

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



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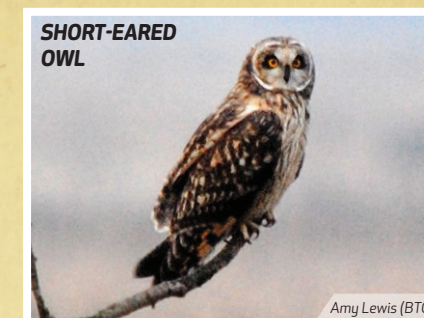
Seen All year round particularly in open upland. Extremely rare.

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"



SHORT-EARED OWL

Amy Lewis (BTO)

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.

Facts They are of European conservation concern.



LONG-EARED OWL

BARN OWL*

Scréachóg Reilige - Graveyard Screecher "Skrike Owl"



Neil Calbrade (BTO)

John Bridges (rspb-images.com)

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.*

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