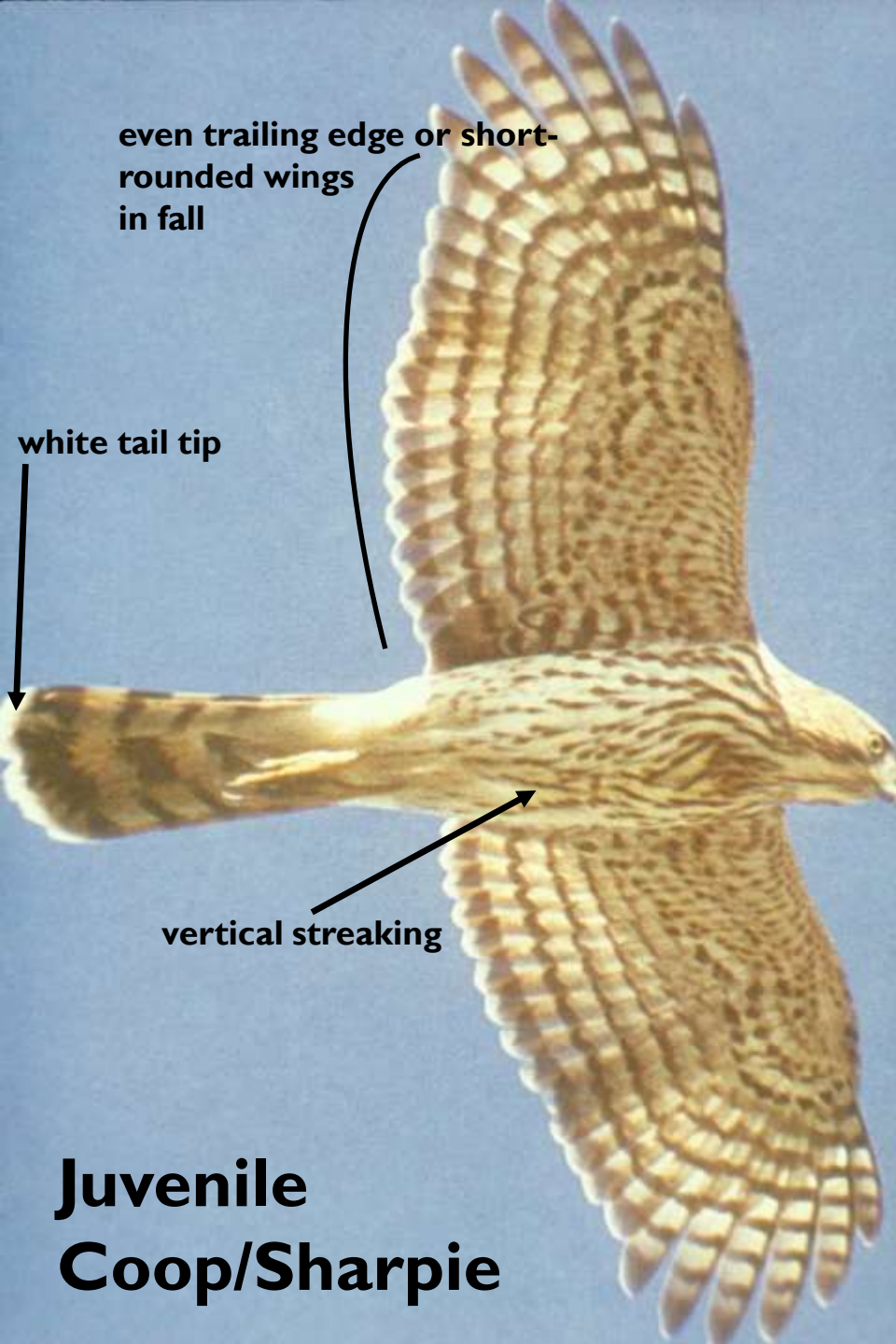
Sharp-shinned Hawk
(adult)



