

NORTHERN GOSHAWK (ACCIPITER GENTILIS)



Adult northern goshawks have slate gray-blue backs, dark caps on the top of the head, and white eye lines above the eyes. Their undersides are streaked with black and gray. The red eye color in adults is a distinguishing feature. Immature goshawks are brown on their backs and on the top of their heads; their undersides are streaked with brown. They also have a white eye stripe, but it is not as prominent as in the adults. Their irises are yellow. Female goshawks are larger than males. Total length ranges from

21 inches (53 cm) to 26 inches (66 cm). Wingspans range from 40 inches (102 cm) to 46 inches (117 cm).

Goshawks feed on a variety of prey, including rabbits, hares, squirrels, small mammals, and birds.

Northern goshawks can be found year-round in Fresno, Madera, Kern, and Tulare counties. During the summer, they generally inhabit coniferous forest habitats. During the winter, goshawks may be seen at lower elevations.

Photo: J.A. Spendelow, from USGS Patuxent Bird Identification InfoCenter. URL: <http://www.mbr-pwrc.usgs.gov/id/framlst/i3340id.html>



Juvenile (left) and adult (right) goshawks. Illustration by Louis Agassiz Fuertes.