



Hawk Ridge: Minnesota's Birds of Prey

Laura Erickson

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Was Caesar like the eagle because of his aquiline (from aquila, for “eagle” in Latin) nose, or does the eagle seem imperial because of his Caesar-like beak? Does the sharp vision of a “hawk-eyed” observer have any basis in nature? And what the heck is “kettling” to a bird-watcher, or, for that matter, a bird? Raptors have captured the imagination from time immemorial and have an especially rich history in Minnesota. The ancient peoples whose pictographs adorn the rock faces of Lake Superior’s North Shore may well have witnessed the first hawk movements along Lake Superior—the same annual migration that today draws as many as twenty thousand people to Duluth’s Hawk Ridge. These birds, passing through in astounding numbers, are among the hawks and accipiters, buteos and harriers, eagles and ospreys pictured and profiled in detail in this book.

Written by one of Minnesota’s best-known bird authorities, with images by one of the state’s favorite illustrators, *Hawk Ridge* is as fun as it is informative. It introduces the state’s raptors, from the rare visitor to the most familiar hawk, noting each species’ signature traits—osprey wings, for instance, are crooked to help them catch fish; vultures urinate on their legs to cool themselves—and their nesting, breeding, and migrating habits. Did you know that Sharp-shinned Hawks banded at Hawk Ridge have been found throughout Central America and even into South America, and also, in midwinter, in Wisconsin? Laura Erickson offers a broad perspective (a bird’s-eye view!), making sense of the raptor’s role in the larger ornithological scheme.

With descriptions of various species—and helpful distinctions between species, families, and orders—the book gives readers a clear idea of which raptors might be seen in Minnesota, when, where, and how often. It also includes a hawk migration primer that explains the movements that bring these birds in such awe-inspiring numbers to places like Hawk Ridge. Filled with curious facts and practical information for expert and amateur bird-watcher alike, the book is at once a guide to the hawks of Minnesota and a beautifully illustrated album of the most regal members of the avian kingdom.

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