

112 Western Marsh Harrier

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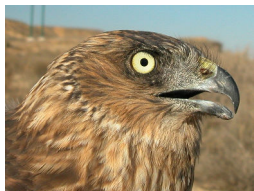


Marsh Harrier. Adult. Male (09-II).

WESTERN MARSH HARRIER (*Circus aeruginosus*)

IDENTIFICATION

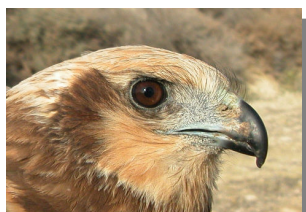
44-56 cm. Adult **male** with pale head; chestnut upperparts; grey wings with black tips; pale blue-grey tail; brown reddish underparts. **Female** dark brown with pale crown, throat and forewings. **Juvenile** similar to a **female**.



Marsh Harrier. Adult. Male: pattern of head and wing.



Marsh Harrier. Adult. Female: pattern of head and wing.

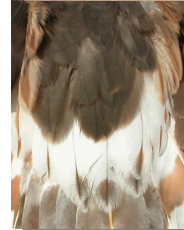


SIMILAR SPECIES

Males of **Montagu's Harrier** and **Hen Harrier** are pale lack of brown colour on wings and body; **females** and **juveniles** of **Montagu's Harrier** and **Hen Harrier** have white rumps and lack of pale patch on head and forearms.



Montagu's Harrier. Adult. Male



Montagu's Harrier. Adult. Female



Hen Harrier. Adult. Male.



Hen Harrier. Adult. Female.



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SEXING

All ages, in extreme birds, can be sexed by wing length: **male** with wing shorter than 390 mm; **female** with wing longer than 410 mm.

AGEING

3 age groups in **females** and 4 in **males** can be recognized:

Juvenile with one age of very fresh feathers, without moult limits; dark brown iris; tip of greater and primary coverts forming a clear thin line; from below, flight feathers pale grey-brown being secondaries with the same colour than primaries; dark brown tail. **Juveniles** cannot be sexed using plumage pattern.

2nd year autumn/3rd year spring male still with dark aspect like a **female** without the clear contrast of **adult males**; streaked ochre coloured head with bold dark ear-coverts; wings and tail with dull grey hue (**CAUTION:** some birds have female-like pattern on outer tail feathers); outer underwing coverts pale brown; tail feathers with broad dark subterminal band and rufous on inner web; rufous uppertail coverts.

2nd year autumn/3rd year spring female quite similar to **adult female** when moult has been completed; iris dark brown, sometimes light brown; dark tail slightly speckled with rufous.

Subadult male with feathers grey with dark hue; grey flight feathers, tail and wing coverts with dark patches; uppertail feathers rufous-brown; outer underwing coverts rusty-ochre to yellowish variably streaked. **CAUTION:** depending on birds, 1 to 3 years are necessary to acquire the full plumage of **adult male**.

Adult male with feathers silver-grey without dark hue; grey flight feathers, tail and wing coverts without dark patches; yellow iris; uppertail feathers silver-grey; outer underwing coverts white and often unstreaked.

Adult female with brown plumage; with gradual change of iris colour, during several years, from brown to amber and then yellow in oldest birds; in **summer** paler and with more worn plumage than **juveniles**; primary coverts dark brown with an indistinct pale edge; tail feathers pale rufous-brown, sometimes with greyish hue, with rufous speckled on every feather except the central pair; from below, flight feathers pale grey-brown being secondaries darker than primaries. **CAUTION:** sometimes with greyish tinge on wings and tail similar to that of **postjuvenile males** but easily separable by size.

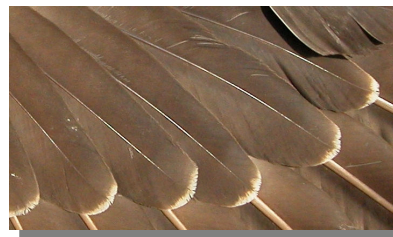
CAUTION: plumage pattern is highly variable in this species, so it is not possible ageing using size and colour of pale patches of head and forearms.