**Juvenile
Coop/Sharpie**



**Adult
Coop/Sharpie**

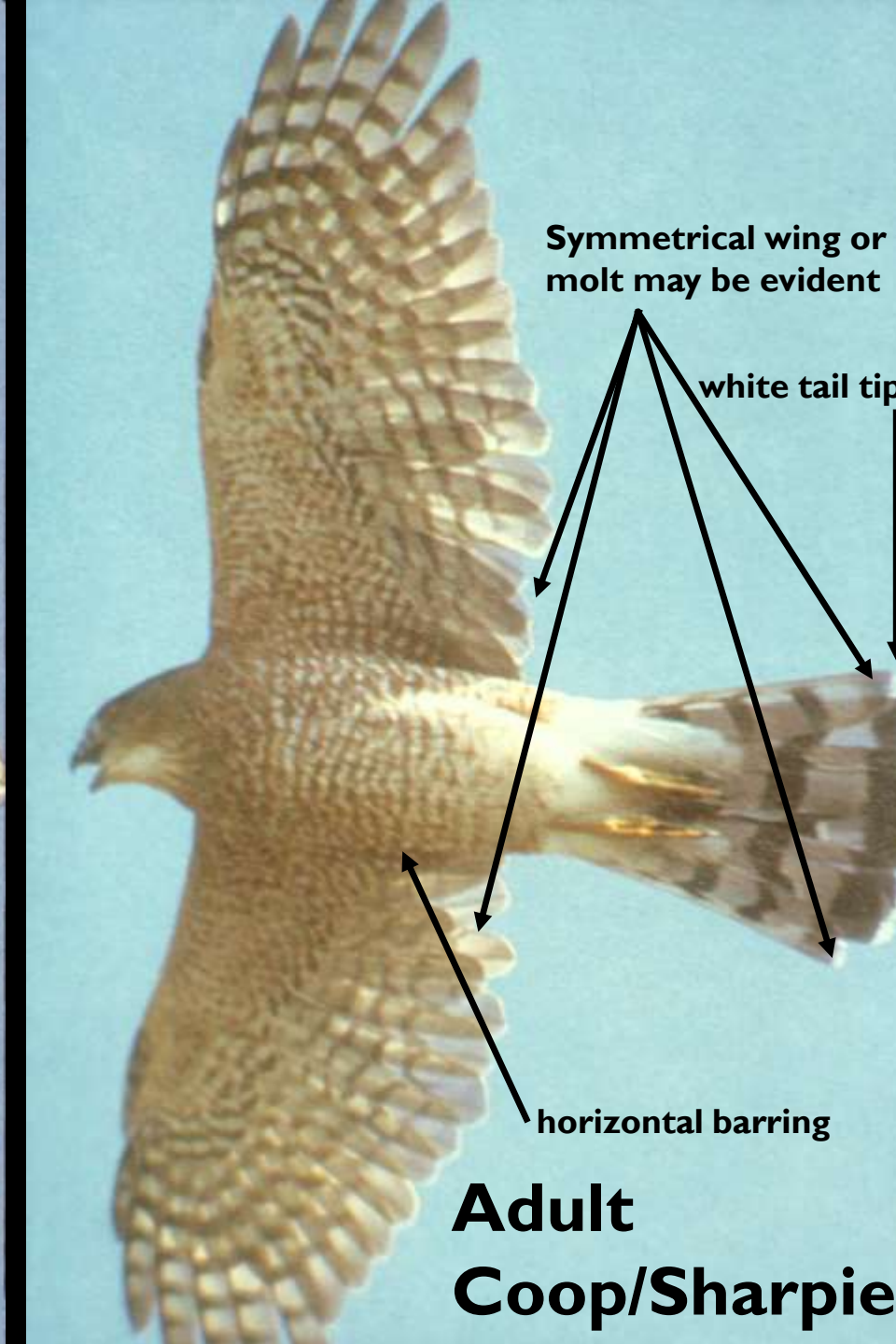


even trailing edge or short-
rounded wings
in fall

white tail tip

vertical streaking

**Juvenile
Coop/Sharpie**



Symmetrical wing or
molt may be evident

white tail tip

horizontal barring

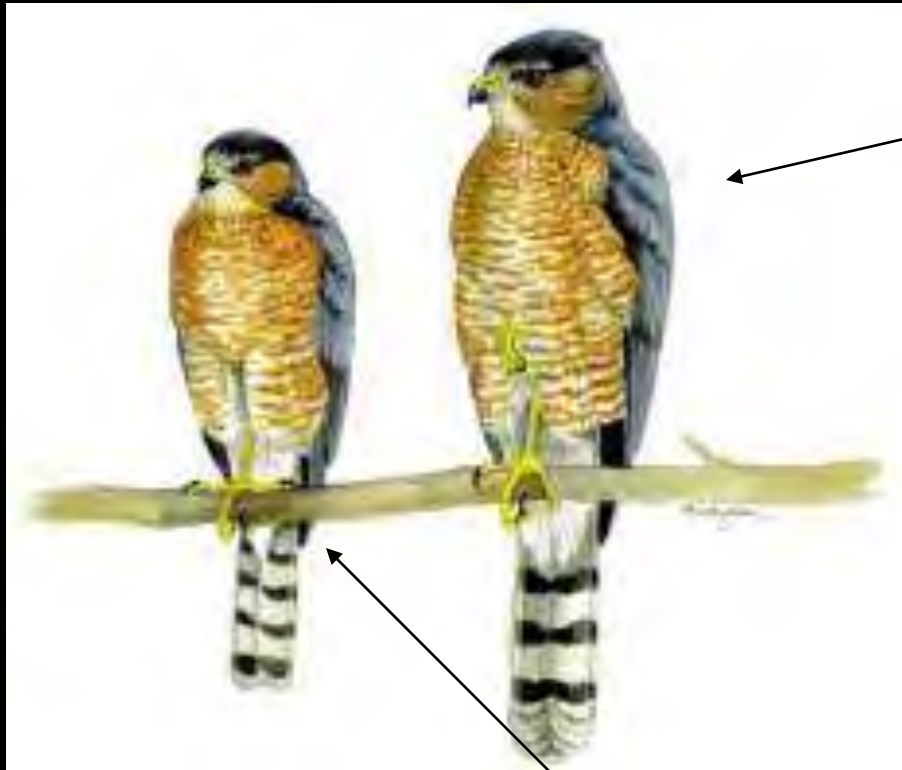
**Adult
Coop/Sharpie**



**Sharp-shinned: rounded
head**



**Coop: rectangular
head**



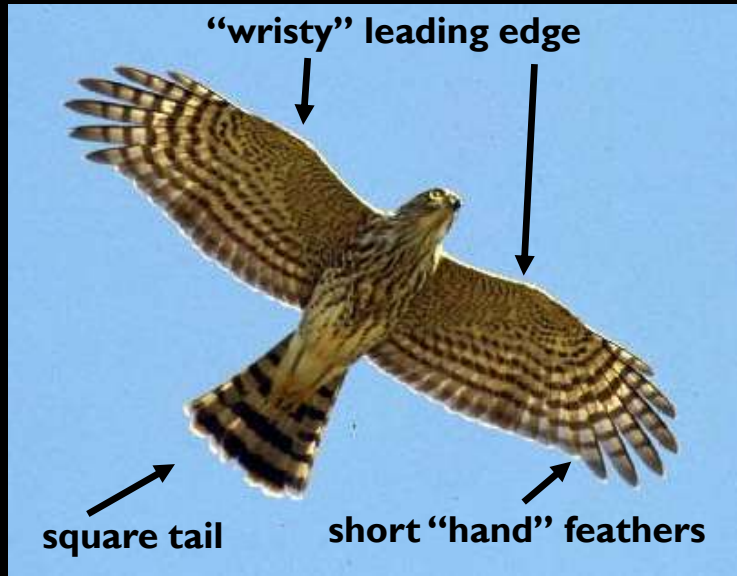
adults

Cooper's Hawk

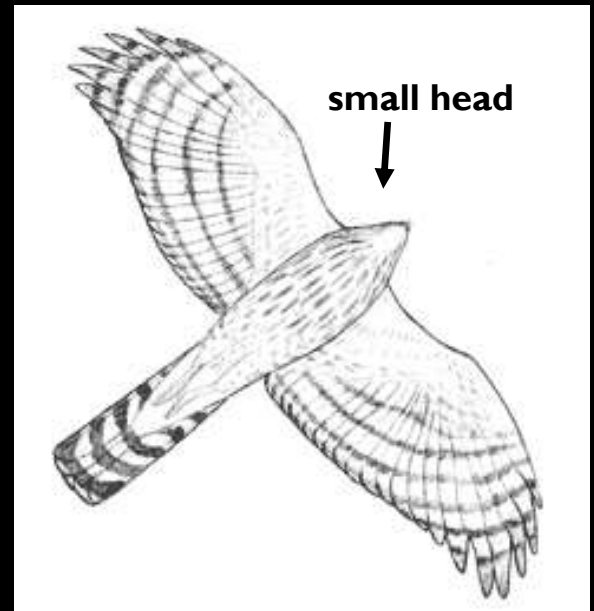
