

Fig. 2.4
Northern Saw-whet Owl



Fig. 2.5
Red-tailed Hawk



Medical: Great horned owls are very susceptible to West Nile virus and should be housed with appropriate mosquito protection. Vaccination is also recommended.

Northern Saw-whet Owl (*Aegolius acadicus*) ★★★★★



Description: Northern saw-whet owls are small, tuftless, forest-dwelling, cavity-nesting owls that inhabit the northern part of the United States, parts of the western United States and Canada. Their adult plumage is grayish brown streaked with white and is spotted on the back. They have a short tail, yellow eyes, a dark beak, white eyebrow and mustache markings, and a light facial disk bordered in brown. Juvenile birds (less than three months old) are dark brown with a buff chest and distinct white eyebrow and mustache markings. Saw-whet owls prey on small rodents, birds, and insects.

Management skill level: Novice

Handling and husbandry: Northern saw-whet owls are very adaptable birds that manage well and acclimate to a display. They appear most comfortable if a cavity or nest box is provided in their enclosure, and if two or more saw-whets (not human-imprints) are housed together. When first moved to a new location, they may refuse to eat for a day or two. If they wear equipment (anklets and jesses), their feathered legs must be monitored for irritation.

Medical: Northern saw-whet owls have been reported to contract avian malaria, a mosquito transmitted blood disease, and should be housed with appropriate mosquito protection.

Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) ★★★★★



Description: Red-tailed hawks are large buteos found across North America. They have long broad wings and a broad tail that acquires the characteristic red color at about one year of age, after

Chapter 3: DIET

Wild raptors feed on a wide variety of vertebrate and invertebrate prey. Everything from fish to snails, rabbits to mice, and a wide variety of insects, birds, amphibians, and reptiles is eaten by some raptor at some time. Species, as well as individuals, vary in the type and variety of food they consume. Some species are generalists, eating a wide range of prey, varying their diet based on what is available. Others are specialists, limiting themselves to one or a few kinds of animals. Most raptors also take advantage of carrion if they come upon it in the wild.

When maintaining raptors in captivity, it is desirable to imitate their natural diet as closely as possible. This includes providing the type, as well as the variety, of prey they might naturally consume. TRC believes strongly that your bird's physical and mental health will benefit from this approach.

3.1 WHAT TO FEED

A diet of raw meat such as hamburger, chicken breast, or organ meat (heart and kidney) is not a proper diet for any raptor. This is a very important point, so it will be repeated:

It is never enough to feed just raw meat to a raptor!

Also, you cannot feed a raptor a primarily raw meat diet and supplement it sufficiently to make it wholesome. Raw meat is nutritionally imbalanced, with an excess of phosphorus that dangerously affects the amount of usable calcium (chapter 7, Medical Care). In addition, some people have tried to maintain raptors on a diet primarily of chicken necks because the necks were inexpensive and easy to acquire. A chicken neck diet will result in a life-threatening vitamin B deficiency.

Captive raptors must be fed whole animals, usually birds or mammals, or a mixture of whole prey animals and commercial diets. TRC prefers using the more natural whole-animal diet. When feeding a natural diet, it's important to include the flesh, organ meat, viscera (of freshly killed prey items), bones, and skin of the prey animal. This ensures that your raptor is getting the proper bal-

ance of vitamins, minerals, and casting materials as well as the calories it needs to survive.

This is probably as good a time as any to bring up the subject of pellet egestion, or casting. Certain parts of any raptor's natural diet are indigestible. This includes such things as fur, feathers, scales and, in the case of owls, bones. To get rid of these materials, raptors cast pellets. Pellets are compact bundles of indigestible material formed in the stomach of the birds and regurgitated, usually daily. You should look for these pellets, as they are a good indicator that your bird is eating and processing food normally.