Marsh Harrier. Ageing. Pattern of the outermost tail feather: left adult female; right juvenile.



Marsh Harrier. Ageing. Pattern of the primary coverts: top adult female; bottom juvenile



MOULT

Complete **postbreeding** moult, starting in April and usually finished in October; some median secondaries sometimes retained. **Postjuvenile** moult starts during the **first winter** with body feathers and occasionally some tail feathers; the first complete moult takes place in autumn of the **2nd year** at the same time as **adults**.

PHENOLOGY

I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII

STATUS IN ARAGON

Resident with contribution of European birds in winter. Breeds in irrigated areas near the Ebro river and in Gallocanta lake,

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Marsh Harrier. Adult. Female (26-XII)



Marsh Harrier. 2nd year autumn. Male (11-X)



Marsh Harrier. Adult. Female (18-II)



Marsh Harrier. 2nd year autumn. Female (17-XI)



Marsh Harrier. Subadult. Male (24-XII).



Marsh Harrier. 2nd year spring. Female (22-VII)

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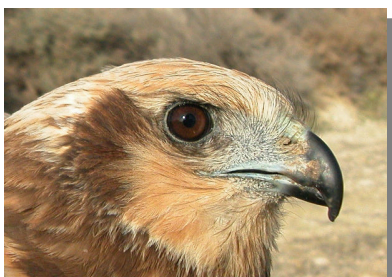
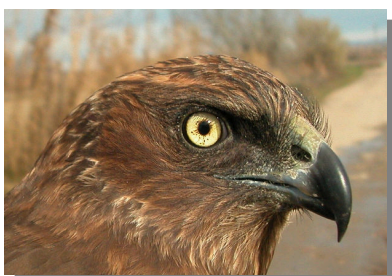
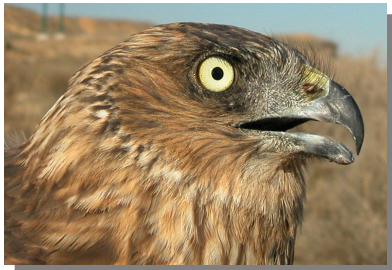
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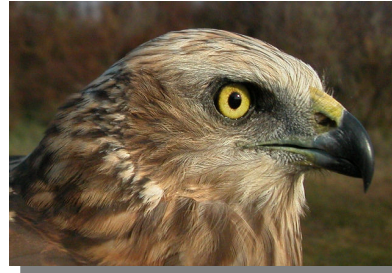
Marsh Harrier. Juvenile. Male (11-X)



Marsh Harrier. Juvenile. Female (24-XII)



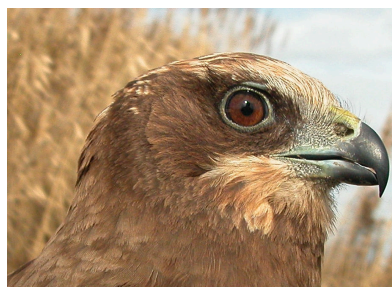
Marsh Harrier. Adult. Head pattern and iris colour: top male (09-II); middle female (18-II); bottom female (26-XII)



Marsh Harrier. Subadult. Male. Head pattern and iris colour (24-XII).



Marsh Harrier. 2nd year. Head pattern and iris colour: top male in autumn (09-II); middle female in autumn (26-XII); bottom female in spring (22-VII)

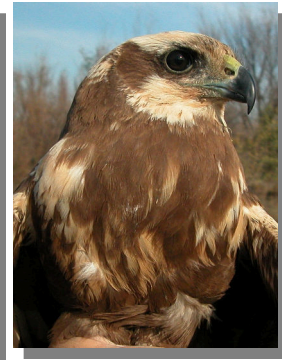
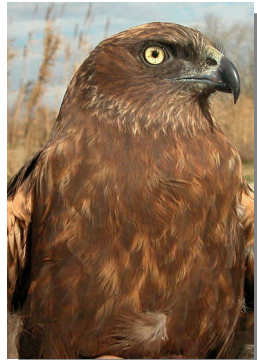


Marsh Harrier. Juvenile. Head pattern and iris colour: top male (11-X); bottom female (26-XI).



