

Broad-winged hawk

Buteo platypterus

Description

The broad-winged hawk is a robust hawk, about the size of a crow, with a length of 13-19 inches and a wingspan of around 3 feet. It features a dark brown head, nape, back, and upper wings, a white throat, and a striped whitish breast and belly with horizontal cinnamon bars. Its tail is broad, squared, and dark grey to black, adorned with a thick white band in the middle and two thinner white bars at the base and tip, prominently visible during flight.

Broad-winged hawks are long-range migrants. They are known to breed in Alberta and further eastern provinces of Canada. Almost all individuals leave North America in fall, in a mass exodus to Central and South America, and sometimes thousands can be seen along ridges, coastlines, or lake shores when the wind conditions are right.

FUN FACTS

- Known by their distinctive "pe-heeeeeee" call.
- Broad-winged hawks use thermal warm air to glide during migration, conserving energy by soaring instead of flapping continuously.
- These hawks gather in massive groups called kettles during the fall, sometimes numbering tens of thousands of birds.
- Normally solitary and territorial but change during migration.

If you find an injured or orphaned wild animal, please contact the Calgary Wildlife Rehabilitation Society hotline at 403-214-1312, for tips, instructions and advice.