3.1a Domestic Birds and Mammals

To achieve your goal of a balanced diet, feed a variety of freshly killed rodents and/or poultry. Mice, rats, rabbits, hamsters, guinea pigs, chicken, turkey (of all ages), and quail are all commonly used as food for captive raptors. If feeding the larger mammal and avian items (rabbit, adult chicken, etc.) do not offer your bird the larger bones. In their zeal for dinner, many birds will eat rapidly, ingesting large pieces that can easily get lodged in the crop, or esophagus. Also, be cautious of feeding poultry necks as these also can be ingested whole, fold over in the crop or esophagus, and get stuck.

3.1b Pigeon

Another prey item people feed to raptors is pigeon. TRC strongly cautions you, however, against doing this. Pigeons are known carriers of a variety of fatal diseases, such as frounce (trichomonas), herpes virus, Newcastle disease virus, avian tuberculosis, and psittacosis (chapter 7, Medical Care). Frounce cannot be prevented by removing the head, neck and digestive tract of a pigeon (the liver and pectoral muscles are often contaminated) but it can be avoided by completely freezing and then thawing a pigeon prior to feeding. However, the freezing process does not eliminate the other diseases listed. To be safe, TRC does not feed pigeons, either wild or domestically raised, to any of our raptors.

3.1c Wild Food Sources

You must be careful if feeding your raptor "wild" food sources. Any wild species should be in good physical condition, killed by a known acceptable method, and be properly and quickly preserved or fed fresh. Animals that should definitely be avoided include those that are shot with lead (they can easily cause fatal lead poi-

soning in your bird), rodents that are just found dead (these were probably sick or potentially poisoned), and road-kill that is not fresh (in the summertime, unless you know a road kill is fresh, drive on past). There is always the risk that a wild animal harbors lead, parasites, carries diseases, or in the case of road-kills, have a flourishing clostridium (bacterial) load that could be harmful to your bird. So, be cautious.

Another issue revolves around feeding English sparrows (*Passer domesticus*) and European starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*). Both are non-native, unprotected species. These species are carriers of West Nile virus and there is always the risk that your bird could become infected by eating infected individuals. The possibility is greatest from mid summer to mid fall, when the English sparrows and European starlings are harboring the greatest number of viral particles in their systems. These birds carry the virus without getting sick, so you cannot determine the potential threat by looking at them. Also, the freezing process does not necessarily kill/disable the virus. Therefore, TRC cautions you against feeding them. There is a lot that is not yet known about this virus and there is always a risk. For the most up-to-date information, contact The Raptor Center.

3.1d Immature Animals

Although research has shown that some immature animals, such as day-old poults, are nutritionally complete, TRC does not recommend feeding your raptor a diet exclusively of immature animals. Raptor managers often like the young animals because they can be acquired cheaply and easily. However, to ensure that your bird is getting all the nutrients it needs, and to vary the type, texture, and size of prey items a little to enrich your bird's life (chapter 4, Housing), TRC recommends that 50 percent or less of your bird's diet be made up of poultry chicks or baby mammals.

3.1e Commercial Diets

Commercially prepared diets are available (appendix B). TRC does not recommend using these as the sole food source. A variety of whole animals should still be included in any captive raptor's diet. An improper diet can cause nutritional disorders (chapter 7, Medical Care).

The bottom line is that it is critical to your bird's health to mimic its natural diet as much as possible. It is not appropriate to feed a bird-eating raptor strictly rodents (or a rodent-eating raptor strictly birds). A bird-eater should receive a diet that consists of at least 50 percent bird prey items. It is not able to extract as much

energy and nutrition from rodents, which often leads to problems with its overall health, beak and talon condition, feather quality, and health of its skin. Do your homework ahead of time to learn what your bird would eat in the wild and how you are going to provide it with the best diet possible.

3.2 HOW MUCH TO FEED

As a general rule of thumb, 100–200 g (4–8 oz) raptors will eat 20–25 percent of their body weight daily, 200–800 g (8 oz–1.8 lb) raptors will eat 15 percent of their body weight, 800–1,200 g (1.8–2.8 lb) birds will eat 10 percent of their body weight, and raptors larger than 1,200 g (2.8 lb) will eat approximately 6–8 percent of their body weight daily. This amount varies with age, activity level, weather, and even time of year. By monitoring your bird's weight (chapter 6, Maintenance Care) and behavior, you can adjust the quantity of food offered. Table 3.1 lists the recommended guidelines for feeding program and display raptors.

