

Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*)

The Red-tailed Hawk is a medium sized bird of prey that breeds throughout most of North America, including metro Toronto. These birds may be observed throughout the year and are easily identifiable by their brick red tails. They have broad wings and soar effortlessly on high. A variety of colourations (morphs) exist throughout North America in shades ranging from very dark to extremely light.

The nest is a large bowl of sticks lined with softer materials such as bark, pine needles and leaves. It may be built high in a tree or, if available, on the ledge of a cliff. Both sexes participate in the construction. Red-tailed Hawks are monogamous and may return to the same nesting location for many years. A clutch of 1-3 eggs is laid in March or April. The female incubates the eggs most of the time. The male provides food (rabbits, squirrels, waterfowl, insects, snakes) for her and, later, for the nestlings.

For many native North Americans, Red-tailed Hawk feathers are deemed sacred and are often used in religious ceremonies.