

The 27 Species of Birds of Prey of Quebec

FALCONIFORMES

Subfamily Accipitrinae

❑ Épervier brun (*Accipiter striatus*) Sharp-shinned Hawk
Description: Svelte. The size of a Blue Jay. Wings short and rounded, long tail. Flight pattern is particular: several wingbeats and a glide. Dark back, chest is barred with reddish-brown.
Habitat: Mixed woodlands, near bird feeders.
Size: 25 to 35 cm. Prey: Small birds mainly.

❑ Épervier de Cooper (*Accipiter cooperii*) Cooper's Hawk
Description: Similar to the Sharp-shinned but the size of a crow. Wings are short and rounded, tail is long. Flight pattern is similar to Sharp-shinned as well, with a longer glide.
Habitat: Broken woodland, riverside groves.
Size: 35 to 50 cm. Prey: Small birds and mammals.

❑ Autour des palombes (*Accipiter gentilis*) Northern Goshawk
Description: Back and head dark grey with a conspicuous white eyebrow. Breast and underparts pale grey. Tail is wedge-shaped.
Habitat: Coniferous or mixed forests, forest edges and clearings.
Size: 50 to 65 cm. Prey: Birds usually ducks, mammals usually hares.

Subfamily Circinae

❑ Busard Saint-Martin (*Circus cyaneus*) Northern Harrier
Description: Svelte. White rump, male is greyish and female is brownish. Flies close to the ground with wings upraised.
Habitat: Open environments (marshes, fields, and prairies).
Size: 44 to 60 cm. Prey: Rodents, birds, amphibians.

Subfamily Buteoninae

❑ Buse à queue rousse (*Buteo jamaicensis*) Red-tailed Hawk
Description: Wings wide, long and rounded. Red tail, white breast often with band of black.
Habitat: Fields and other open areas, forest edges.
Size: 48 to 63 cm. Prey: Rodents, small mammals and reptiles.

❑ Buse pattue (*Buteo lagopus*) Rough-legged Hawk
Description: Long wings and tail. Tail white with wide black band at the end. Black wrist patches, belly black or mottled. Often hovers while hunting.
Habitat: Open country.
Size: 48 to 60 cm. Prey: Rodents.

❑ Buse à épaulettes (*Buteo lineatus*) Red-shouldered Hawk
Description: Wide wings and tail. Tail has wide black bands interspersed with thin white bands. Reddish shoulders and underparts.
Habitat: Moist, mixed woodlands near water.
Size: 43 to 60 cm. Prey: Reptiles, amphibians, rodents.

❑ Petite buse (*Buteo platypterus*) Broad-winged Hawk
Description: Crow-sized, tail short with alternate bands of black and white. Back and head dark brown, underparts flecked with reddish-brown.
Habitat: Forests near water.
Size: 35 to 48 cm. Prey: Rodents, amphibians, insects.

❑ Pygargue à tête blanche (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) Bald Eagle
Description: Large bird, wings long and wide. Adult is dark with white head and tail. Juvenile similar to Golden Eagle. Wingspan: 175 to 225 cm.

Habitat: Lakes, rivers and coasts.

Size: 75 to 108 cm. Prey: Fish, carrion (dead animals).

❑ Aigle royal (*Aquila chrysaetos*) Golden Eagle
Description: Large bird, wings long and wide. Adult is dark with light barring on tail. Juvenile is dark with patches of white on wings and tail. Wingspan: 190 to 230 cm.

Habitat: Mountains, open country (plateaux, prairies).

Size: 75 to 100 cm. Prey: Small mammals, rodents, birds and carrion.

Subfamily Pandioninae

❑ Balbusard (*Pandion haliaetus*) Osprey
Description: Wingspan: 150 cm. Black tail and back. Head white with black stripe through eye. Black wrist patches. Hovers and dives into water to hunt.

Habitats: Lakes, rivers, and coasts.

Size: 36 to 61 cm. Prey: Fish.

FAMILY CATHARTIDAE

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❑ Urubu à tête rouge (*Cathartes aura*) Turkey Vulture
Description: Vulture with black plumage and red head. Soars with wings in a shallow V-shape. Wings black and grey beneath.
Habitat: Soars over open country, near mountains.
Size: 65 to 80 cm. Prey: Carrion.

FAMILY FALCONIDAE

Subfamily Falconinae

❑ Crécerelle d'Amérique (*Falco sparverius*) American Kestrel
Description: Wings pointed, tail long, very common. Dove-sized, often perches on electric wires and posts. Hovering flight. Male has reddish back and tail with blue wings. Female is reddish all-over with banding on tail.

Habitat: Open country, fields, and parks.

Size: 23 to 30 cm. Prey: Field mice, small birds, insects.

