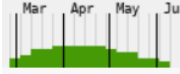
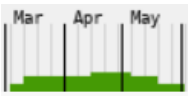
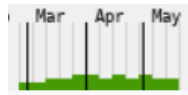


Ontario's Three Common Falcons, Identification in Flight Comparison Table

- Falcons are designed to catch prey on the wing in open spaces. With long tapered wings they possess superior speed and can sustain the pursuit of their prey for longer distances than an accipiter. Some falcons catch prey off the ground, the American Kestrel being an excellent mouser.
- Falcon identification is often based on overall shape and particular flight style, with quick glimpses of dark markings along the side of the face that vary based on the species. The underside also varies depending on the species.
- Like all raptors, female falcons are larger than males (reverse sexual size dimorphism). Streaking on a bird is vertical and barring is horizontal.
- Head on, all falcons have a similar profile with wings flat or nearly flat, with no upswept wing tips.
- All comparisons are relative to other species in chart unless otherwise stated.
- Bird size, proportions and field marks vary and flight is dynamic therefore, descriptions are based on most typical characteristics and attitudes displayed. This chart is not definitive.
- Wingspan refers to the distance from wing-tip to wing-tip with wings fully outstretched. Length refers to distance from beak tip to tail tip.
- NPH Migration Data graphs reflect timing data accumulated from spring migration at Beamer Conservation Area from 1975 to 2019.

Falcon	Size/Proportions	Field Marks	Flight Behaviour and Flight Shapes	Migration
American Kestrel AK	-Smallest falcon in Canada -Long, narrow wings that taper to a point -Relatively smaller head for a falcon -Body is slight and slim -Tail looks slim and long compared to other falcons - Wingspan range: 1'8" to 2' - Length range: 9" to 1' - Weight: 3 to 6 ounces	-Underside of body looks pale with sex specific field marks -Wings are light and dark, appear checkered -Two vertical marks on both sides of the face, looks like mustache and sideburn -Trailing edge of wing has line of dots ("string of pearls"), white on male, buffy on female. Male: -Overall looks pale with variable rufous blush on chest and variable dark spots/streaking on body -Blue-grey wings on top and light brown below -Tail is bright rufous, with contrasting black sub-terminal band Female: -Overall looks creamy underneath with variable red to brown streaking on the body -Wings are rufous with black barring -Tail is rufous with narrow blackish bands Juvenile: Similar to adult sexes	Flight: -Light and buoyant -Wandering, both rising and falling, and tacking left and right -Has a flap, flap, glide pattern akin to an accipiter but generally more flaps, followed by a longer floating glide Wing Beats: -Fluttery, dainty flaps, appear from the wrist In a Soar: -Wings outstretched and trailing edge rounds forward approaching a point at the primary tips, tail often fanned In a Glide: -Wrists forward, primaries are angled back to a point -Tail is narrow with a blunt end Head on Flight Profile: -Wings are flat or slightly drooped	-Migrant and year round resident -During migration can be in loose groups of three to ten NPH Migration Timing  NPH average annual spring migration total from 2015 to 2019 is 45/year
Merlin ML	-Similar to slightly bigger than AK -Wings are longer and broader and tail is shorter than an AK -Merlin is chestier and head is bigger than AK - Wingspan range: 1'9" to 2'3" - Length range: 9" to 1' - Weight: 6 to 9 ounces	-Underside body varies from dark to almost pale with heavy to light streaking, against a white throat and white (male) or buffy (female) undertail -Wings are light and dark, appear checkered -Tail is dark with thin pale bands -Has one dark indistinct falcon mustache, ranging from a blurry thin line to a wider smudgy patch Male: -Metallic blue above Female: Slate brown above Juvenile: -Similar to female except: -Underside of body is darker brown with typically heavier streaking	Flight: -Direct, fast, and less affected by winds than American Kestrel -Most active flapper -Most often flying low at a very fast pace Wing Beats: -Rapid, constant, and piston-like strokes -Faster beats than other falcons In a Soar: -Wings are outstretched with pointed primaries -Tail is often fanned In a Glide: -Wrists forward, primaries are angled back to a sharp point, looks very angular -Often travels fast and will often resort to powered flight Head on Flight Profile: -Wings are flat or slightly angled down	-Migrant and year round resident -Usually solitary in migration NPH Migration Timing  NPH average annual spring migration total from 2015-to 2019 is 15/year
Peregrine Falcon PG	-Larger than other two falcons with longer wings and thicker appearance -Primaries taper into a point -Long tail that is broader than a ML - Wingspan Range: 3'3" to 3'7" - Length Range: 1'2" to 1'7" - Weight Range: 1 lb 3 oz – 3 lb 8 oz	-Blue-grey above and heavily barred below on body with gleaming white chest and throat -Wings are light and dark, appear checkered -Bold, distinct "mustache" mark along the side of face -Tail has thinner bars than a ML -Dark eye with yellow eye ring and cere -Large, bright yellow legs Juvenile same as above except: -Brown above -Lacks bright yellow on face -Typically lacks complete helmet, but has dark mustache -Underside body is heavily streaked with variable buff-coloured chest and throat	Flight: -Direct, and capable of exceptional speed -Deliberate flight and least affected by wind Wing Beats: -Generally slower wingbeat than Merlin -Fluid, rhythmic, and whip-like (undulating) -Appears less deep than a Merlin In a Soar: -Wings outstretched with a rounded trailing edge and an arrow like point to the primaries (wing looks like isosceles triangle) In a Glide: -Wrists forward, primaries swept back to a point, wings look angular Head on Flight Profile: Wings are flat, or slightly raised, looks bulky	-Migrant and year round resident -Solitary in migration NPH Migration Timing  NPH average annual spring migration total from 2015 to 2019 is 7/year