

## Module # 3 – Component # 1



### The Identification of Birds of Prey (Raptors) in Africa

#### Objectives

To enable the Birding enthusiast to identify all the Birds of Prey in Africa.

#### Expected Outcomes

At the conclusion of this Component, learners should be able to:

- Identify all Bird of Prey species by utilising critical key factors, specifically:
  - Habitat
  - Feathered or unfeathered legs
  - Eye colour
  - Dominant plumage colour on their backs
  - Cere colour
  - Bill size and shape
  - Wing shape
  - Breast colour and or patterning
  - Size equivalency

#### Introduction: What to Look Out For

The first step toward making a successful identification is to rapidly run through a series of key factors to either confirm or discard a different raptors family or group.

- **HABITAT** - What habitat are you in ?
- **LEGS** – Are they feathered or unfeathered ?
- **EYES** – Can you determine the eye colour ?
- **PLUMAGE** - What is the dominant plumage colour of back ?
  - sooty brown, black, white or combinations
  - shades of brown (i.e. dark brown,

- reddish-brown, tawny, creamy brown) shades of grey (i.e. grey, grey-brown, grey & white)

- **CERE** - Can you determine the cere colour ?
- **BREAST**- What are the breast colours / patterns
- **WING** - Is it rounded or Pointed when in flight ?
- **SIZE** - try to judge its size in relation to the following commoner bird species (in order of size):
  - Common Fiscal Shrike (**CF**)
  - Turtle Dove (**TD**)
  - Feral Pigeon (**FP**)
  - Grey-headed Gull (**GHG**)
  - Pied Crow (**PC**)
  - Helmeted Guineafowl (**G**)
  - Egyptian Goose (**EG**)
  - Spur-winged Goose (**SWG**)

#### Habitats

##### TERRESTRIAL HABITATS

- 1) **Lowland Equatorial and Gallery Forest** (below 1000 metres above mean sea-level amsl)
- 2) **Mid to high altitude Montane Forest** (Tropical & Sub-tropical)(above 1000 metres above mean sea-level [amsl])
- 3) **Woodland** [usually deciduous]; Miombo [dominated by *Julbernardia*, *Brachystegia* and *Uapaca* species]; Thornbush [dominated by *Acacia* species]; Broad-leaved [dominated by *Terminalia*, *Combretum* species]
- 4) **Savannah** (Grasslands with some scattered trees or bushes)
- 5) **Grasslands** (low and high altitude)
- 6) **Semi-desert** (Sahel, Karoo, Fynbos, montane, alpine)

##### AQUATIC HABITATS

- 1) Rivers
- 2) Other wetlands (Dams, lakes, marshes)
- 3) Estuaries

With these factor is mind we can begin to separate out the various raptor species.

- **LEGS with** Feathers
- **SIZE** equivalent - Helmeted Guineafowl or larger
- **HABITAT** – Terrestrial

#### Lowland Equatorial and Gallery Forest

- Ayre's Hawk-eagle
- Cassin's Hawk Eagle

#### Mid To High Altitude Montane Forest, Escarpment, Forest Remnants

- Ayre's Hawk-eagle
- African Crowned Eagle

#### Woodland (Miombo, Acacia, Broad-Leaved)

- Long-crested Eagle
- Lesser Spotted Eagle
- African Hawk-eagle
- Tawny Eagle
- Martial Eagle
- African Crowned Eagle
- Wahlberg's Eagle
- Greater Spotted Eagle
- Steppe Eagle

#### Savannah (Grasslands With Some Scattered Trees And/Or Bushes)

- Ayre's Hawk-eagle
- Long-crested Eagle
- Martial Eagle
- Eastern Imperial Eagle
- Golden Eagle

#### Semi-Desert (Sahel, Karoo, Fynbos, Montane, Alpine)

- Booted Eagle
- Steppe Eagle
- Eastern Imperial Eagle
- Golden Eagle

- **LEGS Without** Feathers
- **SIZE** equivalent – specified
- **PLUMAGE** – specified
- **HABITAT** – Terrestrial

