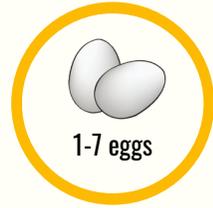
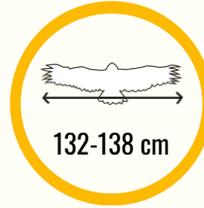




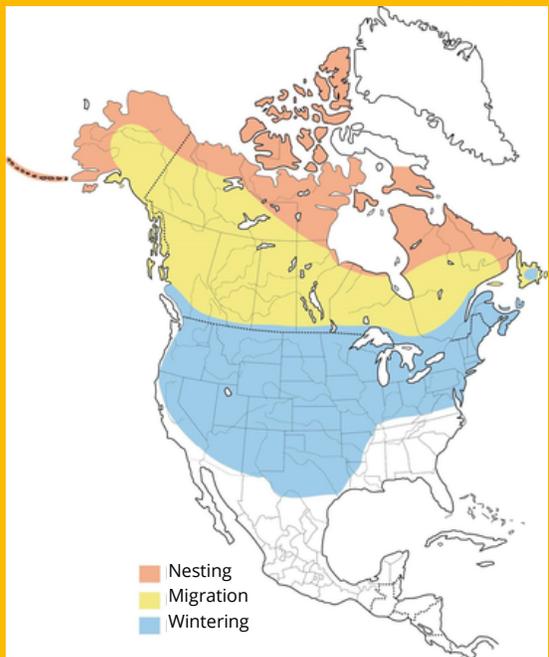
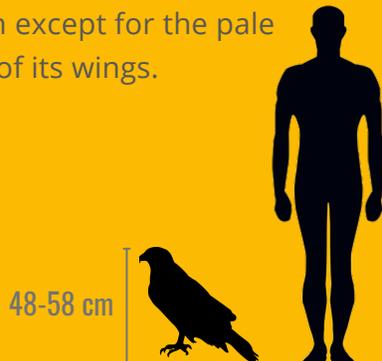
Rough-legged Hawk

Buse pattue, *Buteo lagopus*



IDENTIFICATION

Its name, rough-legged, comes from the fact that its legs are feathered all the way down to the toes to protect them from the cold. The tip of its tail is black. In flight, it can be distinguished from other hawks by its pale wings with a large black wrist patch. The dark form, a variant of the plumage coloration, is predominantly dark brown except for the pale underside of its wings.



ECOLOGY

Nutrition

The Rough-legged Hawk uses a perch at a vantage point in open environments to spot its prey. It feeds mainly on voles and lemmings. It occasionally enjoys hunting birds, amphibians and fish. When hunting, it can be recognized by its “wind hovering” which allows it to remain motionless in the air.

Breeding

Breeding pairs remain together and nest in the tundra on a cliff or on a pile of stones on the ground. The female often uses the same nest year after year. Depending on the abundance of prey, she lays between 1 and 7 eggs. She incubates them for around thirty days. The young males take flight after 5 weeks. The larger females fledge 6 to 9 days later. The parents feed their young about 4 weeks after the first fledging.

DISTRIBUTION

This species lives throughout North America. It nests in the Arctic tundra throughout the northern hemisphere. It migrates to southern Canada and the United States at the beginning of winter. It then seeks out territories reminiscent of the Arctic tundra, with excellent visibility over long distances. These habitats can vary from plains and meadows to coastal marshes.

STATUS AND POPULATION

Since the 1970s, the annual Christmas bird census in Quebec has shown the population to be stable. Road collisions are a major cause of death for the species. It is considered secure.¹

¹Wild species of Canada report, 2015