

02610 Northern Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*)

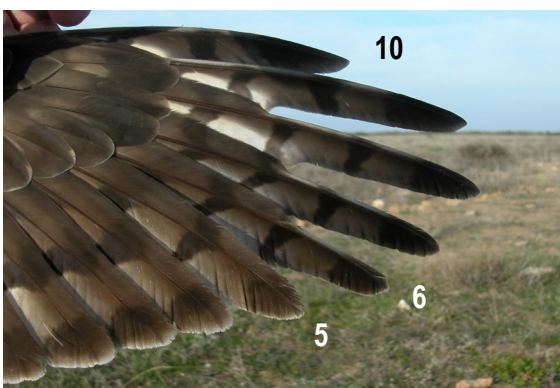


Hen Harrier. Adult. Male (08-III).

NORTHERN HARRIER
(*Circus cyaneus*)

IDENTIFICATION

43-51 cm. **Adult male** with grey head and upperparts; underparts grey on breast and white on vent; black wing-tips; grey tail; white rump. **Adult female** with dark brown upperparts; underparts light brown with dark streaked; white rump; dark barred tail and wings. **Juvenile** similar to **females**, but with underparts tinged rusty-yellow. Length of 10th primary between 5th and 6th; the beginning of emargination of 9th primary hidden by primary coverts.



Hen Harrier. Adult. Female. Wing formula: emargination of 9th primary hidden by primary coverts; length of 10th primary between 5th and 6th.



Hen Harrier. Adult. Male. Pattern of wing.

SIMILAR SPECIES

Adult **male** similar to male of **Montagu's Harrier**, with smaller white rump, with a dark wing bar and streaks flanks and vent. **Females** of **Montagu's Harrier** have smaller white rump and have a band just below the wing coverts; 10th primary with similar length than 6th; the beginning of emargination of 9th primary is not hidden by primary coverts. **Female** and **juveniles** of **Marsh Harrier** have a pale patch on head and throat.



Marsh Harrier. Juvenile.



Montagu's Harrier. Male.



Montagu's Harrier. Female.

AGEING/SEXING

3 age groups can be recognized:

Juvenile with one age of very fresh feathers; head well contrasted with dark cheeks and crown; upperparts with dark brown feathers edged rufous; ochre underparts with dark streaks; tip of greater and primary coverts forming a clear thin line; outermost tail feather with well-defined subterminal dark band; **juveniles** cannot be sexed by plumage pattern but iris colour and size are useful characteristics: **male** with pale yellow, grey or grey-brown iris; wing shorter than 340 mm; **female** with dark brown iris; wing longer than 355 mm.

2nd year autumn/3rd year spring male with juvenile feathers often retained on crown, neck or breast and sometimes some greater coverts; mantle and scapulars tinged dark brownish-grey; usually central tail feathers with ill-defined dark bands; outermost tail feather with well-defined dark line on the outer web.

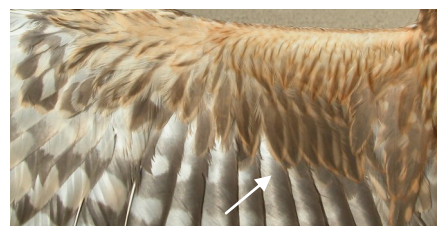
2nd year autumn/3rd year spring female similar to **adult female** when moult has been completed; iris brown or golden brown; outermost tail feather with well-defined subterminal dark band.

Adult male with bluish-grey, white and black plumage; yellow iris; without brown feathers on head and wings; blue-grey upperparts without brownish tinge; white underwing coverts; if some flight feathers remain unmoulted then with **adult** pattern; usually central tail feathers without dark bands; outermost tail feather with ill-defined dark line on the outer web.

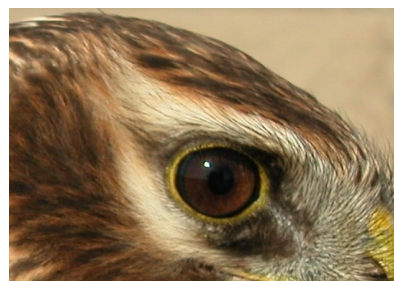
Adult female with yellow iris (**CAUTION:** the bright yellow iris is acquired at 5-7 years old); head weakly contrasted with an extended perocular white area; dark brown upperparts; underparts whitish with brown streaks; from below, flight feathers whitish banded black; underwing coverts mottled buff; greater coverts without pale tips; outermost tail feather with ill-defined subterminal dark band.



Hen Harrier. Adult. Sexing. Pattern of breast and head: left male; right female.

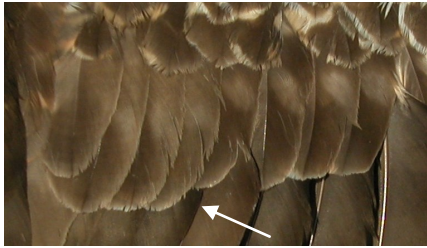


Hen Harrier. Ageing. Pattern of underwing coverts: top adult female; bottom juvenile.



Hen Harrier. Juvenile. Sexing. Colour of iris: top male; bottom female.

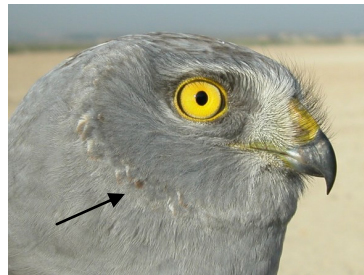
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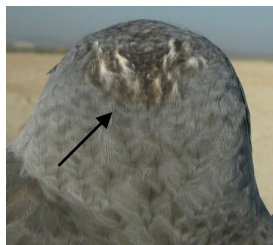
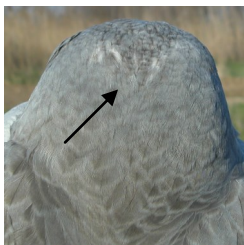
Hen Harrier. Ageing. Pattern of greater coverts: top adult female; bottom juvenile.