### Lowland Equatorial And Gallery Forest

**dominant plumage** colour of back - **sooty brown, black, white or all**

- **size equivalent** - Turtle Dove to Feral pigeon
  - Red-thighed Sparrowhawk [adult]
  - Chestnut-flanked Sparrowhawk [adult]
- **size equivalent** Pied Crow or larger
  - Bat Hawk [adult]
  - Black Sparrowhawk [adult]
  - Palm-nut Vulture [adult]

**dominant plumage** colour of back – **brown**

- **size equivalent** Turtle Dove to Grey-headed Gull
  - Red-thighed Sparrowhawk [juvenile]
  - Red-chested Goshawk [juvenile]
- **size equivalent** Pied Crow and larger
  - African Harrier-hawk (Gymnogene) [juvenile]
  - Congo Serpent-eagle [juvenile]
  - Black Sparrowhawk [juvenile]
  - Bat Hawk [juvenile]
  - Long-tailed Hawk [juvenile]
  - Palm-nut Vulture [juvenile]

**dominant plumage** colour of back - **grey, grey-brown**

- **size equivalent** - Turtle Dove to Feral pigeon
  - Chestnut-flanked Sparrowhawk [adult & juvenile]
- **size equivalent** Grey-headed Gull or larger
  - African Harrier-hawk (Gymnogene) [adult]
  - Red-chested Goshawk [adult]
  - Congo Serpent-eagle [adult]
  - Long-tailed Hawk [adult]
  - Red-necked Buzzard [adult & juvenile]

### Mid To High Altitude Montane Forest Escarpment Edges, Remnant Forest Patches] (Tropical & Sub-Tropical)

**dominant plumage** colour of back - **sooty brown, black, white or all**

- **size equivalent** - Feral pigeon
  - African Hobby [adult & juvenile]
  - Eurasian Hobby [adult]

**dominant plumage** colour of back – **brown**

- **size equivalent** - Turtle Dove to Grey-headed Gull
  - African Hobby [juvenile]
  - Eurasian Sparrowhawk [juvenile]
  - African Goshawk [juvenile]

- **size equivalent** - Pied Crow
  - African Harrier-hawk (Gymnogene) [juvenile]
  - Mountain Buzzard [adult & juvenile]
  - Forest Buzzard [adult & juvenile]

**dominant plumage** colour of back - **grey, grey-brown**

- **size equivalent** - Feral pigeon to Grey-headed Gull
  - African Goshawk [adult]
  - Eurasian Sparrowhawk [adult]
- **size equivalent** to Pied Crow
  - African Harrier-hawk (Gymnogene) [adult]

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### Woodland (Miombo, Acacia, Broad-Leaved)

**dominant plumage** colour of **BACK** - **sooty brown, black, white or all**

- ! **eye colour - yellow**
- Palm-nut Vulture [adult]
  - Bat Hawk [adult & juvenile]
  - Black-chested Snake-eagle [adult]
  - Gabar Goshawk [juvenile]

- ! **eye colour - red**
- Gabar Goshawk [adult]
  - Black Sparrowhawk [adult]
  - Ovambo Sparrowhawk [adult]
  - Bateleur [adult]

- ! **eye colour - brown**
- Ovambo Sparrowhawk [juvenile]
  - African Hobby [adult & juvenile]
  - Eurasian Hobby [adult]
  - Eleonora's Falcon [adult & juvenile]

**dominant plumage** colour of **BACK** – **brown**

! **eye colour - yellow**

- **size** - Turtle Dove to Feral Pigeon
  - Shikra [adult female & juvenile]
  - Levant Sparrowhawk [juvenile]
  - Gabar Goshawk [juvenile]
  - Eurasian Sparrowhawk [juvenile]