Birds can lose weight, become anemic, and die if not fed a sufficient amount of highly nutritious food; they can also become obese if provided with an overabundance of food. Obesity is a medical condition that results in potentially fatal health problems, such as fatty liver disease (chapter 7, Medical Care). Therefore, it is critical to weigh your bird regularly, monitor its annual/seasonal consumption patterns, and adjust the amount of food offered to keep your bird in a healthy weight range.

3.3 WHERE TO OBTAIN FOOD

After looking at table 3.1, you can see that the recommended staple diet consists of a mixture of rats, mice, poultry, and coturnix quail. The rodents can either be purchased from a variety of commercial breeders, or sometimes acquired at no charge from laboratories. If getting rodents from a lab, be sure to limit yourself to “control” or surplus animals, to avoid drugs or other chemicals that might get passed on to your bird. Also, inquire into the method of euthanasia used. Potential food animals should not be injected with euthanasia solutions (e.g. barbiturates); they can cause secondary poisoning in your raptor. In addition, check the rodents carefully for any markers, such as metal ear clips, that need to be removed before feeding them to your bird.

Poultry and quail can also be purchased from commercial breeders and sometimes hatcheries have day-old chicks available at no charge. A list of some food suppliers is presented in appendix B. Before acquiring food from any source, do a little research to make

sure the animals are raised and euthanized humanely, and are frozen quickly.

You can also raise your own food; depending on the quantity you need and the facilities you have available, this can be an attractive alternative. One important rule to follow is never feed any animals to your raptors if they exhibited signs of illness. With age, rodents sometimes get sick and develop tumors or excessive weight loss. These animals should be euthanized and discarded.

If you raise or receive live food, it should be euthanized humanely. Killing animals is never a pleasant task; however, if you keep a raptor, it has to be done, either by you or by someone else. As noted above, you can't use any chemical that might be passed on to your bird. The University of Minnesota's approved method of euthanasia for small rodents is a CO₂ chamber.

3.4 HOW TO STORE FOOD

Carcasses can be frozen and stored for up to six months with little loss of quality (except for fish, which lose vitamins quickly). Most people who keep raptors have a freezer just for storing the birds' food. It is critical that when freezing food, the food is laid flat in a thin layer to avoid rotting and bacterial contamination.

Food can be packaged in meal-size servings and thawed when needed. Thawing whole animal carcasses in cool/cold water is best to avoid bacterial contamination and to replace a little moisture that was lost in the freezing process.

3.5 HOW TO FEED

3.5a Preparation

Just as the proper presentation of a meal at a four-star restaurant is important to your gourmet-dining experience, so too is the presentation of food important to the discerning raptor. Some raptors, like some people, will eat almost anything, any time, anywhere, but most will eat better if their food is prepared and presented with a little thought.

Contrary to popular belief, captive raptors don't need to be fed live prey. In fact, attempting to do so could cause injury to your hawk or owl depending on its housing facility and physical limitations. Except in extraordinary situations, food should be presented to your raptor only after it has been euthanized.

Food should always be thawed and presented in a fresh-looking manner. Food that is frozen or even too cold can cause digestive problems such as "sour crop," which can lead to serious sickness

(chapter 7, Medical Care). The intestines of previously frozen rodents should be removed, as they tend to rot quickly, the birds won't eat them, and they can be a potential carrier of clostridium (a deadly bacterium). The liver, however, is almost always a welcome, very nutritious delicacy and should be offered. Lying open the belly of the prey to get to the intestines will also expose the red organ meat, an irresistible sight to even the most jaded raptor.

Preparing the food in this fashion should be done immediately prior to offering the food. Freshly killed animals can be fed whole (including the intestines) as can day-old chicks if fresh or quickly frozen and thawed in cold water. The yolk and digestive system are very nutritious and the birds seem to like them. Food that has suffered freezer burn, or looks or smells "bad," should never be fed to your bird.

