

BLACK VULTURE

Coragyps atratus

The more southern of our two common vulture species, the Black Vulture flaps its wings rather frequently while it soars. It is more social than the Turkey Vulture, often traveling in large flocks.

Measurements

Both Sexes

Length	23.6–26.8 in 60–68 cm
Wingspan	53.9–59.1 in 137–150 cm
Weight	56.4–77.6 oz 1600–2200 g

COOL FACTS

- One-on-one, a Black Vulture can be dominated by the slightly larger Turkey Vulture. But, Black Vultures rarely travel alone. Flocks of Black Vultures can quickly take over a carcass and drive the more solitary Turkey Vultures away.

TURKEY VULTURE

Cathartes aura

Although it has an ugly, bare-skinned face, the Turkey Vulture is beautiful on the wing. Seldom does this graceful and talented bird flap its wings as it soars over large areas searching for carrion.

Measurements

Both Sexes

Length	25.2–31.9 in 64–81 cm
Wingspan	66.9–70.1 in 170–178 cm
Weight	70.5 oz 2000 g

COOL FACTS

- The Turkey Vulture uses its sense of smell to locate carrion. The part of its brain responsible for processing smells is particularly large, compared to other birds. Its heightened ability to detect odors allows it to find dead animals below a forest canopy.
- The Turkey Vulture maintains stability and lift at low altitudes by holding its wings up in a slight dihedral (V-shape) and teetering from side to side while flying. It flies low to the ground to pick up the scent of dead animals.
- Like its stork relatives, the Turkey Vulture often defecates on its own legs, using the evaporation of the water in the feces to cool itself down.

- The Turkey Vulture usually forages alone, unlike its smaller, more social relative, the Black Vulture. Although a Turkey Vulture can dominate a single Black Vulture at a carcass, usually with a large number of Black Vultures appear that they can overwhelm a solitary Turkey Vulture and take most of the food.