- **size** - Helmeted Guineafowl and larger
  - Southern Banded Snake-eagle [juvenile]
  - Brown Snake-eagle [adult & juvenile]
  - Eastern Chanting Goshawk [juvenile]
  - Black Sparrowhawk [juvenile]
  - Dark Chanting Goshawk [juvenile]
  - Grasshopper Buzzard [juvenile]
  - Beaudouin's Snake-eagle [juvenile]

! **eye colour red/red-brown**

- **size** - Helmeted Guineafowl and larger
  - Black Kite [adult]
  - Yellow-billed Kite [adult]

! **eye colour - brown**

- **size** - Feral Pigeon to Grey-headed Gull
  - Common Kestrel [adult & juvenile]
  - Eurasian Hobby [juvenile]
  - Sooty Falcon [juvenile]
  - Ovambo Sparrowhawk [juvenile]
  - African Goshawk [juvenile]

- ! **size** - Pied Crow and larger
- Lanner Falcon [juvenile]
  - European Honey Buzzard [juvenile]
  - African Harrier Hawk (Gymnogene) [juvenile]
  - Bateleur [juvenile]

! **eye colour yellowish to greyish brown (biscuit-coloured)**

- **size** - Turtle Dove to Feral Pigeon
  - Little Sparrowhawk [juvenile]
  - Levant Sparrowhawk [juvenile]
- **size** - Pied Crow and larger
  - African Cuckoo Hawk [juvenile]
  - Western Banded Snake-eagle [juvenile]
  - Black Kite [juvenile]
  - Yellow-billed Kite [juvenile]
  - Palm-nut Vulture [juvenile]

**dominant plumage** colour of **BACK - grey, grey-brown**! **eye colour - yellow**

- **size** - Turtle Dove to Grey-headed Gull
  - Little Sparrowhawk [adult]
  - Shikra [adult female]
  - Eurasian Sparrowhawk [adult]
  - African Goshawk [adult]
- **size** - Pied Crow and larger
  - African Cuckoo Hawk [adult female]
  - Grasshopper Buzzard [adult]
  - European Honey Buzzard [adult]
  - Western Banded Snake-eagle [adult]
  - Southern Banded Snake-eagle [adult]
  - Short-toed Snake-eagle [adult & juvenile]
  - Beaudouin's Snake-eagle [adult]

! **eye colour yellowish to greyish brown (biscuit)**

- Black-shouldered Kite [juvenile]

! **eye colour - red**

- **size** - Turtle Dove to Grey-headed Gull
  - Shikra [adult male]
  - Gabar Goshawk [adult]
  - Levant Sparrowhawk [adult]
  - Ovambo Sparrowhawk [adult]
  - Black-shouldered Kite [adult]

- Lizard Buzzard [adult & juvenile]

- **size** - Pied Crow and larger
  - Eastern Chanting Goshawk [adult]
  - Dark Chanting Goshawk [adult]
  - African Cuckoo Hawk [adult male]

! **eye colour - brown**

- **size** - Common Fiscal (Fiscal Shrike)
  - African Pygmy Falcon [adult & juvenile]
- **size** - Feral Pigeon and larger
  - Sooty Falcon [adult]
  - Red-necked Buzzard [adult & juvenile]
  - African Harrier Hawk (Gymnogene) [adult]
  - Lanner Falcon [adult]

**Savannah (Grasslands with Scattered Trees or Bushes)****dominant plumage** colour of **BACK - sooty brown, black, white or all**

- ! **eye colour - yellow**
  - Rueppell's Griffon [adult]
  - White-headed Vulture [adult]

- ! **eye colour - red**
  - Bateleur [adult]

- ! **eye colour - brown**
  - Jackal Buzzard [adult]
  - Eurasian Hobby [adult]
  - Lappet-faced Vulture [adult & juvenile]
  - Egyptian Vulture [adult]

**dominant plumage** colour of **BACK - brown**

- ! **eye colour - yellow**
  - Greater Kestrel [adult]
  - Cape Vulture [adult]
  - Eurasian Griffon [adult]
  - Eurasian Sparrowhawk [juvenile]
  - Pale Chanting Goshawk [juvenile]