3.5b Vitamins

If a bird is housed outdoors and is on a varied diet of fresh, whole prey items, vitamins should not be necessary. However, most raptor caretakers feed their birds previously frozen food (which has lost moisture and vitamins during the freezing/thawing process) and provide their birds with a relatively short menu. To make sure your bird is receiving the highest quality nutrition possible, a vitamin supplement can be added to the diet.

When choosing a supplement, keep in mind that vitamin compounds are made with a specific type of animal in mind (human, canine, feline, etc.). If you give your bird an incorrectly balanced supplement (one not made for hawks) you run the risk of deficiencies or excess absorption of one vitamin, both potentially harmful situations. Vitahawk Maintenance®, a multivitamin powder made specifically for hawks, has been used safely for several years and is available through a variety of sources. If you are thinking about using a different vitamin, speak with your veterinarian to see if it will be appropriate for your bird. Make sure to follow the dosing guidelines provided on the packaging. Vitamin overdoses can lead to serious health problems (chapter 7, Medical Care).

One vitamin that is not available to a raptor through its diet is vitamin D3. Birds normally acquire this essential vitamin when ultraviolet irradiation (from sunlight) of the oil in their feathers converts vitamin D2 (which cannot be absorbed) into vitamin D3. When birds preen their feathers, they ingest the vitamin D3. Birds housed outdoors should have a sufficient amount of vitamin D3 to fill their dietary requirements. However, if a bird is housed indoors for a lengthy period of time and has little to no access to sunlight (TRC does not recommend this), a vitamin D supplement may be necessary.

Vitamin D is essential for the absorption of calcium and phosphorus from the digestive tract and for regulating the amount of calcium circulating in the blood. One vitamin D supplement often given is cod liver oil. A drop or two of cod liver oil added to your bird's food once per week is all you need. However, vitamin D is a fat-soluble vitamin and if overdosed can cause severe health problems. Therefore, TRC does not recommend using it if multiple birds are housed together (one bird may get more than its share) and strongly encourages people to provide their bird with regular direct sunlight instead.

Fish that has been frozen for more than a few months loses essential vitamins, particularly thiamine. For raptors that eat a strictly fish diet, such as osprey, adding a thiamine supplement (10 mg/kg once per week) is important to prevent nervous system disorders.

One last note on vitamins: supplements are not a substitute for a high quality diet.

3.5c Delivery

Whenever feeding your bird, there are a few safety tips to follow. Keep in mind that most raptors look forward to dinnertime and sometimes get aggressive for their food.

- Birds that are fed on the glove should be out of site of other birds during feeding time and fed before other birds. Otherwise, they get anxious and aggressive for their food.
- If feeding a bird on the glove, the food should be presented at foot level. Do not reach up and present the food to the bird's beak. Forceps can be used to bring food to the glove to minimize the risk of footing. Routinely offering your bird food from your hand teaches your bird that your hand means food and it will reach out to grab your hand with its feet or beak. The ONLY time birds may see food in your bare hand is during specific training scenarios (chapter 8, Training).
- If birds are just left food in their enclosure, it is a good idea to wear a glove on the hand carrying the food container and/or handling the food. Raptors learn when they are going to be fed and over-eager eaters can respond quickly to the presence of their caretakers at that time. They may fly at the person leaving food, and/or reach out to grab the food, accidentally grabbing a bare hand.
- Food should be hidden from view until it is placed in the feeding location.

It's important to clean up uneaten food. Spoiled food can lead to salmonellosis or other bacterial diseases. Many species of raptors "cache," or hide, food. This natural behavior serves them well in the wild by letting them save uneaten and excess prey for a day or two. It's unnecessary in captivity, however, and attracts flies, ants, bees, rodents, and bacteria as well as other predators.

3.6 WHERE TO FEED

If you are feeding your bird in its enclosure, placing the food in the same spot every day will encourage eating. Raptors tend to be creatures of habit, and will more easily recognize the offered food as dinner (especially if it's different or unusual) if they see it in the same place every day. If two or more birds are housed together, make sure to place their meals in separated piles to prevent aggression. Also make sure neighboring raptors are either fed at the same time or have a visual barrier so they don't see the food.

