

Cooper's Hawk

Épervier de Cooper
Accipiter cooperii

Migratory Species



Wingspan: 69 cm to 91 cm



Cooper's Hawk is a bird of prey the size of a crow and closely resembles the Sharp-shinned Hawk, though the former is of a more imposing size. It has a long banded tail, but, unlike the Sharp-shinned Hawk, the tip of its tail is rounded. Its back is blueish grey and its cap (the top of its head) is darker. Its pale chest is banded with thin rufous stripes. Its eyes are red.



The female is much larger than the male.



Cooper's Hawk frequents forests. It is possible to observe it near our bird feeders.



Cooper's Hawk feeds almost exclusively on birds, like the Mourning Dove, the Blue Jay, and the European Starling. It can also capture small mammals, reptiles and amphibians. It typically flies near to the ground, under the vegetative cover, while searching for prey.



Cooper's Hawk has a lifespan of about 8 years.



The nest is made of branches and twigs, and then lined with bark. The female lays between 4 and 5 eggs.



The first flight attempt is made around 27 to 30 days of age with male chicks; the female, being larger, is unable to fly before 34 days of age. The young chicks remain dependant upon their parents up to 53 days more after they take flight.



Cooper's Hawk is a rare bird in our region and difficult to spot. Its population had been in decline since the beginning of the decade: it is a vulnerable species. The reduction in population size is probably caused by the use of pesticides such as the infamous DDT.



As the nickname "chicken hawk" suggest, this bird is reputed to attack chickens. It has thus quickly become a target for farmers who fear for the safety of their coop. Today, we know that Cooper's Hawk serves an important purpose in nature, as it feeds mostly on weak birds and rodents that humans would not want near their homes.