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COOPER'S HAWK

Accipiter cooperii

Range & Habitat

Cooper's Hawks are widespread breeders in Pennsylvania particularly in southern counties. The Cooper's Hawk nests in both extensive areas of forest and smaller woodlots, as well as in pine plantations, and suburban and urban woodlands of towns and cities of all sizes. They are often found hunting backyard bird feeders for songbirds.



Nesting Behavior

Cooper's Hawks are forest dwellers preferring deciduous, mixed, and coniferous, and deciduous stands of riparian habitat. They seemingly tolerate human disturbance, and are increasingly nesting in suburban and urban areas.

Cooper's Hawks begin nest building in mid-March to April. 2-6 eggs are usually laid in late April to early May with incubation lasting 30-36 days. Once eggs hatch, the young will stay in the nest for about 27-34 days, and leave the nest in June-July. Like other young raptors they will be the most vocal once they fledge and continue begging from their parents. You may even hear the loud "cak-cak-cak" call from your backyard.

Slender, crow-sized accipiter, with short, rounded wings and a long, rudder-like tail rounded at the tip.

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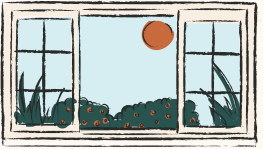
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What Does a Cooper's Hawk Nest Look Like?

Nests, typically 25-50 feet above ground, are built in a variety of trees including pines, oaks, beeches, firs and spruces. You can likely spot the stick nest two-thirds of the way up in the tree in a crotch or placed on a horizontal branch. The nest is about 27 inches across and lined with bark and greenery.

Status & Threats

In Pennsylvania, the Cooper's Hawk is considered "Secure and Increasing". The greatest cause of mortality among Cooper's Hawks in urban areas is window collisions. Bird feeders are believed to spread trichomoniasis which can kill nestling Cooper's Hawks. In rural areas Cooper's Hawks are vulnerable to shooting when they are attracted to free-range chickens or pigeons.



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Conservation & Management

Maintaining groves of large trees, reforestation of riparian nesting habitats and scheduling of timber harvests outside of the breeding season will avoid impacts on known nests. You can also help to prevent window collisions by installing screens or breaking up reflections (using paint, bird tape, film, or bird savers decals) on the outside of your windows.



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