Food should be placed on a feeding platform or perch. Do not place food directly on gravel or sand. These substrates stick to the food and can easily get ingested, potentially causing obstructions.

3.7 WHEN TO FEED

Raptors rarely need to be fed more than once a day. In extremely cold weather, however, small birds such as American kestrels, Northern saw-whet owls, and Eastern and Western screech owls may require food twice a day if they are housed outdoors. In mild weather, larger birds such as great horned owls, red-tailed hawks, bald eagles, and golden eagles could be fed once every other day, but TRC believes in feeding them everyday as a method of enrichment.

Also, during warm weather, one fasting day per week can be incorporated into the feeding regime of the larger species to help control their weight (they are often eager eaters and can easily get obese if their weight is not monitored carefully). Tempting as it may be, this does not mean you should feed them a little extra the day before or after. TRC does not recommend any fasting days for imprinted birds, or those with destructive tendencies such as caracaras and vultures. These birds are easily bored and need as much stimulation as possible.

Wild raptors generally feed in the morning or late afternoon. While it's certainly not essential to feed at those particular times, establishing a routine will keep your bird on a regular casting cycle as well as encourage eating. During daylight saving time, TRC feeds all its education birds in the late afternoon, with the owls fed as late as possible to mimic their normal behavior patterns in the

wild. When the days get short, the hawks are fed in the early afternoon and the owls in the later afternoon, close to dark.

3.8 WATER

Your bird should always have a source of water available, except during freezing temperatures. Many birds drink frequently, especially falcons, eagles, and barred owls. In cold climates, it is a good idea to periodically bring your avian educator indoors, if possible, and give it the opportunity to drink and bathe. Make sure the bird and its equipment are completely dry before it returns to its frigid outdoor enclosure. Keep in mind that when housing a raptor in captivity, you control the amount of food it receives, and you also offer it limited resources for adapting to weather conditions and stressful situations. Therefore, your captive bird will probably need more water than a bird in the wild, and you might find that it readily drinks the water provided. See chapter 4, Housing for more details.

3.9 THE RELUCTANT EATER

Normally, raptors eat very willingly in captivity, so getting your bird to eat shouldn't be difficult. For various reasons, however, captive raptors sometimes refuse to eat. It's not unusual for birds that have been recently moved (newly acquired birds or those moved to a different mew), or had some other change in their management to temporarily stop eating. However, usually within a few days, their hunger overrides their nervousness and temptation wins. Eastern screech owls are notorious for not eating after a change in management. Listed below are a few suggestions TRC has found useful for getting a reluctant bird to eat.

3.9a A Newly Acquired Bird

- Make sure the area is quiet, with as little disturbance as possible. Constant distractions may prevent a bird from concentrating on its food.
- Try a variety of food items to see if one is preferred or recognized. The commercial bird-of-prey diet is seldom accepted right away, because raptors do not recognize it as food. If you want to include this food in your bird's diet, you might need to mix it in with the recognizable food items.
- If different species are housed next to each other, make sure

they have a visual barrier. Sometimes, a bird won't eat if it feels intimidated by the sight of another raptor, especially a potential predator.

- If possible, temporarily move the bird next to or in with another bird of the same species or of a compatible species (table 4.5) that is a consistent eater. Often the sight of another bird eating will stimulate a non-eater's appetite.
- If the bird is housed with other birds, the other residents may intimidate it, it may not be aggressive enough for the food, and/or the other birds may be possessive of the food and prevent the new tenant from eating. Isolate the newcomer and once it eats, start a slow introduction back into the enclosure (chapter 8, Training).
- If the bird will allow you to approach it, try offering juicy pieces of meat such as liver and heart; this might stimulate your bird's appetite in its new environment.

3.9b A Resident Undergoing Management Change

(new location, new handler, etc.)