Sharp-shinned Hawk



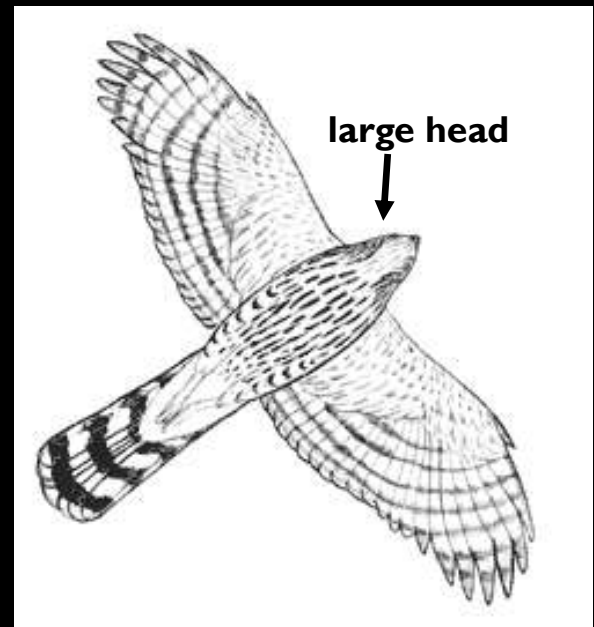
juveniles



**Sharp-
shinned**

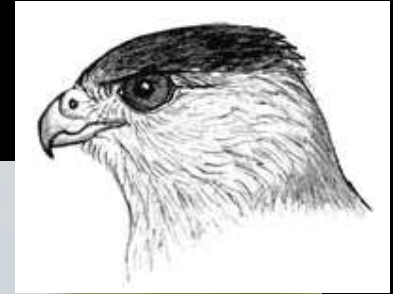


Cooper's





Sharp-shinned Hawk



Cooper's Hawk



Vulture



Eagle



Osprey



Harrier



Buteo



Accipiter



Falcon

Peregrine Falcon (adult)



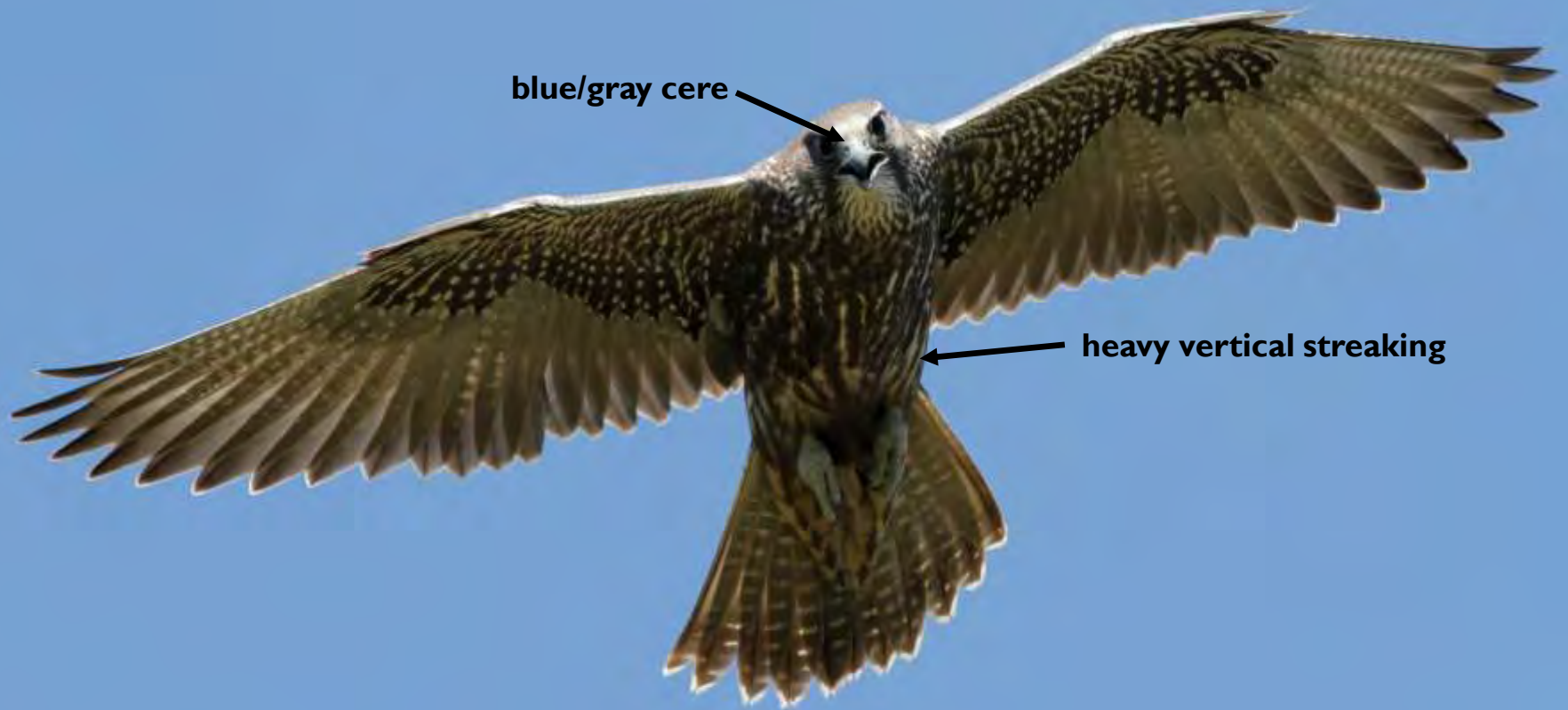
Kate Davis photo*

Peregrine Falcon (adult)



Kate Davis photo*

Peregrine Falcon (juvenile)



Adult (barred)



Kate Davis photo*

Juvenile (heavily streaked)

