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# Snow

## A Red-tailed Hawk

Snow is a very unusual Red-tailed Hawk. He is not an albino or a leukocyte. All albinos have pink eyes and leukocytes have blue eyes. Snow has normal colored eyes for a Red-tailed Hawk; yet, he is mostly white.

Judging from his size he is a male; in all birds of prey (raptors) the males are smaller than the females. Raptor experts think this difference in size is because the females lay the eggs, they incubate the eggs, and they protect the nest from predators like raccoons. These duties require a larger, stronger bird.

As a raptor breeder with a Federal Propagation permit, throughout the years my facilities have produced Golden Eagles, Harris Hawks, and European Sparrow Hawks.



One day while riding on a back road near home I spotted a white hawk hunting for mice. I immediately rushed home and loaded a hawk trap with mice. Returning, I spotted this white hawk perched on top of a telephone pole. I dropped the trap on the opposite side of the road so as not to scare

him away. I was not even out of sight when he came down and was caught.

Snow is quite unusual. I could not find any hawks or anything like him in all the bird books in the library system. Therefore, since I have the raptor propagation permit, I've decided to breed Snow. I'll find out if his coloring is a dominant or a recessive trait. I'm thinking recessive which will make it harder to reproduce.

All birds of prey need to be in sunlight. This is their only source of vitamin D3. Vitamin D3 is now produced in pills, but it is an oil soluble vitamin. This means if you overdose with it your body cannot eliminate the excess like it can with water soluble vitamins. Therefore, raptors must be perched outside to absorb sunshine.

One day I took Snow out of his shed, called a mews because of its special features, and tied him to a hawk perch in my yard. A little while later when I looked out, Snow was being attacked by two wild turkey hens. I quickly chased them off, but now Snow is only tied out in a fenced area. The turkeys either had young or were sitting on eggs and naturally wanted to drive this white hawk away.

Red-tailed Hawk plumage can be variable, depending on the subspecies and the region. These color variations are morphs, and are not related to molting. Though the markings and hue vary across the subspecies, the basic appearance of the Red-tailed Hawk is consistent.



**Laser, a male normal colored Red-tailed Hawk.**