- Make sure the new area is quiet, with as little disturbance as possible.
- Make sure there are visual barriers to other raptors or animals. Other animals may not only be distracting, but threatening.
- With a location change, make sure all other management practices remain unchanged. This would include the time of feeding, the person who feeds, the type of food offered, and the location of food placement (feeding platform, perch, etc).
- If necessary, conduct a slow transition to a new location. Place your bird in the new enclosure for part of a day but then return it to its old enclosure, if possible, to feed.
- If the bird is routinely fed off the fist but won't eat with a new handler, after a day or two give it a break and either leave the food in the bird's enclosure or have the old handler feed it while the new handler is close. A slow transition may be required.

3.9c A Resident Not Undergoing Management Change

If your bird has not undergone any change in location or management and stops eating for two days, consult your veterinarian. Sometimes, if the weather is hot a bird may go off food for a few days. However, once a bird is acclimated to its surroundings and captive life, it usually eats at least partial meals daily, even in warm weather. If it doesn't, it could mean your bird is sick and you should not waste any time diagnosing the problem. Remember that a bird that doesn't eat for a few days (and doesn't drink water) can become dehydrated, which only compounds the anorexia and potential illness.

Birds that lay eggs also often stop eating and/or have a greatly reduced appetite. This situation must be monitored closely. Contact your veterinarian and/or falconers or zoos with captive breeding experience for information and guidance.

3.10 RECORD KEEPING

It is important to keep good records of your bird's daily eating patterns. Annual feeding patterns and weight ranges do exist and once you establish what is normal for your bird, you can relax a little when your bird shows expected changes in appetite. For example, captive eagles, and some of the larger hawk and owl species, may lose as much as 200g in the spring (in the Midwest), and gain this weight back to bulk up for the winter. Figure 6.1 shows the forms used by TRC to record and monitor the weights of education raptors.

3.11 SUMMARY

A diet consisting exclusively of raw meat is never sufficient for any raptor. To ensure proper nutrition, your bird's diet must also contain skin, bones, and organ meat.

Finding a reliable supply of high-quality food in sufficient quantities is one of the most important tasks in caring for a captive raptor. It can be expensive and time-consuming and is a never-ending proposition. If the money is available, you can purchase food from a number of sources. Food can be kept frozen for up to six months, but must be properly and completely thawed before it is fed to your bird. While some birds eat regularly and with no prompting, others, particularly birds moved to new facilities, might need special treatment. In general, a quiet and peaceful setting, along with established routines, will ensure that your bird will eat heartily and well. It is

essential to monitor and record your bird's eating patterns throughout the year so you can be prepared for shifts in appetite and food consumption and identify potential problems early.

3.12 SUGGESTED READINGS

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Table 3.1 Recommended average daily food rations for program and display raptors *

Species	Sex	Amount	Food Type **
American kestrel	Male	20-25g (0.7-0.9oz)	Mice, chicks, quail, insects
	Female	25-30g (0.9-1.1oz)	
Bald eagle	Male	200g (7.1-10.6oz)	Fish, rat, poultry, quail, rabbit
	Female	300g (10.6oz)	
Barred owl	Male	50g (1.8oz)	Mice, chicks, quail, rat
	Female	80g (2.8oz)	
Black vulture	Male or Female	100g-125g (3.5-4.4oz)	Rat, chicks, fish, poultry, quail, rabbit
Borcal owl	Male	30g (1.1oz)	Mice, chicks, quail
	Female	35-50g (1.2-1.8oz)	
Broad-winged hawk	Male	30-40g (1.1-1.4oz))	Mice, chicks, quail, rat
	Female	40-50g (1.4-1.8oz)	
Burrowing owl	Male or female	50g (1.8oz)	Mice, chicks, insects
Common barn owl	Male	50g (1.8oz)	Mice, chicks, rat
	Female	80g (2.8oz)	
Cooper's hawk	Male	40-50g (1.4-1.8oz)	Quail, chicks, mice, rat
	Female	50-60g (1.8-2.1oz)	
Crested caracara	Male or Female	100-140g (3.5-4.9oz)	Mice, chicks, poultry, quail, rat
Eastern screech owl	Male or female	20-30g (0.7-1.1oz)	Mice, chicks, insects, quail
Ferruginous hawk	Male	100-125g (3.5-4.4oz)	Mice, rat, chicks, poultry, quail, rabbit
	Female	125-150g (4.4-5.3oz)	
Golden eagle	Male	200g (7.1oz)	Rat, poultry, quail, rabbit
	Female	300g (10.6oz)	
Great gray owl	Male	60-80g (2.1-2.8oz)	Mice, chicks, quail, rat
	Female	80-100g (2.8-3.5oz)	
Great horned owl	Male	60-80g (2.1-2.8oz)	Rat, mice, chicks, poultry, quail, rabbit
	Female	80-120g (2.8-4.2oz)	
Harris's hawk	Male	60-80g (2.1-2.8oz)	Mice, chicks, quail, poultry, rabbit, rat
	Female	80-100g (2.8-3.5oz)	