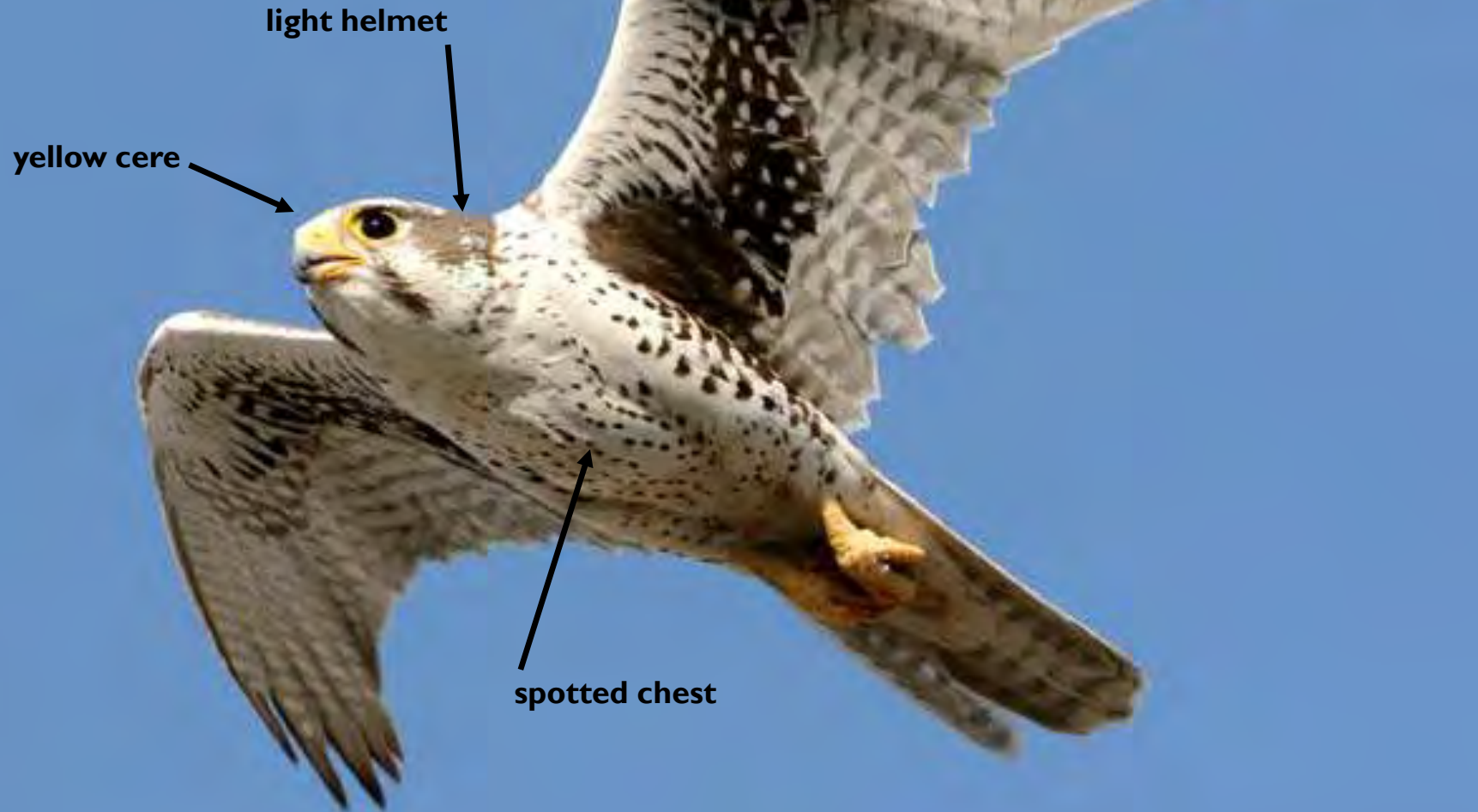




Prairie Falcon (adult)



Black “armpits” or “axillaries”!



**Long pointed wings
shared by all falcons**



**Sandy-brown
back and light
brown tail**

Prairie Falcon (juvenile)



Peregrine



Prairie



Merlin Adults

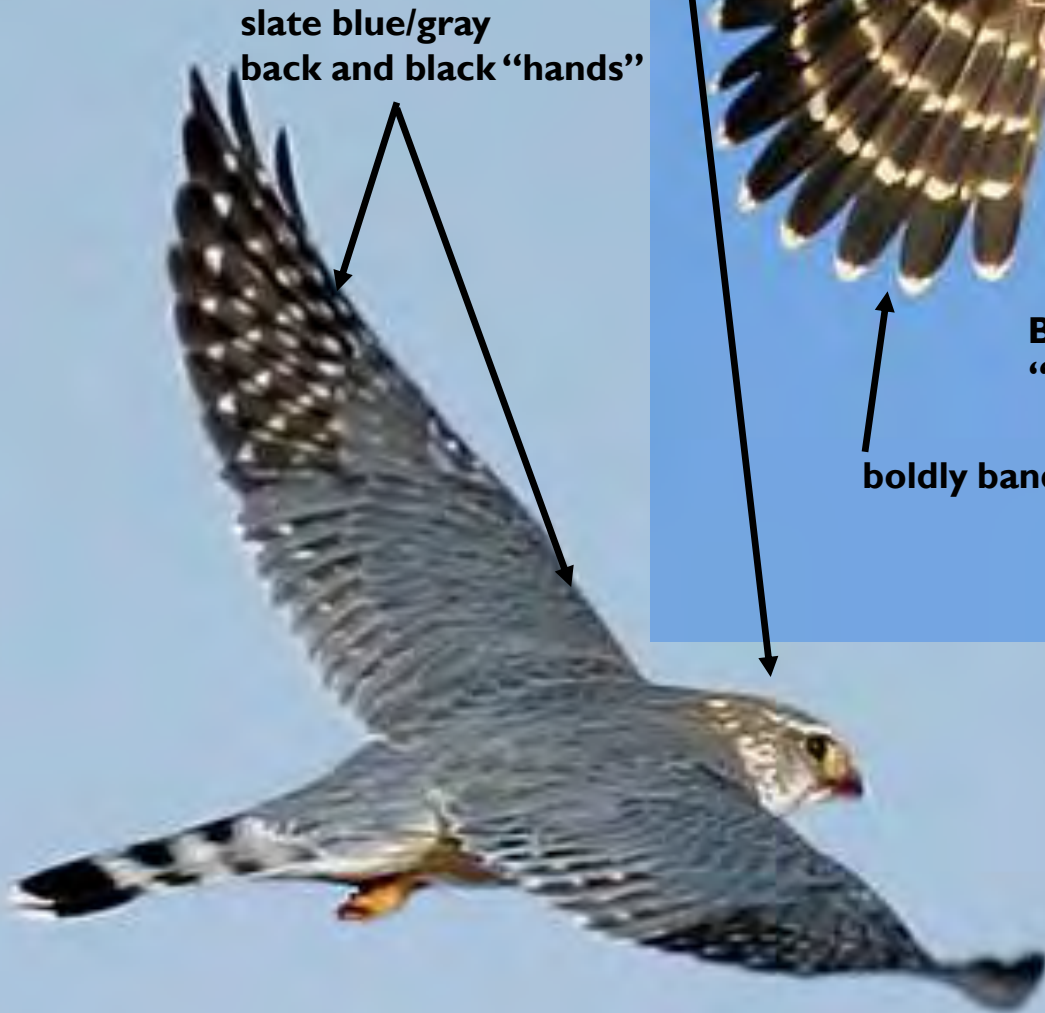
(male)



(female)

Merlin Adults

(male)



slate blue/gray
back and black "hands"

white superciliary or eyebrow



Brown back and
"hands"

boldly banded tail

(female)