- Southern Banded Snake-eagle [juvenile]
- Levant Sparrowhawk [juvenile]

- ! **eye colour - red**
  - Black Kite [adult]
  - Yellow-billed Kite [adult]

- ! **eye colour yellow-brown [biscuit]**
  - Long-legged Buzzard [adult & juvenile]
  - Steppe Buzzard [juvenile]
  - Black Kite [juvenile]
  - Yellow-billed Kite [juvenile]
  - Eurasian Griffon [juvenile]
  - Jackal Buzzard [juvenile]
  - Levant Sparrowhawk [juvenile]

- ! **eye colour brown**
  - Rock Kestrel [adult & juvenile]
  - Hooded Vulture [adult & juvenile]
  - Saker Falcon [adult & juvenile]
  - Steppe Buzzard [adult]
  - Lesser Kestrel [adult & juvenile]
  - White-backed Vulture [adult & juvenile]
  - Cape Vulture [juvenile]
  - Greater Kestrel [adult & juvenile]
  - Bateleur [juvenile]
  - Eurasian Hobby [juvenile]
  - Rueppell's Vulture [juvenile]
  - White-headed Vulture [juvenile]
  - Egyptian Vulture [juvenile]
  - Pallid Harrier [juvenile]
  - Montagu's Harrier [juvenile]
  - Lanner Falcon [juvenile]

**dominant plumage** colour of **BACK - grey, grey-brown**

- ! **eye colour - yellow**
  - Pallid Harrier [adult]
  - Montagu's Harrier [adult]
  - Secretarybird [adult]
  - Eurasian Sparrowhawk [adult & juvenile]
  - Southern Banded Snake-eagle [adult & juvenile]
  - Black-shouldered Kite [juvenile]

- ! **eye colour - red**
  - Pale Chanting Goshawk [adult]
  - Black-shouldered Kite [adult]
  - Swallow-tailed Kite [adult]

- Levant Sparrowhawk [adult female]

! **eye colour grey-brown**

- Pale Chanting Goshawk [juvenile]
- Levant Sparrowhawk [juvenile]

! **eye colour - brown**

- Dickinson's Kestrel [adult & juvenile]
- Grey Kestrel [adult & juvenile]
- Sooty Falcon [adult & juvenile]
- Western Red-footed Falcon [adult & juvenile]
- Amur Falcon [adult & juvenile]
- African Pygmy Falcon [adult & juvenile]
- Red-necked Falcon [adult & juvenile]
- Lanner Falcon [adult]

**Grasslands (Mid To High Altitude)**

**size equivalent - Grey-headed Gull to Pied Crow**

- **dominant plumage** colour of **BACK - sooty brown, black, white or all**

! **eye colour deep red or dark brown**

- Augur Buzzard [adult]
- Peregrine Falcon [adult & juvenile]

- **dominant plumage** colour of **BACK - brown**

! **eye colour - yellow-brown**

- Augur Buzzard [juvenile]

! **eye colour yellow**

- Rufous-chested Sparrowhawk [juvenile]

- **dominant plumage** colour of **BACK - grey, grey-brown**

! **eye colour yellow**

- Rufous-chested Sparrowhawk [adult]

**Semi-Desert (Sahel, Karoo, Fynbos, Montane, Alpine)**

- **dominant plumage** colour of **BACK - sooty brown, black, black and white**

! **eye colour deep red or dark brown**

- Jackal Buzzard [adult]

- Augur Buzzard [adult]
- Lappet-faced Vulture [adult & juvenile]
- Barbary Falcon [juvenile]
- Peregrine Falcon [juvenile]

! **eye colour - yellow**

- Black Harrier [adult]
- Bearded Vulture [adult & juvenile]
- Rueppell's Griffon [adult]

