

We are adult **American Kestrels**.

Our scientific name is *Falco sparverius*.

Field Marks

We are the smallest **falcons** in North America. Like other falcons, we have long, pointed wings, long tails, and we flap a lot while migrating. Male and female American Kestrels have different **plumages**. Although both of us have reddish backs and tails, males have blue-gray wings, and females have reddish-brown wings with dark brown bars. Males also have one wide, black tail band, while females have many dark brown bands on their tails. The tops of our heads are blue-gray, and we have white cheeks with 2 black "mustache" marks.

Habitat

We are found in open habitats across most of North America. We nest in holes in trees, in buildings, and nest boxes. We can be found in cities and towns, and we can often be seen perched on telephone lines or hovering over fields hunting for prey.

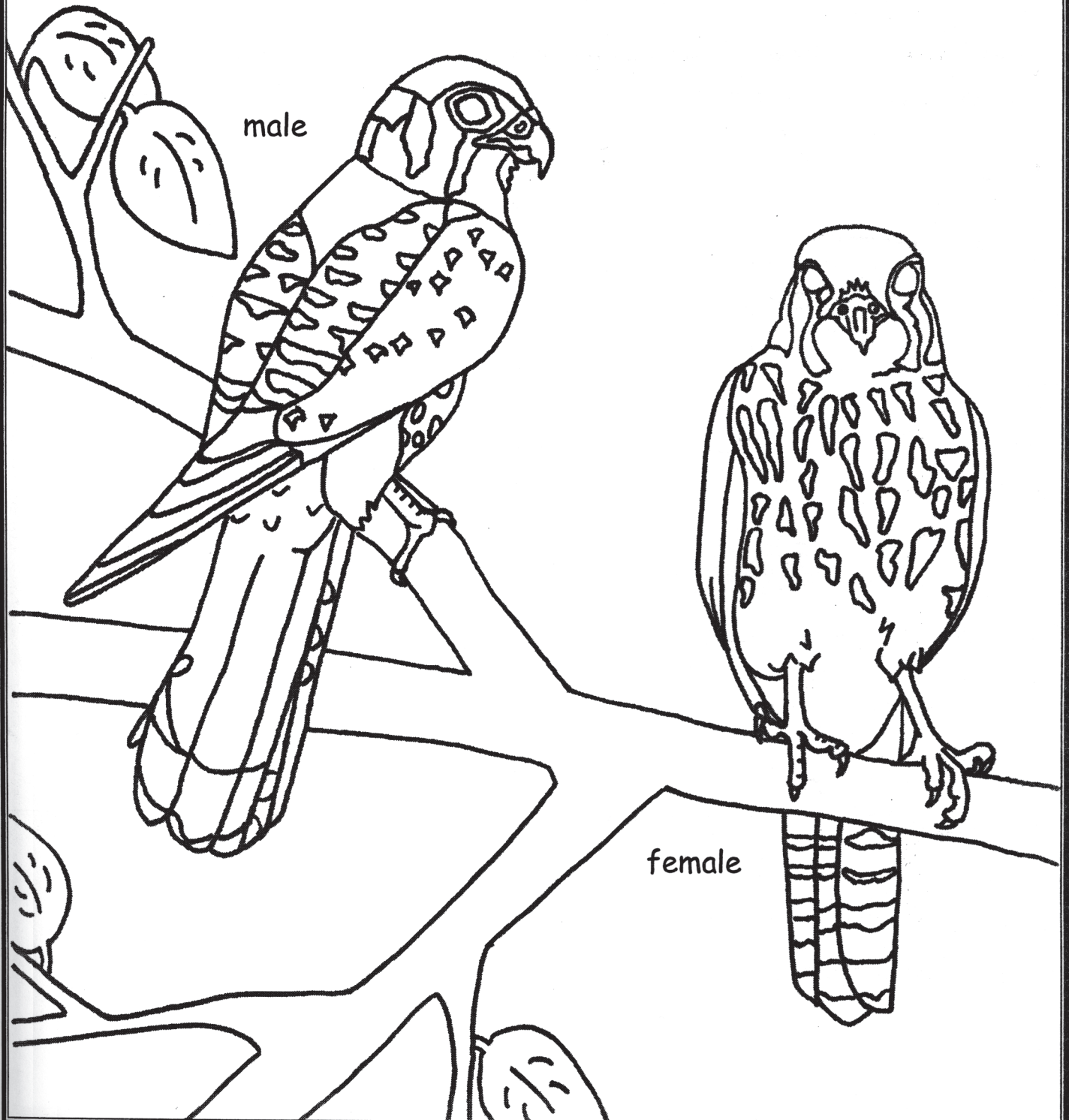
Food

We hunt from perches and while hovering. We eat insects and small rodents, as well as amphibians, reptiles, and small birds.

