



Perch Poles

A perch pole is a tall, human-made structure that provides a perching and vantage point for predatory birds (raptors) where natural perches do not exist. Many species of raptors will hunt from these perches or simply use them to rest.

Provides: Space (structure for resting and foraging)

Supports: Birds of prey (raptors) – buteos (red-tailed and red-shouldered hawks), accipiters (Cooper's hawk and sharp-shinned hawk), falcons (American kestrel) and owls



Flickr-Ingrid Taylor; background, Flickr-Peter Kaminski

Implementation Steps:

1 Building the Perch – Raptor perch poles tend to be 12-20 ft. in height and vary in design. Regardless of design, most raptor perches consist of:

- A vertical 4 in. X 4 in. piece of treated lumber or ¾ in. diameter galvanized pipe measuring at least 16 ft. long (3-4 ft. is buried in the ground).
- A crossbar made from similar material attached with nuts and bolts at the top of the vertical piece to resemble an uppercase “T”. The cross piece should be centered on the vertical piece and measure roughly 12 ft. in length.

2 Installing your Perch – Orient your perch pole so the horizontally-oriented perch piece is pointing in an east-west direction. This orientation offers the most available light for perched raptors, benefiting their hunting efforts. One perch pole per 5 acres is recommended, so if you are installing multiple perching poles within a neighborhood, keep this spacing in mind.



Raptors and owls that commonly use perch poles:



Red-tailed hawk



Red-shouldered hawk



American Kestrel



Barn owl



Great horned owl



Short-eared owl

Photo credits: red-tailed hawk – Terry Spivey, USDA Forest Service, bugwood.org; red-shouldered hawk – WDNR; American Kestrel – Flickr, Kev Chapman; barn owl – Joy Viola, Northeastern University, bugwood.org; great horned owl – WDNR; short-eared owl – Vern Wilkins, Indiana University, bugwood.org

Other Resources:

- Natural Resources Conservation Service – *Artificial Perches for Raptors* pdf
efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/references/public/WY/RaptorPerches.pdf
- Information on 3 different designs for raptor perches
tommy51.tripod.com/perch.html



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