Long-eared owl	Male or female	50g (1.8oz)	Mice , chicks, quail
Merlin	Male	25-30g (0.9-1.1oz)	Quail , chicks, mice
	Female	30-40g (1.1-1.4oz)	
Mississippi kite	Male or female	35-40g (1.2-1.4oz)	Mice , chicks, insects, quail
Northern goshawk	Male	80g (2.8oz)	Quail , chicks, poultry, rab, rat
	Female	100g (3.5oz)	
Northern harrier	Male or female	50-60g (1.8-2.1oz)	Mice , chicks, quail
Northern saw-whet owl	Male	15-20g (0.5-0.7oz)	Mice , chicks, insects, quail
	Female	20-25g (0.7-0.9oz)	
Osprey	Male	150-175g (5.3-6.2oz)	Fish
	Female	175-200g (6.2-7.1oz)	
Peregrine falcon	Male	80-100g (2.8-3.5oz)	Quail , chicks, mice, poultry, rat
	Female	100-120g (3.5-4.2oz)	
Prairie falcon	Male	80-100g (2.8-3.5oz)	Quail, rat , chicks, mice, poultry
	Female	100-120g (3.5-4.2oz)	
Red-shouldered hawk	Male	50g (1.8oz)	Mice , chicks, quail, rat
	Female	60-80g (2.1-2.8oz)	
Red-tailed hawk	Male	60-80g (2.1-2.8oz)	Mice, rat , chicks, poultry, quail, rabbit
	Female	80-100g (2.8-3.5oz)	
Rough-legged hawk	Male	60-80g (2.1-2.8oz)	Mice , chicks, quail, rat
	Female	80-90g (2.8-3.2oz)	
Sharp-shinned hawk	Male	25-30g (0.9-1.1oz)	Quail , chicks, mice
	Female	30-40g (1.1-1.4oz)	
Short-eared owl	Male or female	50g (1.8oz)	Mice , chicks, quail
Snowy owl	Male	125-150g (4.4-5.3oz)	Mice, rat, poultry , chicks, quail, rab, rat
	Female	150-200g (5.3-7.1oz)	
Swainson's hawk	Male	60-80g (2.1-2.8oz)	Mice , chicks, insects, quail, rat
	Female	80-100g (2.8-3.5oz)	
Swallow-tailed kite	Male or Female	40-50g (1.4-1.8oz)	Mice , chicks, insects, quail
Turkey vulture	Male or Female	100-125g (3.5oz-4.4oz)	Rat , chicks, fish, poultry, quail, rabbit
Western screech owl	Male or female	20-30g (0.7-1.1oz)	Mice , chicks, insects, quail

*Please note that these quantities are designated for raptors that are in good weight, not undergoing weight management for free flight, and are housed in temperate climates. Also, keep in mind that the size of species varies with geographical regions. With the exceptions of the black vulture, crested caracara, kites, and Western screech owl, the quantities listed here are for members of the species living in the upper Midwest.

**The first item(s) listed in bold are typically the staple diet of each species. The other items, listed alphabetically, are a selection of additional food types each species will typically eat. Offering items from these lists twice per week will help provide your bird with a healthy diet.