

HARPY EAGLE

DOMAIN
Eukaryota

KINGDOM
Animalia

PHYLUM
Chordata

CLASS
Aves

ORDER
Accipitriformes

FAMILY
Accipitridae

GENUS
Harpia

SPECIES
H. harpyja

WHERE DO THEY HANG OUT?

Harpy eagles sparsely inhabit the tall trees of tropical rainforests in Central and South America, from southern Mexico to northern Argentina.



A LOOK THAT'S HARD TO FORGET!



Harpy eagles have a distinctive grey double crest of feathers on its head, as well as large talons and a wingspan of up to 7.5 feet! Compared to their bodies, that's actually relatively short! What they lack in length these wings make up in breadth, and this unique shape helps them navigate through dense forests. A dark gray body and white underside completes their monochrome look, interrupted only by bright yellow talons.



WHAT'S ON THE MENU?



Harpy eagles are apex predators, proudly sitting on the top of the rainforest food chain. These birds crave meat! With their powerful talons, they specialize in snatching prey such as sloths, monkeys, and opossums right off the trees! They are ambush hunters, relying on their speed and stealth to get close to their prey before launching a rapid attack for their next meal.



Extinct

EX

Threatened

EW

CR

EN

VU

NT

LC

Least Concern

FEATHERY HEADDRESSES

Despite not having jewelry like humans do, harpy eagles have no lack of facial adornment. A crest of long feathers, usually lying flat, make their appearance known by standing straight up when threatened. In addition, smaller feathers form a facial disk to enhance hearing, giving these animals their signature circle-shaped face.

HARPY EAGLE FAMILIES

Harpy eagles mate for life and work together to raise their young. They lay one or two eggs every two to three years, with only one eaglet usually surviving. Both parents contribute to hunting and guarding the nest, which is typically built high up in a tall tree. Once hatched, young eagles stay with their parents for up to two years, learning essential hunting and survival skills.



THREATS TO THEIR SURVIVAL



Hunting



Lack of Prey



Habitat loss



Sadly, harpy eagles are listed as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List, with only around 20,000 to 50,000 of them left in the wild. Their range is only a fraction of their historically territory due to human activities like logging, cattle ranching, and deforestation. This habitat loss not only affects them, but also the animals they rely on for prey. Finally, some farmers see harpy eagles as a threat, so they unfairly hunt these birds.



5 FUN FACTS ABOUT HARPY EAGLES

Harpy eagles have talons as long as a grizzly bear's claws and as big as a large human hand, giving them one of the strongest grips among all eagles.

Despite their size, harpy eagles are not clumsy giants. Their uniquely-shaped wings are nearly silent in flight, helping them ambush their prey undetected.

The harpy eagle is the national bird of Panama, symbolizing power and resilience. It is depicted in Panama's coat of arms.

When alarmed usually in response to rain or direct sunlight, baby harpy eagles make a "chi-chi-chi-chi" sound to express their disapproval.

harpy eagles have always been compared to phoenixes and other legendary creatures. To Aztecs, Harpy Eagles were sacred to the deity Quetzalcoatl.