

# Discover the Fauna of Our Campus

## European Bee-eater -*Merops apiaster*

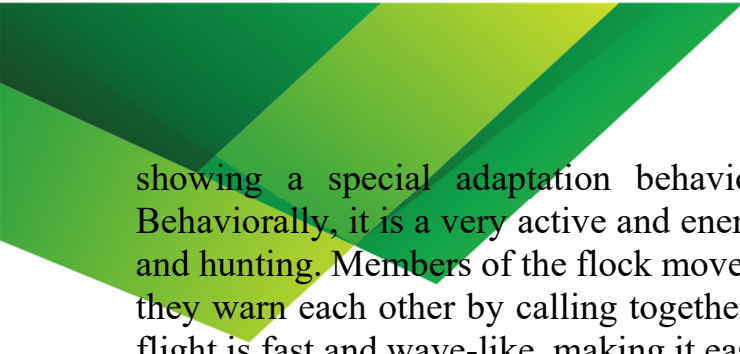
**Kingdom:** Animals  
**Phylum:** Chordates  
**Class:** Birds  
**Order:** Coraciiformes  
**Family:** Bee-eaters  
**Genus:** Bee-eater  
**Species:** European Bee-eater

The European Bee-eater is one of the most colorful and aesthetically remarkable bird species in nature. Its body displays a harmony of blue, turquoise, green, yellow, and brown colors, which appear even brighter in sunlight. Because of this feature, it is often described as a “natural work of art.” Its body is slim and elongated, while its wings are long and pointed, allowing it to fly quickly and very skillfully in the air. In Azerbaijan, it is mainly observed during spring and summer. Since it is a migratory bird, it moves to warmer regions during the cold seasons. It



prefers open landscapes, riverbanks, sandy areas, and places with soft soil as its habitat. Such environments are suitable for digging nesting tunnels. European Bee-eaters are highly social birds and usually live in colonies. They dig many nests in the same area and move together as a group. Their nests are built in steep soil banks in the form of long tunnels. These nests are important for protecting the eggs and ensuring the safe development of the

chicks. Living in colonies provides advantages both for defense and for hunting. Regarding feeding habits, *Merops apiaster* mainly feeds on flying insects. Its primary diet includes bees, wasps, flies, butterflies, and other small flying insects. During hunting, it performs very agile aerial maneuvers and catches insects directly in flight. Before eating bees, it rubs them against a surface to remove the stinger,



showing a special adaptation behavior that demonstrates its survival skills. Behaviorally, it is a very active and energetic bird. It spends most of the day flying and hunting. Members of the flock move in coordination, and when danger appears, they warn each other by calling together. Its voice is thin, short, and rhythmic. Its flight is fast and wave-like, making it easy to recognize in the sky.

From an ecological perspective, the European Bee-eater is considered a very beneficial bird because it reduces the number of harmful insects and helps maintain biological balance in nature. At the same time, its colorful appearance makes it highly interesting for nature photography and ornithology. Overall, *Merops apiaster* is a very valuable bird species both ecologically and aesthetically.