Migration

We are **partial migrants**. We usually migrate alone or with a few other kestrels. Unlike Merlins and Peregrines, few of us are long distance migrants, and we do not usually make long water crossings. At Hawk Mountain, about 600 kestrels are seen each autumn. Most of us are counted in September and October, mainly in early October.

American Kestrel



male

female

I am an adult **Barn Owl**.

My scientific name is *Tyto alba*.

Field Marks

I am a slender, medium-sized owl. I am mostly white on my belly with a few dark spots. My back is tan or grey and reddish-brown with dark spots. Females are usually darker in color and more spotted than males. I have long legs, a heart-shaped face and large, dark eyes. My wingspan is 42 inches long.

Habitat

I am found on every continent, except Antarctica. I prefer open fields, meadows and pastures or marshes for hunting and nesting. I can adapt to many open habitats and do not mind being near humans. I use large **cavities** (holes) in tall trees, barns, or silos for nesting. If natural cavities are not available I will use an artificial nestbox placed on a tall tree or building. Female Barn Owls can lay 2 to 11 eggs, but usually only raise 1 to 4 young owls.

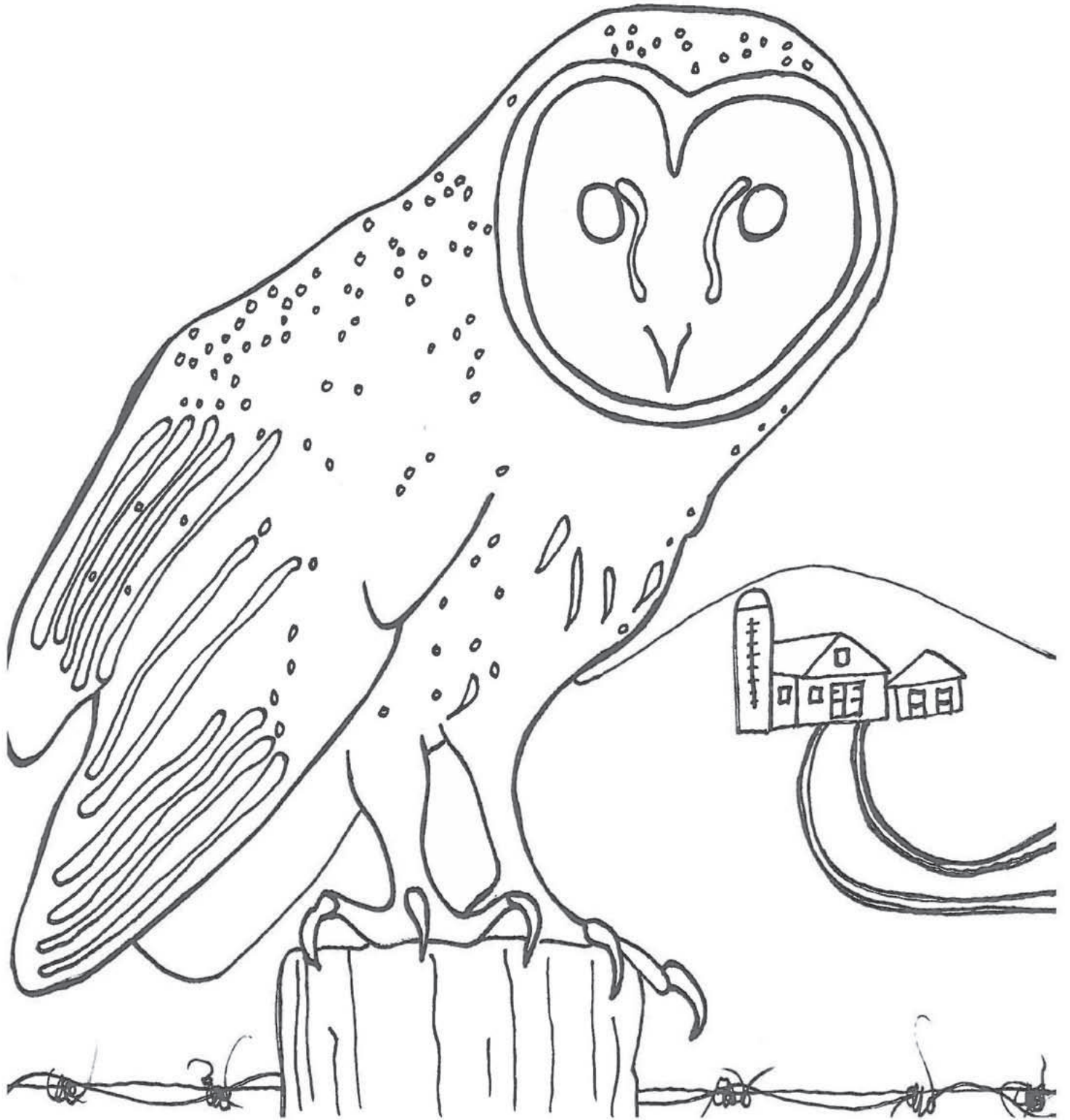
Food

I am a friend to farmers because I like to feed mainly on small mammals, such as voles and mice. I can eat nearly 3,000 mice in a year! I will occasionally eat bats, birds and reptiles. Like most owls, I am **nocturnal**, primarily hunting at night. I have exceptional hearing and night vision, which allows me to hunt in complete darkness.

Migration

I am **partial migrant** during the winter. I will migrate south in the most northern portions of my range, including Pennsylvania, but I can also stay year-round if there is sufficient food. I can migrate up to 1,000 kilometers to find areas where I can spend the winter.

Barn Owl



We are adult **Northern Harriers**.

Our scientific name is *Circus cyaneus*.

Field Marks

We are thin-bodied raptors with long wings and long tails. We have owl-like faces, distinctive white rump patches, and in flight we often hold our wings in a "V." Unlike many raptors, male and female Northern Harriers do not look alike. Males have light blue-gray backs and wings. Their wings have whitish undersides and black tips. Females have brown backs and wings and whitish underparts with brown streaks. Young harriers resemble adult females, but their underparts are cinnamon-colored with dark streaks.

