

Sky Hunters, An Introduction to Raptor Biology Vocabulary

Adaptation - an inherited change in a living thing that allows it to better fit for survival in its environment.

Beak – the bill of a bird, especially the hooked bill of a bird of prey that is adapted for tearing and shredding prey captured in the talons.

Behavior – the way an animal acts, often in response to something in its environment; an inherited pattern of automatic responses (such as courtship or nesting)

Bill – the bill of a bird serves as a tool for capturing or finding food, as hands for picking up food, as jaws and teeth for shredding or crushing food into smaller pieces, and as a mouth for swallowing.

Binocular vision – a way of seeing using both eyes to look straight ahead resulting in a three-dimensional view produced by overlap of vision.

Bird of prey – a predatory bird that uses its hooked beak, strong feet, and sharp talons to catch and eat other animals; also called a Raptor.

Carnivore – a flesh-eating animal, usually a predator.

Carnivorous – eating the flesh of another animal.

Convergent evolution – when two unrelated animal groups fill the same role, or niche, in an environment and evolve similar adaptations.

Crepuscular – active during twilight; in the early morning and early evening hours.

Depth perception – the ability to see an object and at the same time determine how far away it is.

Diurnal – active by day and sleeping by night.

Ecosystem - (short for ecological system) an ecological community and its physical environment, considered as a unit. All ecosystems are "open" systems in the sense that energy and matter are transferred in and out. Example: The Earth as a single ecosystem constantly converts solar energy into myriad organic products, and has increased in biological complexity over time.

Facial disks – the two circles of short, specialized feathers that surround an owl's eyes.

Field of vision – all that can be seen at one time, as when looking through binoculars.

Habitat – the area or type of environment where plants or an animals naturally live or occur.

Migrate – to move from one area or climate to another for feeding or breeding.

Monocular vision – vision resulting when only one eye is used to see an object, common in non-raptors with eyes on the sides of their heads.

Molt – the process of shedding feathers and growing new ones.

Nictitating membrane – an inner or third eyelid in birds, reptiles, and some mammals that helps keep the eye moist and clean. To nictitate means to wink.

Nocturnal – active at night and sleeping during the day.

Predator – an animal that hunts, kills, and eats other animals

Prey – an animal that is hunted, killed, and eaten by other animals.

Raptor – a predatory bird that uses strong feet and sharp talons to catch and carry prey, has a hooked bill to kill and tear prey, and is carnivorous by nature.

Rousing – cleansing action of a bird in which all contour feathers are elevated, wings and tail are held loosely, and the bird vigorously shakes itself.

Talon – the long, sharp, curved claw of a bird of prey.

Wing span – the distance from the tip of one outstretched wing to the tip of the other outstretched wing; also called wingspread.

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