

Species At Risk

Ferruginous Hawk



What is the at risk status?

- This species is considered threatened.



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Habitat

- Found in prairies, deserts, and open range of weatern Canada
- Ferruginous Hawks hunt from a lone tree, rock outcrop, or from high in the sky.



Size

- The Ferruginous Hawk is a large diurnal raptor with long, broad wings with rounded tips, a fan-shaped tail, a robust chest, large head and large beak.
- At 56 to 69 cm long and a wingspan that can reach 1.5 metres, it is the largest hawk.
- Although both sexes have similar plumage, the female, usually larger than the male, tends to have a darker stomach and legs.



Population

- Fewer than 700 pairs are estimated in Alberta



What does it eat?

- Ferruginous Hawks eat a diet of small mammals, sometimes standing above prairie dog or ground squirrel burrows to wait for prey to emerge.



What is causing it to be at risk?

- Changes to nesting habitat including agriculture, grazing, small mammal control, mining, and fire may contribute to regional population declines.



What is being done to help?

- Ranching may be an effective means of conserving Ferruginous Hawk habitat.
- Other proposed management includes maintaining prey populations and mitigating mining, pipeline construction, and urbanization.
- In formerly occupied areas where trees are no longer available for nesting, artificial nest platforms help boost populations.



Interesting Facts

- When bison still roamed the west, Ferruginous Hawk nests contained bison bones and hair along with sticks and twigs.
- Ferruginous Hawks and Rough-legged Hawks (plus the Golden Eagle) are the only American hawks to have feathered legs all the way down to their toes.



Sources

- <http://aep.alberta.ca/fish-wildlife/wild-species/birds/large-hawks-eagles/ferruginous-hawk.aspx>
- https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Ferruginous_Hawk/id
- http://www.registrelep-sararegistry.gc.ca/species/speciesDetails_e.cfm?sid=47