

Interesting Facts

- The name “Ferruginous”, from the Latin word *ferrum*, means rust and refers to this bird’s rust brown colouration.
- The word *regalis* means king or royalty in Latin.
- A good trick to identifying this hawk is to look for the orange “pants” it’s wearing, referring to the feathers on the legs that are rufous/orange.
- The Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks are the only hawk species that have feathers all the way down to their toes.

Thank you to landowners and land managers conserving species at risk habitat and to our partners that funded this brochure:



Saskatchewan Conservation Data Centre



“INFORMING CONSERVATION”

This project was undertaken with the financial support of:
Ce projet a été réalisé avec l'appui financier de :



Environment and
Climate Change Canada

Environnement et
Changement climatique Canada

To learn more contact:

Nature Saskatchewan

206-1860 Lorne Street
Regina, Saskatchewan S4P 2L7
Toll Free: 1-800-667-4668
Or 306-780-9273 Fax: 306-780-9263
Email: info@naturesask.ca
Website: www.naturesask.ca



Nature
SASKATCHEWAN

Humanity in Harmony with Nature

Nature Saskatchewan gratefully acknowledges funding from:



Photo credits: Janet Ng, Jennifer Rumancik, Kris Mutafov,
and Randy McCulloch

Ferruginous Hawk

Buteo regalis



Status: Threatened

To report a sighting
call the Hoot Line:

1-800-667-HOOT (4668)

How can you help?

- Conserve native prairie and ensure heterogeneous landscapes.
- Avoid using pesticides (e.g., strychnine) in or adjacent to native prairie.
- Avoid constructing built-up roads, and plant roadsides with non-invasive vegetation.
- Learn about Ferruginous Hawks and share your knowledge with others.
- Participate in a stewardship program like Nature Saskatchewan’s **Stewards of Saskatchewan!**

Identification

- The largest hawk in Saskatchewan, Ferruginous Hawks have broad wings with rounded tips.
- They have a distinct bright yellow cere or ridge over the beak. Bright yellow extends past the opening of the mouth, under the eye, creating a bright smile.
- Two different colour morphs exist.
- The pale morph is more common and has a white underbelly, head and tail, with brown upper feathers and orange-cinnamon markings on the back and underwings. The legs are a bright rust colour.
- The dark morph has dark brown on both upper and underparts of the body, with wing undersides light in colour.



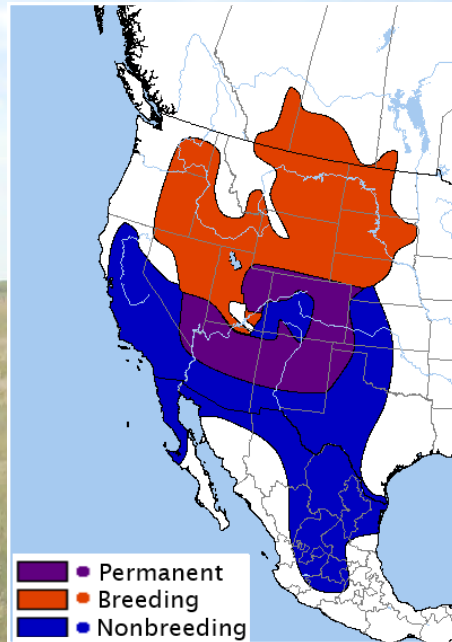
Habitat

- Patches of uncultivated pastureland and native prairie are important to Ferruginous Hawks.
- Isolated large trees or ledges usually make good nesting habitat, as long as there are open hunting grounds nearby.



Distribution

- Ferruginous Hawks are found on the prairies, deserts, and open ranges of western North America.
- During this century, the breeding range has contracted inwards and Ferruginous Hawks breed in only 50% of their historical range.
- Ferruginous Hawks overwinter in Oklahoma, Texas and northern Mexico.



Range map adapted from NatureServe Explorer

Causes of Decline

- Ferruginous Hawks are sensitive to habitat loss or degradation of native prairie.
- Large fluctuations in the population of prey species such as Richardson's Ground Squirrels also negatively affect the hawks.
- They are sensitive to human disturbance during the first few weeks of nesting.
- 10% of all nests fail due to storms blowing them out of trees in the breeding season.

Life Cycle

Nesting: The male will collect and bring most of the materials to the female who will arrange and form the nest.



Eggs, incubation, and chicks: Females lay on average 2-4 eggs between mid May and mid July. Both adults incubate the eggs for 28-32 days, and the young leave the nest 38-50 days after they hatch. The young remain with the adults for several weeks after fledging.



Feeding: These hawks rely heavily on ground squirrel populations that make up most of their diet, particularly Richardson's Ground Squirrels. A family of Ferruginous Hawks will eat 500 in a single season. Other prey includes other smaller mammals such as hares, voles, and mice.