❑ Faucon émerillon (*Falco columbarius*) Merlin
Description: Wings pointed, tail long. Female and juvenile with brown back, tail banded with black. Male back is bluish grey.
Habitat: Forest edges, open country, nests in coniferous trees.
Size: 25 to 34 cm. Prey: Small birds.

❑ Faucon pèlerin (*Falco peregrinus*) Peregrine Falcon
Description: Wings pointed, tail long, very fast. Black crown and nape with black patches beneath eyes. Female and juvenile with dark brown back, and streaked belly. Male is greyish-blue with streaked belly.

Habitat: Cliffs, open country, urban environments.

Size: 8 to 50 cm. Prey: Birds caught on the wing, mammals.



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(Falconinae continued)

❑ Faucon gerfaut (*Falco rusticolus*) Gyr Falcon

Description: Large falcon with pointed wings that are broader than other falcons. Plumage can be white, grey or black.

Habitat: Tundra, cliffs, mountains, coasts, and open country.

Size: 50 to 63 cm. Prey: Birds, hares, mammals.

STRIGIFORMES

FAMILY TYTONIDAE

❑ Effraie des clochers (*Tyto alba*) Barn Owl

Description: Very rare in Quebec. Heart-shaped facial disk, dark eyes, no ear tufts. Rusty, golden brown back, pale underneath. Females always darker than males. Flight is butterfly-like.

Habitat: Open country (fields, marshes, farmland), suburban areas.

Size: 5 to 50 cm. Prey: Field mice, shrews, insects.

FAMILY STRIGIDAE

❑ Hibou des marais (*Asio flammeus*) Short-eared Owl

Description: Medium-sized, crepuscular. Eyes yellow surrounded by dark feathers in the facial disk, ear tufts very short. Plumage is tawny, breast is streaked, belly paler. Flight is erratic.

Habitat: Marshes, fields, and tundra.

Size: 33 to 43 cm. Prey: Field mice, voles.

❑ Petit-duc maculé (*Otus asio*) Eastern Screech-Owl

Description: Small owl of south-eastern Quebec. Ear-tufted with yellow eyes. Red and grey forms. Nests in tree cavities.

Habitat: Coniferous forests, parks. Size: 18 to 25 cm. Prey: Rodents, amphibians, birds.

❑ Hibou moyen-duc (*Asio otus*) Long-eared Owl

Description: Svelte, crow-sized. Tall close-set ear tufts, eyes yellow, reddish facial disk. Underparts streaked vertically.

Habitat: Fields or marshes near forest edges. Size: 33 to 40 cm. Prey: Voles, rodents.

❑ Grand-duc d'Amérique (*Bubo virginianus*) Great Horned Owl

Description: Large bulky owl. Ear-tufted with yellow eyes, brownish overall with white throat patch.

Habitat: Variable. Forests, fields, open country, desert, and cities. Size: 45 to 63 cm. Prey: Rodents, skunks, birds, etc.

❑ Chouette rayée (*Strix varia*) Barred Owl

Description: Dark eyes, no ear tufts. Neck streaked horizontally, chest streaked vertically.

Habitat: Coniferous and mixed forests, marshes. Size: 46 to 58 cm.

Prey: Small mammals, amphibians.

❑ Chouette lapone (*Strix nebulosa*) Great Gray Owl

Description: Largest owl of Quebec. Small yellow eyes set in a large facial disk with no ear tufts. Tail is long. Black mark on chin bordered by white moustaches. Underparts streaked.

Habitat: Boreal forest, wooded bogs, open country.

Size: 64 to 84 cm. Prey: Rodents, small mammals.

❑ Harfang des neiges (*Bubo scandiaca*) Snowy Owl

Description: Large white owl with yellow eyes. Females are darker than males and juveniles are darkest. Mainly diurnal.

Habitat: Tundra, open country, and airports. Size: 50 to 68 cm. Prey: Lemmings, hares, voles.

❑ Nyctale de Tengmalm (*Aegolius funereus*) Boreal Owl

Description: Common, small owl without ear tufts. Black-bordered facial disk, black crown with white spots, yellow eyes. Pale beak.

Habitat: Mixed and coniferous forests, dense woods. Size: 23 to 35 cm.

Prey: Small rodents, voles.

❑ Petite Nyctale (*Aegolius acadicus*) Northern Saw-whet Owl

Description: Common, small owl without ear tufts. Reddish-brown facial disk with white eyebrows. Yellow eyes and dark beak. Habitat: Dense, moist forests.

Size: 18 to 21 cm. Prey: Small rodents, birds, insects.

❑ Chouette épervière (*Surnia ulula*) Northern Hawk-Owl

Description: Diurnal owl that resembles a hawk. Tail is long. Facial disk is grey with black border, eyes yellow. No ear tufts. Barred belly.

Habitat: Coniferous or mixed forests, near fields and swamps. Size: 6 to 44 cm. Prey: Small rodents.

