Turkey Vulture
**Turkey Vulture**
*Cathartes aura*

**Identification Clues**
- 27 inches long; 70 inch wingspan
- Dark, almost black body
- Head featherless, gray (young) or red (adult)
- Tail long and pale underneath

**Where to Look**
Turkey vultures are seen on the roads and roadsides feeding on carrion (dead animals) or in flight searching for a meal. When soaring, the vulture’s wings form a ‘V’ which helps distinguish them from other raptors.

**Where to Nest**
Turkey vultures prefer secluded, dark nesting sites such as caves, abandoned buildings and thick vegetation. They only lay 1-2 eggs directly on the ground.

**What It Eats**
Turkey vultures are both scavengers (feed on dead animals) and hunters (of small live prey).

**Did You Know**
The turkey vulture has a great sense of smell. The part of the brain responsible for smell is unusually large in vultures. This heightened sense of smell helps the vulture find its next meal.

**Call or Song**
The turkey vulture is usually silent but will occasionally make hissing noises as it feeds on a dead carcass.

**Migration?**
The turkey vulture spends the winter in the South but travels to the northern US and Canada for the summer.