When people hear the word raptor, sharp talons usually come to mind! In fact, the word “raptor” originated from the Latin word rapere which means “to seize”. A raptor’s talons are made up of a hard covering made up of layers of keratin, a structural protein similar to human nails.

The size and shape of talons tell us a lot about a raptor’s hunting style and what they eat.

Can you match the feet that belong to the birds below? **Hint: think about the type of animals each bird eats and the size and shape of talons they would need to help them capture the animals.**
Osprey have long, strongly curved talons that act like fish hooks to help them catch and hold on to slippery fish.

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Hawks have large thick talons, especially on their first and second toes to secure struggling prey like rats and smaller birds.
Owls have relatively long talons compared to the shorter length of their toes to give them maximum leverage for securing small prey like lizards and frogs.