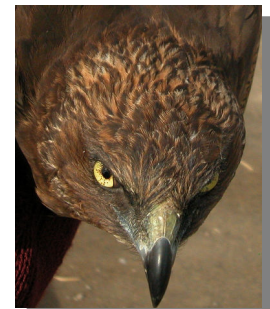
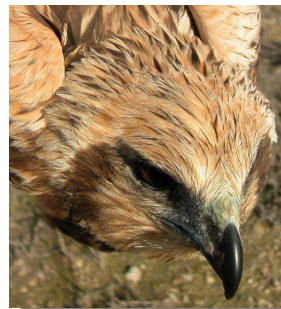
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Marsh Harrier. Adult. Breast pattern: top left male (09-II); top right female (18-II); left female (26-XII)

Marsh Harrier. Juvenile. Breast pattern: left male (11-X); right female (26-XI).



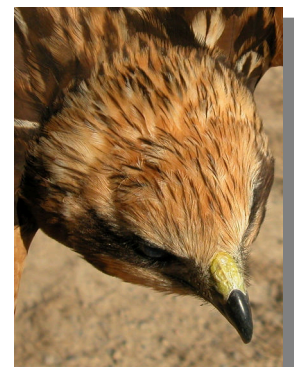
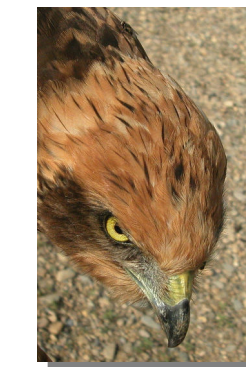
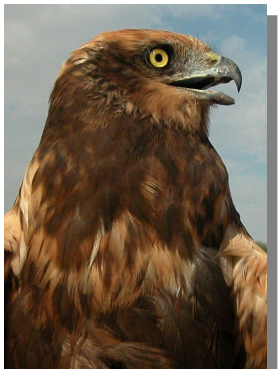
Marsh Harrier. Adult. Female. Crown pattern: left (26-XII); right (18-II).



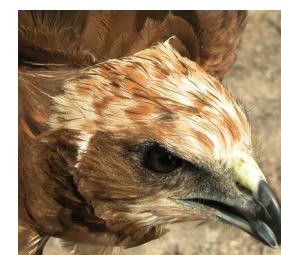
Marsh Harrier. Subadult. Male. Breast pattern (09-II).



Marsh Harrier. Subadult. Male. Crown pattern (09-II).



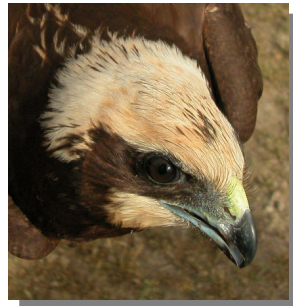
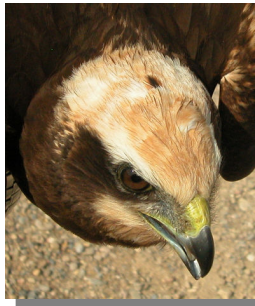
Marsh Harrier. 2nd year. Breast pattern: top left male in autumn (26-XII); top right female in autumn (18-II); left female in spring (22-VII).



Marsh Harrier. 2nd year. Crown pattern: top left male in autumn (09-II); top right female in autumn (17-XI); left female in spring (22-VII)

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Marsh Harrier. Juvenile. Crown pattern: left male (11-X); right female (26-XI).



Marsh Harrier. Juvenile. Female: pattern of tail and the outermost tail feather (24-XII).



Marsh Harrier. Adult. Male: pattern of tail and the outermost tail feather (09-II).



