



FALCONS OF CONNECTICUT

AMERICAN KESTREL

Falco sparverius

Length: 8.7-12.2 in

Weight: 2.8-5.8 oz

Wingspan: 20.1-24.0 in

American Kestrels are found year-round throughout the entire state of Connecticut. They can be seen perching on telephone wires and fence posts when in the country, keeping a keen eye out for insects, small mammals, and reptiles to snatch up. Kestrels also keep an eye out for predators, such as hawks, owls, and crows, as well as snakes. American Kestrels are the smallest falcons in Connecticut and North America, and the most colorful. Males have grey-blue wings and a rusty orange back with black barring. The tail is also rusty orange with black tips. The pale belly is washed with orange and spotted with small, black polka dots. Black stripes frame the face of female kestrels, too, but their wings lack the male's blue-gray color. Their wing coverts are rufous-brown and finely barred, like the back. The tail is barred as well.



MERLIN

Falco columbarius

Length: 9.4-11.8 in

Weight: 5.6-8.5 oz

Wingspan: 20.9-26.8 in

The Merlin is a small species of falcon found in Connecticut, but only during migration times. Look for them in the spring and fall as they are passing through the state to and from their breeding grounds in Canada and Alaska, spotting them may prove difficult though as they are elusive little falcons that know how to make themselves scarce. They can be identified by their gray or slate gray upper-parts and mostly brown underbody with short black stripes. They are only slightly bigger than American Kestrels.. Merlins do not build their own nests but will take over the nests of other raptors or birds. They feed primarily on small songbirds and have been known to hunt flocks of birds in pairs to increase chances of success.



PEREGRINE FALCON

Falco peregrinus

Length: 14.2-19.3 in

Weight: 18.7-56.4 oz

Wingspan: 39.4-43.3 in

The Peregrine Falcon is a migratory visitor in eastern Connecticut, but does have a breeding range in western parts of the state. Even though the Peregrine was pushed to the edge of extinction in North America at one point, they have made a comeback in recent decades and are among the most widespread birds in the world. They are found on all continents on earth except for Antarctica. Peregrine Falcons are amazing aerial acrobats and fierce hunters. They can reach speeds of over 200 mph when diving for prey, making them the fastest animals on the planet. They feed almost exclusively on other birds and have been documented eating over 450 different species in North America and 2,000 worldwide.

EAGLES OF CONNECTICUT

GOLDEN EAGLE

Aquila chrysaetos

Length: 27.6-33.1 in

Weight: 105.8-216.1 oz

Wingspan: 72.8-86.6 in



The Golden Eagle is one of the best-known birds of prey in the Northern Hemisphere. It uses its agility and speed combined with powerful feet equipped with sharp talons to snatch up a variety of large prey. They're sighted in Connecticut during the winter months after breeding in eastern Canada during the summer. Most populations of Golden Eagles are considered to be resident, but the species is technically a partial migrant. They're a hardy species well adapted to colder weather, and it's usually the stronger juveniles that elect to travel to breeding grounds during the summer. They're extremely territorial animals, and migrating runs the risk of flying into another eagle's territory and eliciting a fight.

BALD EAGLE

Haliaeetus leucocephalus

Length: 27.9-37.8 in

Weight: 105.8-222.2 oz

Wingspan: 80.3 in



The Bald Eagle is considered to be a "winter visitor" in Connecticut. The Bald Eagle has been the national emblem of the United States since 1782 and a spiritual symbol for American Indians for far longer than that. They aren't really bald, but the name derives from the older meaning of "bald", meaning "white-headed", so named for the white plumage on top of their head. Look for them soaring in solitude, chasing other birds for their food, or gathering by the dozens in winter. Once endangered by hunting and pesticides, Bald Eagles have flourished under protection. They were finally removed from the list of the Federal Endangered and Threatened Wildlife in 2007 due to stringent hunting Restrictions and various protections from local governments. Rather than do their own fishing, Bald Eagles often go after other creatures' catches. A Bald Eagle will harass a hunting Osprey until the smaller raptor drops its prey in midair, where the eagle swoops it up. A Bald Eagle may even snatch a fish Directly out of an Osprey's talons. Fishing mammals (even people sometimes) can also lose prey to Bald Eagle piracy.

OSPREYS IN CONNECTICUT

OSPREY

Andiron halites

Length: 21.3-22.8 in

Weight: 49.4-70.5 oz

Wingspan: 59.1-70.9 in



The Osprey is a medium-large fish-eating bird of prey that's widely distributed in locations near bodies of water worldwide. Within Connecticut, it's seen mostly on platforms along our coastline. Locally, they're also referred to as "fish hawks" for their ability to dive out of the air and grab fish out of the water. They're actually the only species in Connecticut with a fish-only diet, which helps them to be successful when hunting. They can catch up to 10 fish a day and can often be seen hovering over the water in search of a meal. Their populations are on the rise again after being threatened with pesticides and other human contaminants in the water supply.