Merlin (male)



Merlin (female)

Female/juvenile

Unless close enough to see adults
yellow cere

brown vertical
streaking

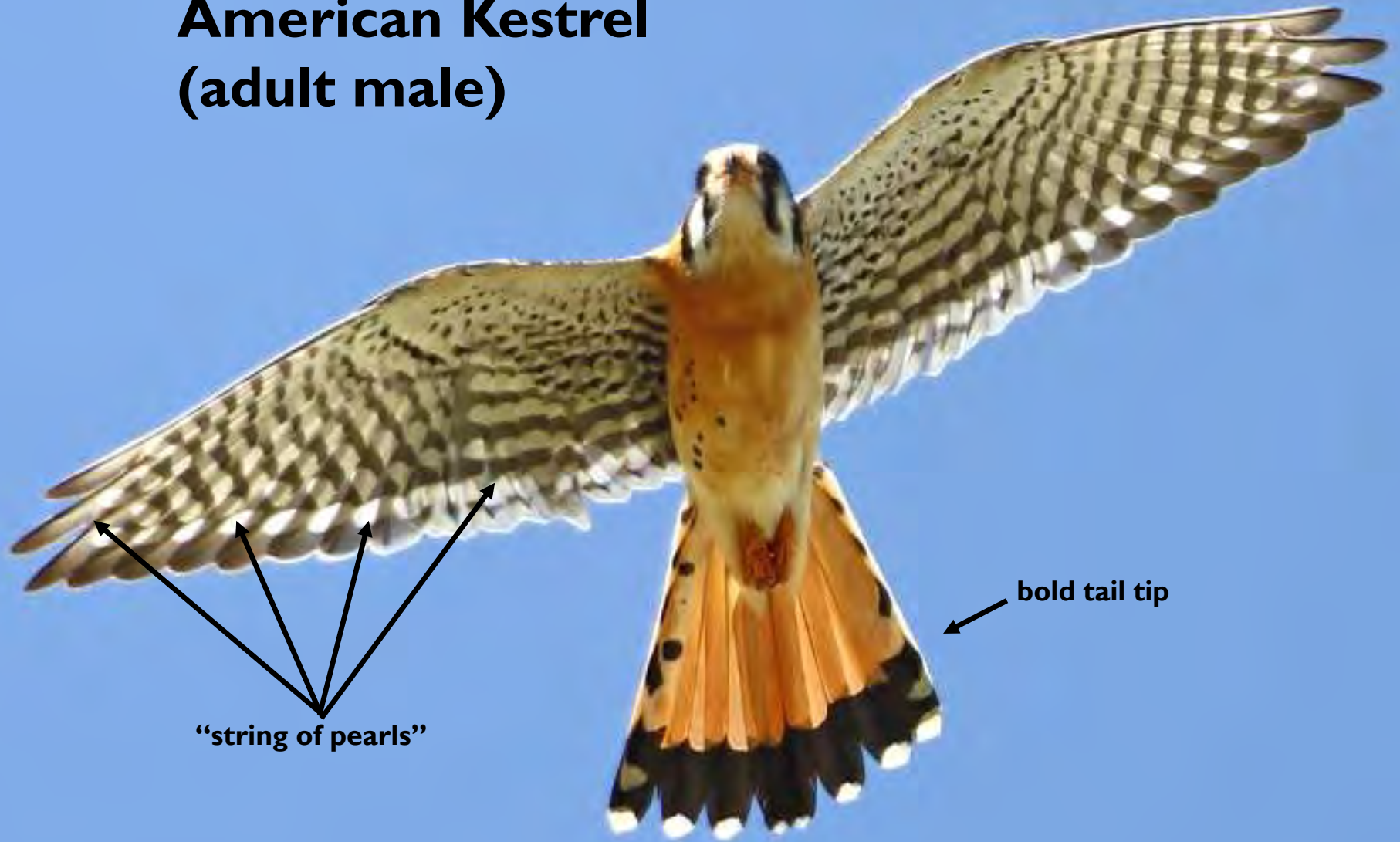
Rob Palmer photo*



**American Kestrel
(adult male)**



American Kestrel (adult male)



“string of pearls”

bold tail tip

Male

orange back

slate blue/gray
back and black "hands"

dark mustache and
sideburns



© Bob Steele

dark mustache and
sideburns

vertical streaked chest



orange/brown barred back
and tail



American Kestrel
(female/juvenile)
(adult female)

**Blue/gray cere
of juvenile**

**Gyr Falcon:
Rare winter
visitor!**





**Light to no
helmet**

yellow cere of adult

Feathered legs

Rob Palmer photo*



Vulture



Eagle



Osprey



Harrier



Buteo



Accipiter

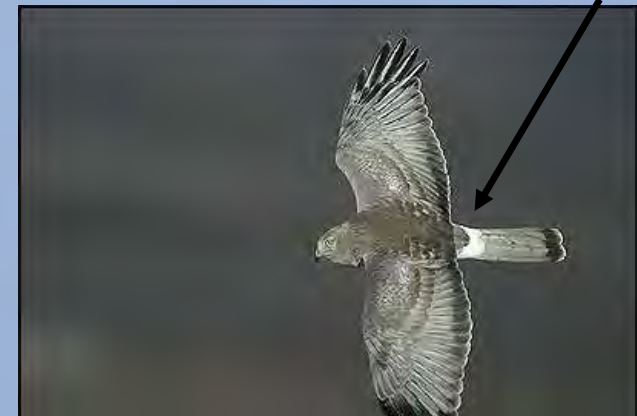


Falcon

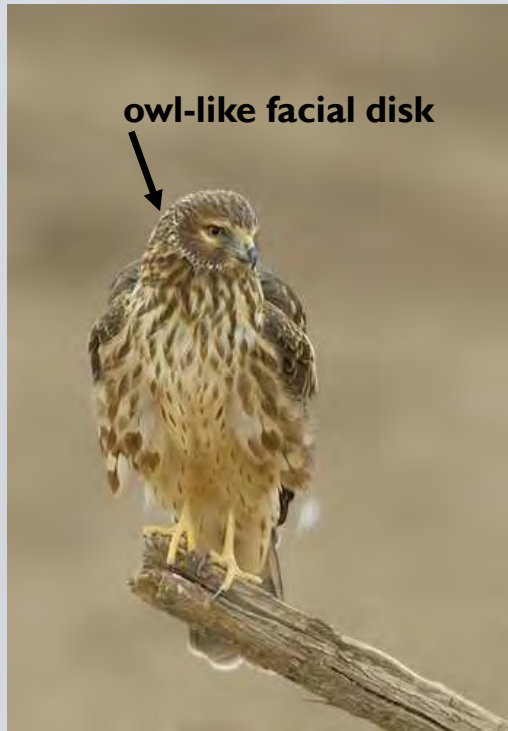
Northern Harrier (adult male) – the grey ghost