Marsh Harrier. Adult. Pattern of uppertail coverts: top male (09-II); bottom female (26-XII)



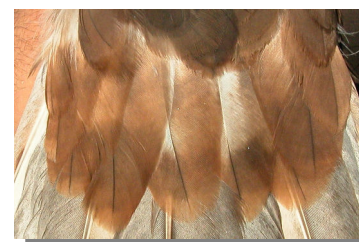
Marsh Harrier. Adult. Female: pattern of tail and the outermost tail feather (26-XII).



Marsh Harrier. Subadult. Male. Pattern of uppertail coverts (24-XII).



Marsh Harrier. Subadult. Male: pattern of tail and the outermost tail feather (24-XII)



Marsh Harrier. 2nd year autumn. Pattern of uppertail coverts: top male (09-II); bottom female (17-XI).

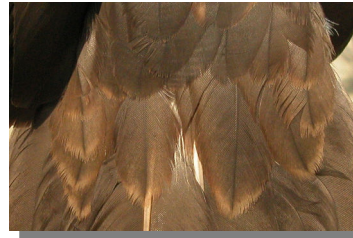


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Marsh Harrier. 2nd year autumn. Male: pattern of tail and the outermost tail feather (11-X).



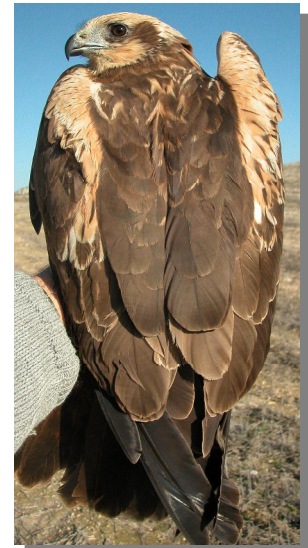
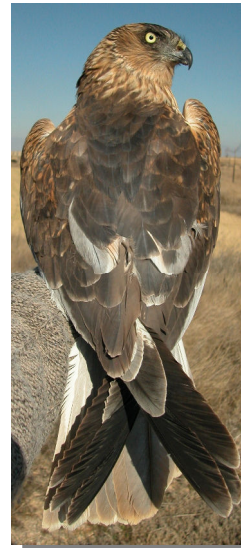
Marsh Harrier. Juvenile. Pattern of uppertail coverts: top male (11-X); bottom female (26-XI).



Marsh Harrier. 2nd year autumn. Female: pattern of tail and the outermost tail feather (20-XII).



Marsh Harrier. 2nd year spring. Female: pattern of tail and the outermost tail feather (22-VII).



Marsh Harrier. Adult. Upperparts pattern: left male (09-II); right female (26-XII).



Marsh Harrier. Juvenile. Male: pattern of tail and the outermost tail feather (19-X).



Marsh Harrier. Subadult. Male. Upperpart pattern (24-XII).

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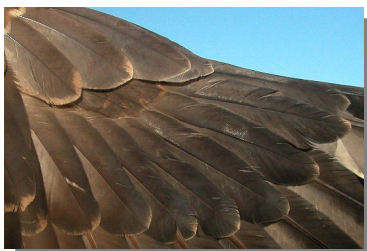
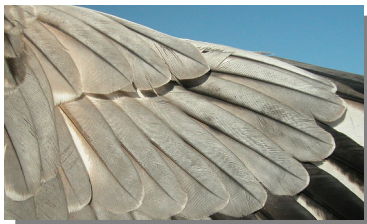
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Marsh Harrier. 2nd year autumn. Upperparts pattern: left male (09-II); right female (17-XI).



Marsh Harrier. Juvenile. Upperparts pattern: left male (11-X); right female (26-XI).



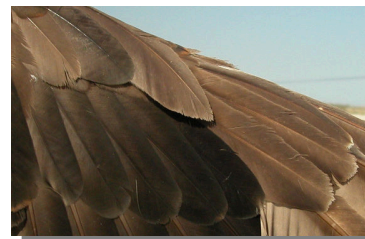
Marsh Harrier. Adult. Pattern of primary coverts: top male (09-II); bottom female (26-XI)



Marsh Harrier. Subadult. Male. Pattern of primary coverts (24-XII).



