



Common Buzzard

(Buteo buteo)

The Common Buzzard is a medium-sized raptor with broad, rounded wings and a fairly short tail. Its feathers are a rich brown color, with lighter markings beneath the wing. In the United States, many members of the *Buteo genus* are referred to as Hawks.

Habitat & Diet

The Common Buzzard inhabits forests and areas with scattered woodlands. It is often seen soaring over fields, hills, and along forest edges. When it's not hunting from the air, it perches on a tree or post, holding its position, waiting for unsuspecting animals to stroll underneath it. The Common Buzzard has a very diverse diet, and will eat just about any animal from something as small as a beetle to as large as a rabbit. It also feeds on carrion, and is usually falsely credited with the kill.

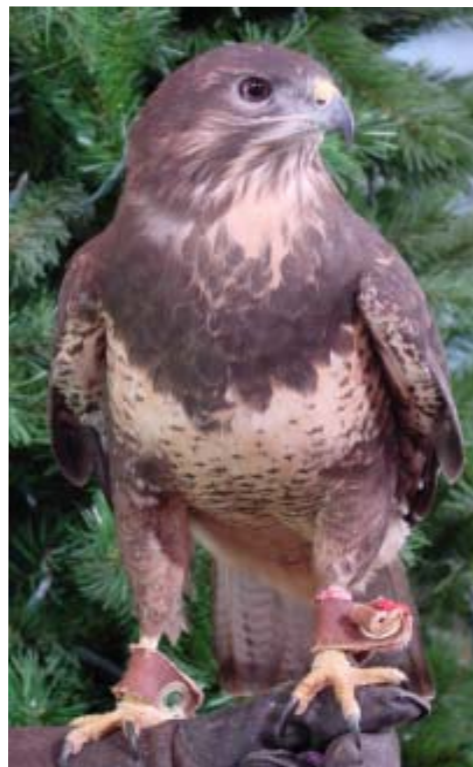
Length: 20-22 inches
Weight: 15-31 ounces
Wingspan: 44-50 inches
Habitat: Trees and rocky ledges
Range: Europe and Asia to Japan; winter in East Africa, Malaya & South China

Fascinating Facts

The Common Buzzard is naturally a slow, lazy flier, and often appears like it is laboring through the air. It can often be seen soaring at great heights, riding on warm currents of air, or thermals. Sometimes this can get the bird in trouble, for a sudden gust of strong wind can sweep the bird away from its natural habitat to a new, foreign location. The Common Buzzard is often labeled as a threat to game and livestock, but is actually quite harmless.

Status

During the late 1950's, Buzzard numbers were dramatically reduced when myxomatosis wiped out 99% of the rabbit population, depriving Buzzards of their main food source. Since then, they have been able to exploit other sources of food, leading to their steadily increasing numbers. Their size and hooked beaks, however, continue to cause them to be persecuted for an unjust reputation of being a ferocious killer of livestock.



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