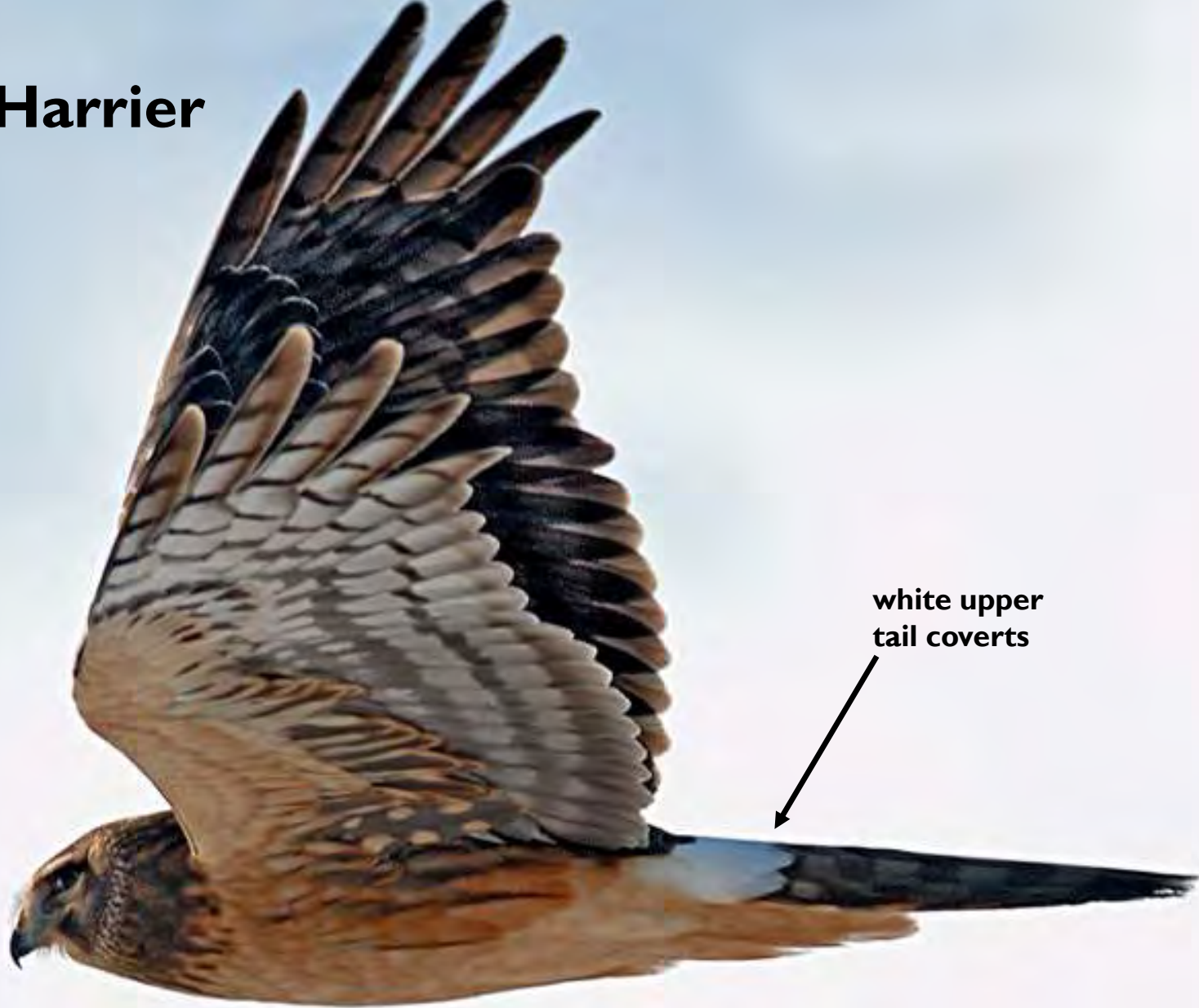
white upper
tail coverts



Northern Harrier (adult female)



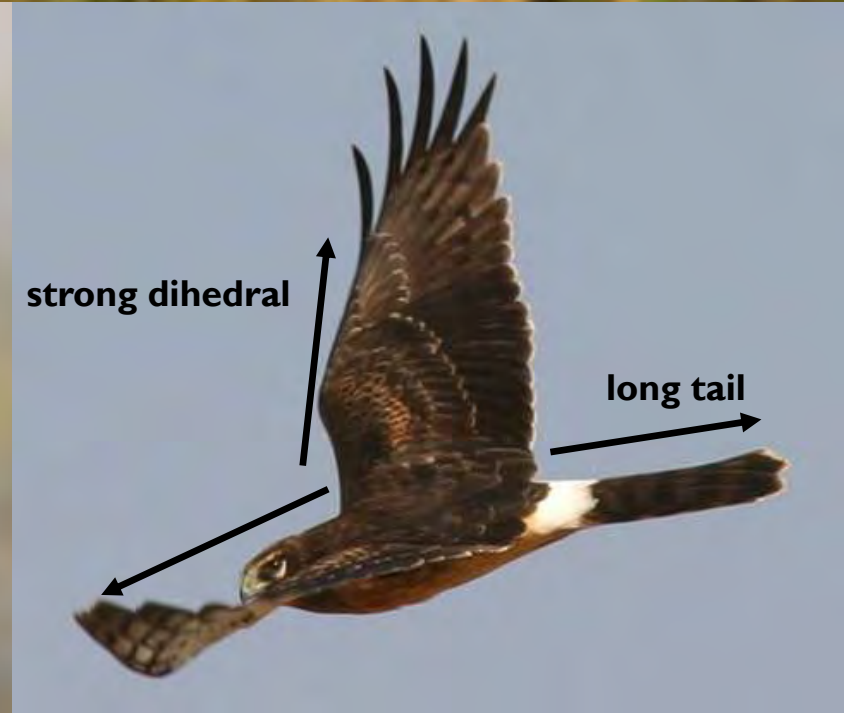
Northern Harrier (juvenile)



