

Manitoba Species at Risk

Ferruginous Hawk

Buteo regalis



Christian Artuso

The Ferruginous Hawk is aptly named for its regal appearance. It is a large rust-coloured bird of prey - the largest of the hawk family - and is often mistaken for an eagle. You can find this species in areas abundant with grassland rodents, like the Richardson's ground squirrel. Federally Threatened and provincially Endangered, Ferruginous Hawk populations in Canada declined a staggering 64% between 1992 and 2005.



Habitat



Diet



Provincially
Endangered

Ferruginous Hawk Range Map



* Range map based on potential range.

Beneficial Management Practices (BMPs)

- Maintain at least one section of contiguous native prairie
- Create a variety of grass heights and litter accumulation in pastures
- Maintain woody areas, including dead trees, shelterbelts, and lone trees
- Construct nesting structure platforms
- Avoid grazing until mid-July to reduce "nest disturbance"
- Restrict grazing in woody/riparian areas by fencing or using salt blocks/watering sites
- Stay 500 m (on foot) to 1000 m (in large equipment) from nests until mid-July

Co-benefiting Species: The BMPs listed for this species may also benefit Loggerhead Shrikes, Chestnut-collared longspurs.

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More about the Ferruginous Hawk

Description

Ferruginous Hawks are large (55-68 cm long) Buteo hawks. They present two colour phases: the more common pale phase, and a dark phase. Ferruginous Hawks in the pale phase have brown/rust-coloured upper parts and beige underbodies. The legs and tail are also rust-coloured. The less common dark phase birds have dark brown plumage and a white tail.

Habitat

Ferruginous Hawks nest in isolated trees or rocky edges in large, open prairie, or uncultivated pastureland. When trees are scarce, they can nest on the ground. Because they rely on mammalian food sources, particularly during breeding season, habitat where ground squirrels are plentiful is necessary.

Threats

Habitat loss, degradation, and fragmentation, are the major problems affecting Ferruginous Hawks. Additional threats include disturbance from human activity, which is particularly harmful during breeding season, and human-induced reduction of available food supply.

Outlook

The outlook for Ferruginous Hawks in Canada is bright. The prairie populations are considered stable but vulnerable. This is in part due to landowners who are increasingly aware of the essential role these predators play in the prairie ecosystem.

Producer Benefits

The Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) is a voluntary, confidential, self-assessment process, enabling farm managers to develop an action plan to address agri-environmental assets and risks in their operation. Completion of an EFP may qualify you for funding to implement BMPs on your land. For more information or to register, contact your local Manitoba Agriculture office.

Beyond the species benefits, BMPs can help your operation through:

- Access to on-farm programs and incentives
- Meet emerging market demands for sustainable sourcing
- Increased agricultural sustainability
- Greater resilience to events such as insect outbreaks, floods and droughts
- Better pest control and management
- Improved water quality, quantity and erosion control
- Improved pasture and forage

For more information regarding beneficial management practices on your land, please contact Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation or the organizations listed below.

FUN FACT

Ferruginous Hawk courtship includes a dancing routine, in the sky, where the pair grasp beaks and talons, and spiral downwards.

Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation

www.mhhc.mb.ca

Conservation Data Centre

www.manitoba.ca/sd/cdc

Manitoba Agriculture

www.manitoba.ca/agriculture

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