

SPARROWHAWK

accipiternisus

FactFile

Length: 28cm –38cm

Wingspan: 55cm –70cm

Weight: 0.11kg –0.34kg

Habitat: Mixed woodland with some open spaces and paths but has adapted to hunting in urban parks & gardens. Sparrowhawks build nests in tall trees and lay between 4 to 6 eggs which the female incubates for about 35 days with fledging about 1 month later. The young are independent at 2 months but only 40% will survive their first winter.

The Sparrowhawk is the smaller of our two native species of true hawk and is far more numerous than its Goshawk cousin. Although it shared the severe decline resulting from persecution and the use of organochlorines, the population has made a remarkable recovery.

A rather small bird with short, broad wings, a long tail and slender legs tipped with needle-sharp talons, the Sparrowhawk is ideally suited to life in woodland

The Sparrowhawk preys on small birds and uses its great agility to pursue its prey through woodland at high speed. However, it is sometimes so intent on its prey that it collides with trees and other obstacles. Many Sparrowhawks are killed or injured in this way.

Sparrowhawks can carry prey as large as themselves (the female is 25% larger than the male) and will frequently take their kill to a favourite post to be plucked.