white upper
tail coverts

rufous wash to chest and
underwing coverts

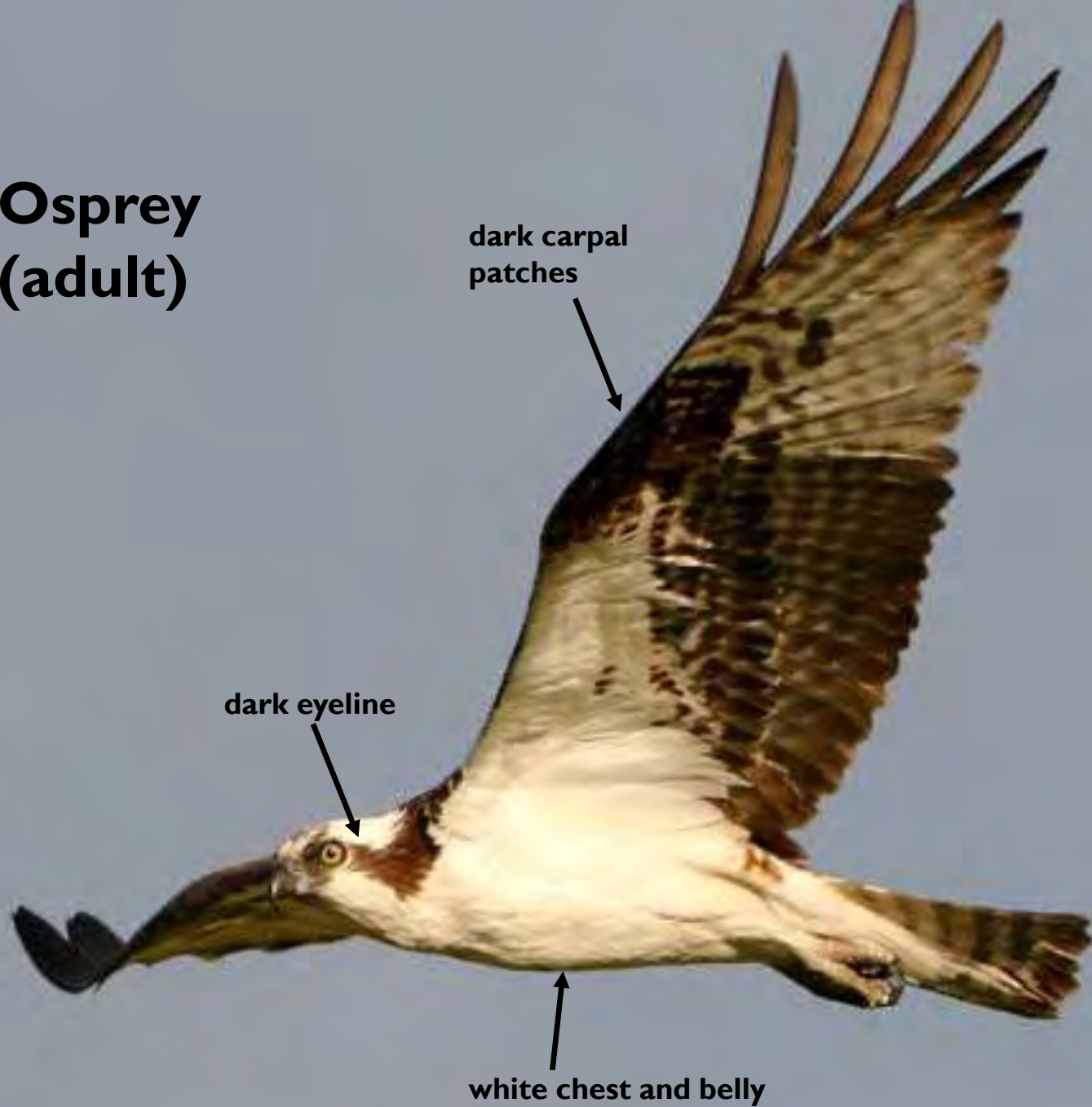
Kate Davis photo®



**Osprey
(adult)**



Osprey (adult)



dark carpal
patches

dark eyeline

white chest and belly

Osprey: Flying 'M' in the sky!



**solid dark,
not mottled**





Vulture

Eagle



Osprey



Harrier



Buteo



Accipiter



Falcon

Turkey Vulture (adult)

white primaries and
tail feathers

ragged trailing edge of wing with
broken feathers or symmetrical
molt

Black Vulture



red bald head and
white bill of adult



mostly even trailing edge

gray head



(juvenile)

Strong dihedral!



