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Species	No	Date	Location (and Grid Ref if possible)	Notes
Buzzard				
Hen Harrier				
Kestrel				
Sparrowhawk				
Peregrine				
Merlin				
Short-eared Owl				
Barn Owl				
Other				

Options For Recording

- Submit your records online www.habitas.org.uk/records/ bhp and add pictures as it helps with verifying the record. Records go directly to Northern Ireland's Centre for Environmental Data and Recording (CEDaR) and are used for conservation purposes.
- Fill in the form below and put the tear- off section into the box at leaflet dispenser as you leave, or post it back to us.
- Go to www.belfasthills.org and get involved by clicking 'Record Biodiversity'.
- Additional help with identification can be found on iSpot, the RSPB and BTO websites .

FIELD NOTES

Recording

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National	Ulster Wildlife	WOOD	LAND	COLIN GLEN	P. F.	RSPB
National Trust	Wildlife	TRU	ST	FOREST PARK	COUF	IXOI D
	CDCI					Northern Irelanc
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Good places to see these key birds of prey in the Belfast Hills

All our sites have birds of prey

Check our website for more detailed maps and information on how to get to the sites by car or public transport



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Help protect our key birds of prey

Become a wildlife detective and find these important species

Why: Raptors are an intrinsic part of the Hills and they are a vital aspect of Northern Ireland's biodiversity. Having suffered in the past from various forms of persecution many raptors declined to critical levels. Nowadays, with the protection given to many of these birds, numbers are increasing. Several threats remain including habitat loss or change, declining prey populations, climate change and illegal persecution. Your help is needed to find out which raptors are using the Hills. This will allow us to monitor their numbers and help ensure their future protection.

How: When you are visiting the Belfast Hills go prepared to record the birds of prey and send your sightings in to us or CEDaR using one of the methods as shown on the back cover.

Training and Volunteering: Check the websites of Belfast Hills Partnership, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, British Trust for Ornithology ,Bird Watch Ireland and Northern Ireland Raptor Study Group for further information, training events or bird surveys. The RSPB have a good bird guide and identifier section too.

Belfast Hills Partnership 9 Social Economy Village Hannahstown Hill, Belfast BT17 OXS Tel 028 90603466 Email info@belfasthills.org www.belfasthills.org

Top Tips for Watching Wildlife

- Check the weather forecast and dress accordingly
- Keep any dogs on leads
- Be prepared to be very patient and sit quietly
- Use the cover of trees and bushes to approach the birds and avoid stepping out into open spaces
- Learn to identify birds by their calls
- Don't disturb any wildlife or damage their habitats
- Leave no trace behind you
- Take care not to trespass on private land

USEFUL GEAR TO BRING

Binoculars, Camera, Notebook and pencil Identification guide book



KEY BIRDS OF PREY



Become a wildlife detective and help us find and record these declining species

KEY SPECIES TO LOOK OUT FOR

Common name, Irish and Ulster Scots shown

BUZZARD: Clamhán - Messy Eater





Seen All year round, but easiest to spot February - March and June - August.

Habitat Feed over farmland and nest in woodland

ID Plumage very variable but is generally brown with barred wings and banded tail. Often seen riding the thermals or perched on a post. Has a mewing "pee-ay" call.

Facts Buzzards were driven to extinction across Ireland in the 20th C but have naturally recolonised and their numbers continue to increase.

HEN HARRIER *:

Cromán na gCearc - Jinker that feeds on hens "Glebe"





Seen All year round but mostly in winter. Very rare.

Habitat Moorland with heather or grass cover.

ID Male as pale grey-blue plumage, black wing tips and white rump and under belly. Female is brown with darker barring on wings and tail. Glide low over the ground with slow wing beats. Mostly silent.

SPARROWHAWK: Spéor-chearc - Sky Hen "Kack"





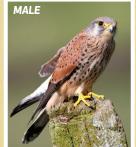
Seen All year round and most common of our raptors

Habitat Nest in woodland preferably conifers and hunt over farmland. Often seen chasing small birds.

ID Has relatively short rounded wings and long barred tail. Male has grey - blue upper plumage and barred reddish - brown underparts. Female has blue - brown upper plumage and pale underparts with dark barring. Notoriously secretive and hard to observe.

Facts Persecuted in the past but, due to their protected status, numbers are recovering. Lack of suitable habitat and food are probably the main factors limiting its recovery.

KESTREL: Pocaire gaoithe - Wind frolicker





Seen All year round - most commonly observed hovering over farmland or roads.

Habitat Wide variety of habitats, from moor and heath to farmland and urban areas.

ID Male has spotted orange-brown back, blue grey head and blue - grey tail with black band at tip. Female has barred brown plumage.

Facts Recent declines in their population may have resulted from habitat loss.

PEREGRINE FALCON:

Fabhcún Gorm - Blue Falcon "Gamehawk"





Seen All year round.

Habitat Heather moor. Nest on cliff edges or old quarry faces.

ID Ireland's largest falcon. Long, broad, pointed wings and a relatively short tail. Blue-grey plumage above with a blackish top of the head and prominent black 'moustache' that contrasts with white face. Breast finely spotted. Swift and agile in flight, chasing prey by soaring on a bowed wing.

Facts Now protected, Peregrines are recovering well after suffering illegal egg collection and killing.

MERLIN: Meirliún





MERLIN: Meirliún

Seen All year round particularly in open upland. Extremely rare.

Habitat Breed from May to August on upland moors and sometimes head to coasts in winter.

ID UK's smallest bird of prey, this compact, dashing falcon has a relatively long, square-cut tail and rather broad-based pointed wings, shorter than those of other falcons. Males have grey-blue upperparts and streaked underparts. Females have brown upperparts and pale underparts with brown spots.

SHORT-EARED OWL*

Ulchabhán Réisc - Marsh Owl "Woodcock Owl"





Seen All year round but uncommon. Can often be seen hunting during the day.

Habitat Moorland for breeding - farm and woodland during the rest of the year. Short-eared Owls nest on the ground.

ID Medium sized owls with mottled brown bodies, pale under-wings and yellow eyes. Similar to Long-eared Owl but the latter look longer and thinner, with orange eyes and ear tufts it raises when alarmed.

Fact They are of European conservation concern.

BARN OWL*

Scréachóg Reilige - Graveyard Screecher "Skrike Owl"





Seen All year round at dusk.

Habitat Feeds over meadows and farmland, roosts in tree hollows or old buildings.

ID Has a heart-shaped face, buff back and wings with pure, ghostly white underparts. Has leisurely flight on rounded wings and a blood curdling shriek.

Facts Currently it is thought that less than 50 pairs are breeding in Northern Ireland.

> Those marked with * are on the Northern Ireland Priority Species List because they are rare or in decline.



