

Discover the Fauna of Our Campus

Harrier - Circus

Kingdom: Animals

Phylum: Chordates

Class: Birds

Order: Accipitriformes

Family: Hawks

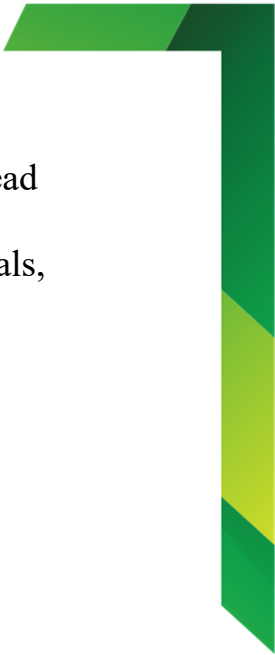

Genus: Harrier

Species: Harrier

Harriers are slender and graceful birds of prey with several unique characteristics that distinguish them from other raptors. Similar to owls, harriers possess a facial disc made of feathers around their eyes. This adaptation helps them detect the sounds of rodents moving through grass and reeds more accurately. They have slim bodies, long tails, and relatively broad, elongated wings. Male and female birds differ greatly in coloration. Males are usually grey or ash-colored, while females are mostly brown or cinnamon-colored. One of the most characteristic features of harriers is their flight style. They glide low over the ground while holding their wings in a shallow “V” shape. This slow and silent flight helps them search for prey efficiently.



Harriers avoid dense forests and prefer open landscapes such as wetlands, grasslands, marshes, agricultural fields, and meadows. Their diet mainly consists of small rodents, birds, lizards, and large insects. They usually catch prey through sudden low attacks near the ground. Unlike many other hawks, most harriers build their nests directly on the ground, hidden among dense grass or reeds. This nesting behavior provides protection for eggs and chicks. Several harrier species can be found in the fauna of Azerbaijan: “Hen Harrier” a wintering and migratory species. “Pallid Harrier” a rare species included in the Red Book of Azerbaijan. “Montagu's Harrier” a breeding and



migratory species. “Western Marsh Harrier” the largest and most widespread species, commonly found in reed-bed habitats. Harriers play an important ecological role by controlling populations of rodents and other small animals, helping maintain the natural balance of ecosystems.