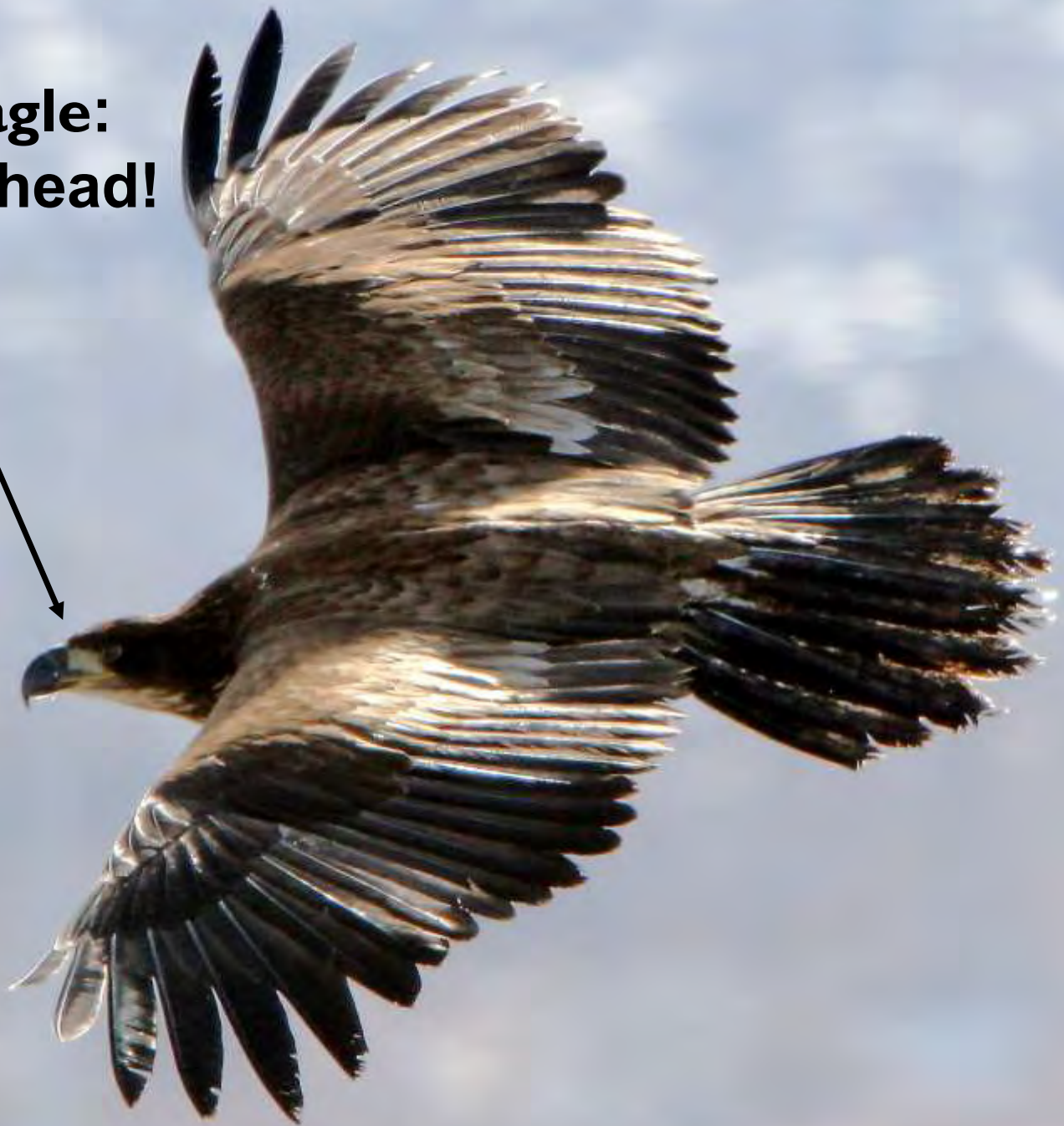
**Bald Eagle
(Adult)**



**Bald Eagles:
Plank-like wings!**



**Bald Eagle:
Massive head!**



Juv. Bald Eagle: White wing linings

1. 1-2 years



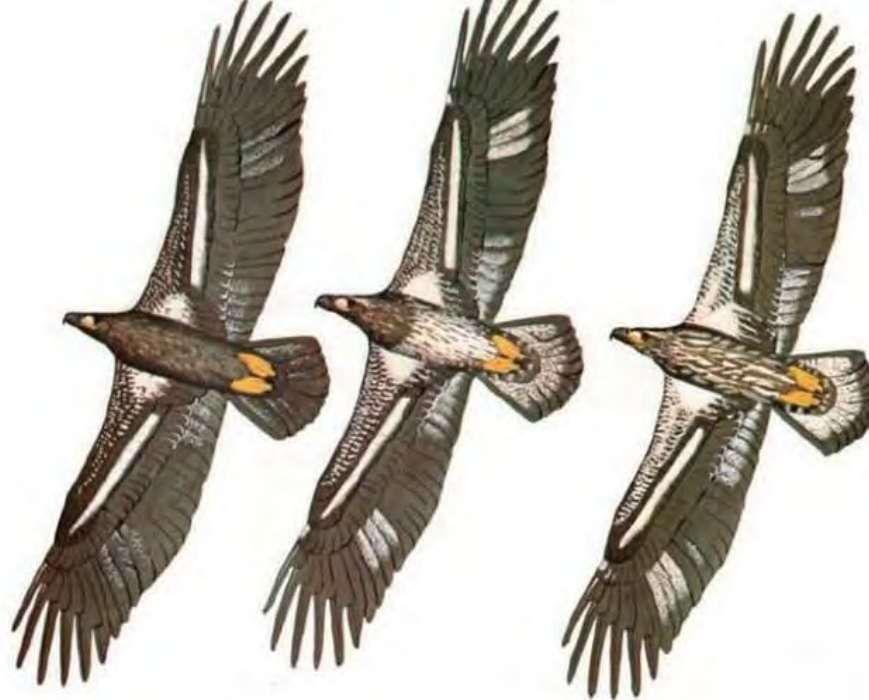
2. 2-3 years



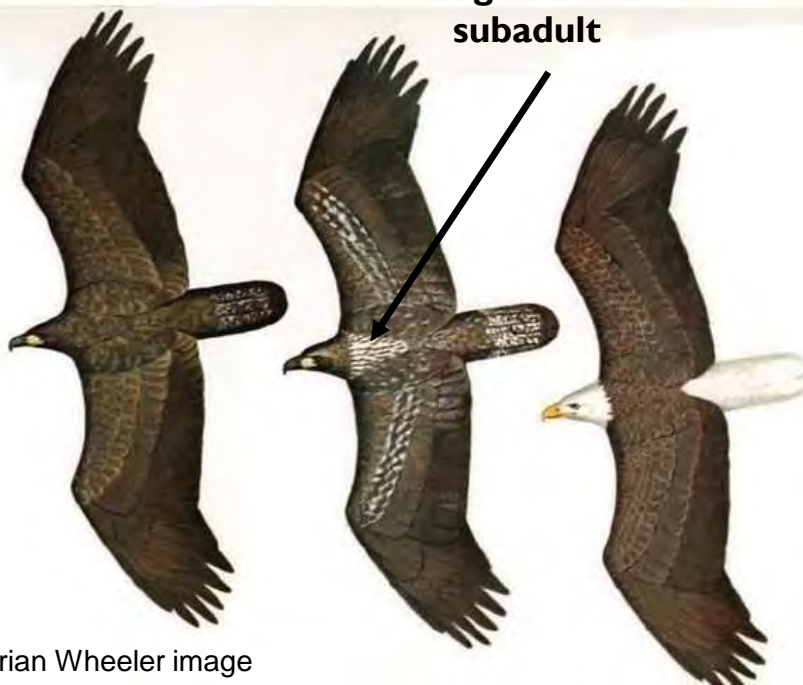
3. 3-4 years







light back of
subadult



Golden Eagle



Golden Eagle (Adult)



Golden Eagle (Juvenile)

even trailing
edge of juvenile

golden nape

dark scapulars

white wing and
tail patches





white wing and
tail patches shrinking with age

Golden Eagle (Subadult)

dark underwing coverts and
body feathers

molt limit



white wing and
tail patches

molt limit

Kate Davis photo®







**“tawny bar”
of 2+ years**





Golden Eagle

Eagles



Bald Eagle



Bald Eagle - Basic I



Golden Eagle - juvenile

Bald Eagle



Golden Eagle





Bald Eagle gliding



Golden Eagle gliding



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aseaman@mtaudubon.org

Literature and images cited

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Dunne, Pete., Sibley, David., Sutton, Clay. Hawks in Flight. Houghton Mifflin, 1988.

Wheeler, Brian., Clark, William S. A field guide to Hawks of North America. Princeton University Press. 2003.

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Dubois, Kristi

Hisgett, Tony

Martinka, Bob

McCullough, Mark

Palmer, Rob - <https://www.falconphotos.com/Galleries/Birds-of-Prey>

Peruaves.org - <http://www.peruaves.org/bird-morphology/>

Seaman, Amy

Steele, Bob - <https://www.bobsteelephoto.com/>