Marsh Harrier. 2nd year. Pattern of primary coverts: top male in autumn (09-II); middle female in autumn (26-XI); bottom female in spring (22-VII)



Marsh Harrier. Juvenile. Pattern of primary coverts: top male (11-X); bottom female (26-XI).



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Marsh Harrier. Adult. Male: pattern of primaries (09-II).

Marsh Harrier. Subadult. Male: pattern of primaries (24-XII).



Marsh Harrier. Adult. Female: pattern of primaries (26-XII).

Marsh Harrier. 2nd year autumn. Male: pattern of primaries (11-X).

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Marsh Harrier. 2nd year autumn. Female: pattern of primaries (17-XI).

Marsh Harrier. Juvenile. Male: pattern of primaries (19-X)



Marsh Harrier. 2nd year spring. Female: pattern of primaries (22-VII).

Marsh Harrier. Juvenile. Female: pattern of primaries (24-XII)

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Marsh Harrier. Adult. Male: pattern of wing coverts and secondaries (09-II).



Marsh Harrier. Subadult. Male: pattern of wing coverts and secondaries (24-XII).



Marsh Harrier. Adult. Female: pattern of wing coverts and secondaries (26-XII).



Marsh Harrier. 2nd year autumn. Male: pattern of wing coverts and secondaries (11-X).

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Marsh Harrier. 2nd year autumn. Female: pattern of wing coverts and secondaries (17-XI).



Marsh Harrier. 2nd year spring. Female: pattern of wing coverts and secondaries (22-VII).



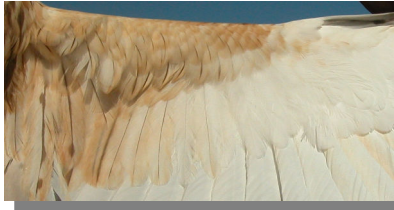
Marsh Harrier. Juvenile. Male: pattern of wing coverts and secondaries (19-X)



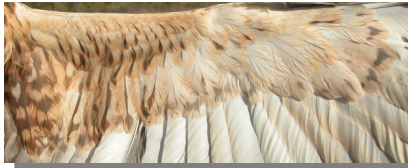
Marsh Harrier. Juvenile. Female: pattern of wing coverts and secondaries (24-XII)

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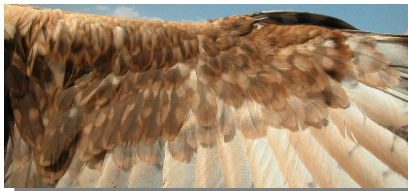
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Marsh Harrier. Adult. Pattern of underwing coverts: top male (09-II); bottom female (26-XII).



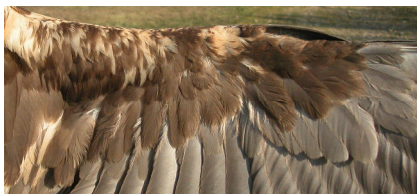
Marsh Harrier. Subadult. Male. Pattern of underwing coverts (24-XII).



Marsh Harrier. 2nd year. Pattern of underwing coverts: top male (09-II); bottom female (26-XII).



Marsh Harrier. Juvenile. Pattern of underwing coverts: top male (11-X); bottom female (26-XI).



Marsh Harrier. Adult. Male: pattern of wing (09-II).



Marsh Harrier. Adult. Female: pattern of wing (26-XII).



Marsh Harrier. Subadult. Male: pattern of wing (24-XII).

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Marsh Harrier. 2nd year autumn. Male: pattern of wing (11-X).

Marsh Harrier. Juvenile. Male: pattern of wing (11-X).



Marsh Harrier. 2nd year autumn. Female: pattern of wing (17-XI).

Marsh Harrier. Juvenile. Female: pattern of wing (24-XII).



Marsh Harrier. 2nd year spring. Female: pattern of wing (22-VII).