

Raptors, or birds of prey, are top predators and therefore serve an important role in our ecosystem. Many raptors nest on, or near, cliffs.

Climbers and raptors are often attracted to the same types of topographic areas. Climbers are privileged to be able to share the same incredible habitats with birds of prey and need to be aware that these wild birds can be stressed when humans are near their nests.

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## FOR MORE INFORMATION

[www.hawkwatch.org](http://www.hawkwatch.org)

[www.accessfund.org](http://www.accessfund.org)

[www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov)

HawkWatch (801) 484-6808 x111

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Protect America's Climbing

# CLIMBERS & RAPTORS

## Awareness Reduces Conflict



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# Climbers Can Help Protect and Manage Raptors

Raptors are most vulnerable during breeding season. Raptor nesting season generally begins late in the winter, and continues into late-June or mid-July, though specific breeding dates vary by species and region.

SEASON & ACTIVITY	RAPTOR BEHAVIOR	DISTURBANCE RISK
<b>LATE WINTER &amp; EARLY SPRING</b> Raptors build nests, establish, territories and mate	Acrobatic courtship flights, Adults carrying sticks, Defensive behaviors	<b>Raptors pass by good nesting sites or do not breed in the area that year</b>
<b>SPRING</b> Adults incubate the eggs for 30+ days	Secretive behavior, Adults stay hunched on nests and take turns foraging	<b>Adults may leave nest, eggs are vulnerable to exposure and predators</b>
<b>LATE SPRING</b> Adults protect and feed nestlings for +/- 7 weeks (depending on the species)	Defensive behaviors, "White wash" (bird poo) seen below nests	<b>Adults lose energy defending nests, Nestlings receive less food, stressed nestlings may "force-fledge"</b>
<b>MID-SUMMER</b> Nestlings learn to fly but adults still supply food	Activity around the nest site diminishes, Young may be seen perching near the nest	<b>Decreasing sensitivity, Less impact once birds aren't dependent on site</b>

## WHAT CAN CLIMBERS DO?



**OBSERVE CLOSURES.** Information may be posted at trailheads, [mountainproject.com](http://mountainproject.com), or land manager websites. It's a climber's responsibility to know the rules. Respecting closures fosters good stewardship. Seasonal closures, ideally accompanied by a monitoring program, balance recreation and raptor protection.



**SCAN THE AREA PRIOR TO CLIMBING.** Watch and listen for signs a nest is nearby.



**GIVE RAPTORS SOME SPACE!** Select an alternative crag or route where you won't disturb a nesting raptor. If no closure is in place, choose a crag where the access trail, routes, and staging area are not visible from the nest. Active nests need a buffer to protect raptors during sensitive times. After the nesting season is over it's OK to climb a route near a nest site, but do not damage the nest.



**REPORT NESTING RAPTORS.** Let your local land manager know if you encounter an active raptor nest (Forest Service, BLM, etc). Land managers will respond to reports and manage raptor populations. If closures are initiated, climbers may be able to volunteer to participate in nest monitoring so closures can be minimized (area and time) and so more can be learned about the effects of human activity.