Habitat

We live in open habitats such as marshes, fields, and pastures. We are found in North America, northern South America, Europe, Asia, and Africa. We nest on the ground. In winter, we sometimes roost in groups on the ground.

Food

We almost always hunt while flying low, and we use both hearing and sight to find our prey. We eat small mammals and birds, as well as insects, amphibians, and reptiles.

Migration

We are **partial migrants**. When we migrate, we flap and glide, and also soar. On migration, we fly lower than other raptors, and we often migrate in light rain and snow. About 200 Northern Harriers are seen at Hawk Mountain each autumn. Most of us are counted between September and November.

Northern Harrier



I am an adult **Short-eared Owl**.

My scientific name is *Asio flammeus*.

Field Marks

I am a medium-sized owl with light and dark cinnamon-brown streaks on my dark brown back. My belly is beige with light brown streaks. I have small ear tufts from which I get my name, although they are not always visible. I also have dark marks, like sunglasses around my bright yellow eyes. My wings are long and thin. I often fly low to the ground and hold my wings in a slight **dihedral** or "V" above my back.

Habitat

I am sometimes referred to as the "marsh owl" because I prefer open habitats, such as marshes, fields and farmlands. I build my nest on the ground among tall grasses and weeds in large open areas. My nest is well concealed and can be difficult to locate. I like to perch on the ground or on fence posts. Loss of open fields and marshes through development and changes in farming practices is a threat to my survival. In the winter, I can be found roosting in small groups with other Short-eared Owls in large grassy fields.

Food

I am a farmer's friend because I like to feed on small rodents, especially mice. I will occasionally feed on bats, snakes, small birds and insects. I can often be seen hunting low over fields and hovering in flight. Unlike most owls I am **crepuscular**, preferring to hunt at dawn and dusk.

Migration

I am an **irregular migrant** in the northernmost portions of my range. I can sometimes be seen migrating past Hawk Mountain in fall. I will move around in search of food, but I may stay in an area year-round if there is an abundance of prey.

Short-eared Owl

