

## OUT ON THE RANGE

# On the Wing

**H**arriers of the animal world, raptors include vultures, falcons, ospreys, kites, hawks and owls, many of which are descended from Africa's

long-legged secretary bird. Keen-eyed, beautiful and sleek of feather, raptors' curved talons and razor-sharp beaks serve their ferocious, predatory nature.

**“God gives every bird its food,  
but He does not throw it into its nest.”**

JOSIAH GILBERT HOLLAND (1819-1881)

AMERICAN NOVELIST AND POET AKA TIMOTHY TITCOMB



*The osprey, also known as the fish eagle or sea hawk, is a superb fisherman, diving with feet outstretched onto shallow-swimming fish. After a successful strike, the bird rises heavily from the water, carrying its prey to a nest high in a dead tree, where it will feed two or three fledglings. Conservation projects provide osprey nesting platforms near populated areas, sometimes resulting in the raptors harvesting bright koi from golf-course ponds and neighborhood waterways.*  
© Robert Pratt, Grand Junction, Colorado



*Red-shouldered hawks watch for prey from a forest perch. These raptors swoop on their prey and may fly very low over open areas in pursuit of mice, frogs or snakes. They prefer to inhabit open wet hardwood forest canopy but have been known to nest in residential areas. They can live nearly two decades and are most common east of the Mississippi although they are also found in coastal California.*  
© Diane McAllister, Reno, Nevada



*Burrowing owls are pint-sized, long-legged daytime hunters which prefer the open habitats of grassland and desert, but who have adapted to agricultural fields, golf courses, airports, and vacant lots in residential areas. They eat prairie dogs, squirrels and insects and inhabit abandoned tortoise, armadillo or rodent burrows that may extend four to eight feet underground, lined with grass clippings, feathers, paper, and manure. When alarmed they tend to bob their heads quickly up and down and make a chucking or chattering sound.*  
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*The American kestrel, a member of the falcon family, searches for prey by flying into the wind and hovering above likely targets. Once sighted, the kestrel makes a short, steep dive onto its prey. Like most birds, this raptor is able to see light in the near-ultraviolet range, allowing it to detect urine trails around rodent burrows. It prefers the open habitats of field, shrubland and marsh, nesting in cavities in cliffs or trees.*  
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