- **dominant plumage** colour of **BACK - brown (creamy-brown)**

! **eye colour - yellow**

- Cape Vulture [adult]
- Eurasian Griffon [adult]
- Beaudouin's Snake-eagle [juvenile]
- Grasshopper Buzzard [juvenile]

! **eye colour greyish-yellow**

- Rueppell's Griffon [juvenile]
- Jackal Buzzard [juvenile]
- Augur Buzzard [juvenile]
- Eurasian Griffon [juvenile]
- Pale Chanting Goshawk [juvenile]
- Eastern Chanting Goshawk [juvenile]

- **dominant plumage** colour of **BACK - brown (creamy-brown)**

! **eye colour - dark brown**

- Long-legged Buzzard [adult & juvenile]
- Hooded Vulture [adult & juvenile]
- Saker Falcon [adult & juvenile]
- Cape Vulture [juvenile]
- White-backed Vulture [adult & juvenile]
- Rock Kestrel [adult & juvenile]
- Fox Kestrel [adult & juvenile]
- Lanner Falcon [juvenile]

- **dominant plumage** colour of **BACK - grey, grey-brown**

! **eye colour - yellow**

- Black Harrier [juvenile]
- Beaudouin's Snake-eagle [adult]
- Grasshopper Buzzard [adult]
- Swallow-tailed Kite [juvenile]
- Black-shouldered Kite [juvenile]

! **eye colour deep red or dark brown**

- Black-shouldered Kite [adult & juvenile]
- Swallow-tailed Kite [adult & juvenile]
- Pale Chanting Goshawk [adult]

- Eastern Chanting Goshawk [adult]

- **dominant plumage** colour of **BACK - grey, grey-brown**

! **eye colour - dark brown**

- Sooty Falcon [adult & juvenile]
- Western Red-footed Falcon [adult & juvenile]
- African Pygmy Falcon [adult & juvenile]
- Red-necked Falcon [adult]
- Barbary Falcon [adult]
- Peregrine Falcon [adult]
- Taita falcon [adult & juvenile]
- Lanner Falcon [adult]

## Legs Without Feathers

**Size** - equivalent to Helmeted Guineafowl or larger  
**Habitat** – Aquatic

### DAMS, LAKES & MARSHES

- **dominant plumage** colour of **BACK - sooty brown, black, black and white**
  - Osprey [adult]
  - Palm-nut Vulture [adult]
  - Black Harrier [adult]
- **dominant plumage** colour of **BACK - brown**
  - Osprey [juvenile]
  - African Marsh-harrier [adult]
  - Western Marsh-harrier [adult & juvenile]
  - African Fish-eagle [adult & juvenile]
  - Southern-banded Snake-eagle [juvenile]
  - Palm-nut Vulture [juvenile]
- **dominant plumage** colour of **BACK - grey, grey-brown**
  - Black Harrier [juvenile]
  - African Marsh-harrier [adult & juvenile]
  - Southern-banded Snake-eagle [adult]

### RIVERS

- **dominant plumage** colour of **BACK - sooty brown, black, black and white**
  - Osprey [adult]
- **dominant plumage** colour of **BACK - brown**
  - Osprey [juvenile]
  - African Fish-eagle [adult & juvenile]
  - Black Kite [adult & juvenile]
  - Yellow-billed Kite [adult & juvenile]

### ESTUARIES

- **dominant plumage** colour of **BACK - sooty brown, black, black and white**
  - Osprey [adult]
  - Palm-nut Vulture [adult]
  - Peregrine Falcon [juvenile]
- **dominant plumage** colour of **BACK - brown**
  - Osprey [juvenile]
  - African Fish-eagle [adult & juvenile]
  - Black Kite [adult & juvenile]
  - Yellow-billed Kite [adult & juvenile]
  - Southern-banded Snake-eagle [juvenile]
  - Palm-nut Vulture [juvenile]
- **dominant plumage** colour of **BACK - grey, grey-brown**
  - Peregrine Falcon [adult]
  - Southern-banded Snake-eagle [adult]