

COOPER'S vs SHARP-SHINNED HAWKS

PERCHED			
#	Field Mark	Sharp-shinned Hawk	Cooper's Hawk
1	SIZE	Similar to a jay or dove (~ 10-14" long). Female is larger and can be as large as a male Cooper's Hawk.	Similar to a crow (avg.14-20" long). Male is smaller and can be as small as a female Sharp-shinned Hawk.
2	HEAD SIZE	Head appears small compared to body.	Head appears large compared to body. The feathers on the back of the head are often raised, giving the bird a crested look.
3	BODY SHAPE	Broad chest and narrow hips. Center of gravity is often high.	Thick, tubular body with a lower center of gravity.
4	EYES	Eyes appear to be close to half way between front and back of head.	Eyes appear to be close to the front of the head.
5	LEGS	Thinner, pencil-like legs that can look long when compared to Cooper's.	Thicker, shorter looking legs compared to Sharp-shinned.
6	"HOODED" OR "CAPPED"	The feathers on the crown and the back of the neck are dark, giving the bird a "hooded" appearance.	The feathers on the crown are darker than the feathers on the back of neck, giving the bird a "capped" appearance. (The "Cooper Cap").
FLYING			
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2	HEAD SIZE	Head appears small compared to body.	Head appears large compared to body. The feathers on the back of the head are often raised, giving the bird a crested look.
3	BODY SHAPE	Broad chest and narrow hips. Center of gravity is often high.	Thick, tubular body with a lower center of gravity.
7	SHAPE IN FLIGHT	When the bird is soaring, short rounded wings are pushed forward at the wrists so that the small head barely extends past the wings.	The large, angular head projects far beyond the wings when soaring, giving the bird a cross-like appearance.
8	FLIGHT PATTERN	Typically flies with several quick wingbeats followed by a short glide. The wing beats can be erratic and more difficult to count than for a Cooper's.	Often flies with slower wing beats followed by a short glide. The slower, regular wing beats are easily counted when the bird flies overhead.
9	TAIL TIP SHAPE	Tail typically has square tip, showing prominent corners. The outer tail feathers are usually the longest (or nearly so). Note: tail tip of soaring bird appears rounded.	Tail is usually rounded at the tip. The middle tail feathers are usually the longest. Note: When the bird is perched, the shorter feathers are often tucked inside of the longer feathers making them only visible from the front.
10	TAIL TIP COLORING	Tail has narrow white tip.	Tail typically has clear white tip, although the white can wear off over time.
JUVENILE			
#	Field Mark	Sharp-shinned Hawk	Cooper's Hawk
11	JUVENILE STREAK PATTERN	Heavy, bold, reddish streaks on chest and belly.	Thin, dark streaks mostly on upper breast; lower belly mostly white.