

## **Rough-legged Hawk (*Buteo Lagopus*)**

### **Field Marks:**

- Length:18-23in / Wingspan:48-56in / Weight:745-1380g
- Wings are long & broad; flight feathers are pale with dark trailing edges
- Tail is broad and white at base with a dark tip
- Pronounced dark mark at the wrist on the wings
- Variable in appearance
- Legs are feathered down to their toes

### **Breeding Range:**

In North American, Rough-legged Hawks breed in tundra or taiga in arctic and sub-arctic Alaska and Canada.

### **Wintering Range:**

In winter, these hawks concentrate in open areas reminiscent of their tundra summer haunts, including pastures, marshy areas and wet meadows, field and pastures. Rough-legged Hawks have short to moderate length migrations across the boreal forest to winter in open country of southern Canada and northern U.S. Their migration begins in August to September.

### **Habitat Preferences:**

The Rough-legged Hawk prefers semi-open tundra areas with cliffs, embankments or rocky outcrops that serve as nest sites.

### **Nesting:**

Nesting begins in May or June, depending on latitude, and ends in July through September. The nest is constructed of sticks, wood, twigs, bones, fur and feathers. The nest grows larger with each reuse, often by the same pair. Clutch size is 2-6 eggs, rarely 7, and is incubated mainly by the female. Eggs hatch in 28-31 days and fledge in 34-45 days.

### **Feeding:**

The Rough-legged Hawk is a perch and aerial hunter. They feed on lemmings, small rodents, young hares, and small to medium-small birds. In the non-breeding season, they occasionally feed on fish, reptiles, amphibians and insects. They readily feed on carrion in all seasons.

### **Flight:**

The Rough-legged Hawk is powered by slow wing beats and irregular gliding. They often hover and kite when hunting. Their legs are often lowered when hovering.

### **Conservation Status:**

Populations of Rough-legged Hawks appear to be stable. No specific measures have been taken to conserve them. Breeding areas are not usually affected by human pressure. In the west, many have been killed by vehicles while feeding on animal carcasses on highways.