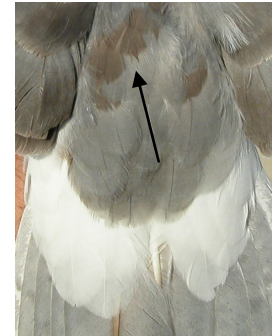
Hen Harrier. Male. Ageing. Pattern of head: top adult; bottom 2nd year.



Hen Harrier. Female. Ageing. Pattern of the outermost tail feather: left adult; middle 2nd year; right juvenile.



Hen Harrier. Male. Ageing. Pattern of nape: left adult; right 2nd year.



Hen Harrier. Male. Ageing. Pattern of rump: left adult; right 2nd year.

MOULT

Complete **postbreeding** moult, starting in April and finished in November; some birds may have unmoulted secondaries. Partial **postjuvenile** moult reduced to some body feathers changed during the winter; the first complete moult takes place in the **2nd year** at the same period as **adults**; occasionally some birds may have unmoulted body and flight feathers.

PHENOLOGY

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

- Summer visitor
- Wintering
- Resident
- On passage



Hen Harrier. Adult. Female (30-I).



Hen Harrier. 2nd year autumn. Male (25-XII).



Hen Harrier. 2nd year autumn. Female (25-XII).



Hen Harrier. Juvenile. Male (14-II).



Hen Harrier. Juvenile. Female (30-I).



Hen Harrier. Adult. Head pattern: top male (08-III); bottom female (30-I).

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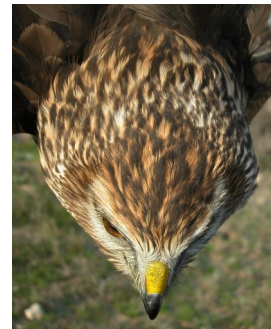


Hen Harrier. 2nd year autumn. Head pattern: top male with all feathers moulted (25-XII); middle male with some retained juvenile feathers (25-XII); bottom female (25-XII).

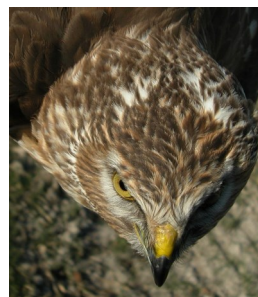
Hen Harrier. Juvenile. Head pattern: top male (14-II); bottom female (30-I).



Hen Harrier. Adult. Crown pattern: left male (08-III); right female (30-I).



Hen Harrier. 2nd year autumn. Crown pattern: left male (25-XII); right female (25-XII).



Hen Harrier. Juvenile. Crown pattern: left male (14-II); right female (30-I).

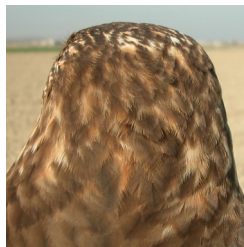


Hen Harrier. Adult. Nape pattern: left male (08-III); right female (30-I).

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Hen Harrier. 2nd year autumn. Nape pattern: left male (25-XII); right female (25-XII).



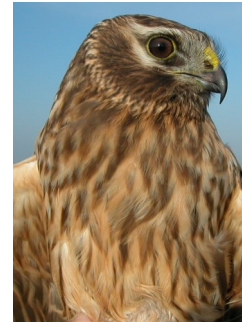
Hen Harrier. Juvenile. Nape pattern: left male (14-II); right female (30-I).



Hen Harrier. Adult. Breast pattern: left male (08-III); right female (30-I).



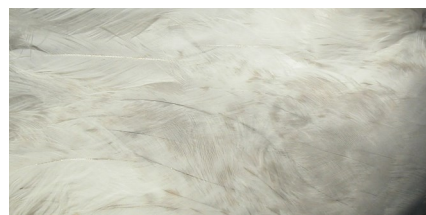
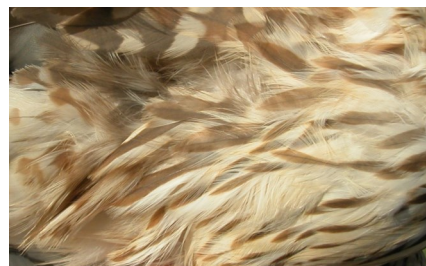
Hen Harrier. 2nd year autumn. Breast pattern: top left male with all feathers moulted (25-XII); top right male with some retained juvenile feathers (25-XII); left female (25-XII).



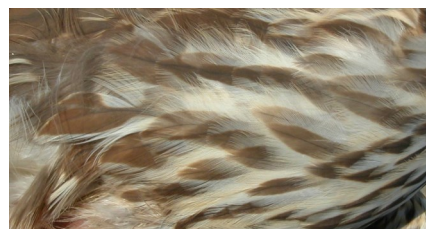
Hen Harrier. Juvenile. Breast pattern: left male (14-II); right female (30-I).



Hen Harrier. Adult. Flank pattern: top male (08-III); bottom female (30-I).



Hen Harrier. 2nd year autumn. Flank pattern: top male (25-XII); bottom female



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Hen Harrier. Juvenile. Flank pattern: top male (14-II); bottom female (30-I).



Hen Harrier. Juvenile. Upperpart pattern: left male (14-II); right female (30-I).



Hen Harrier. Adult. Upperpart pattern: left male (08-III); right female (30-I).



Hen Harrier. Adult. Rump pattern: left male (08-III); right female (30-I).



Hen Harrier. 2nd year autumn. Upperpart pattern: left male (25-XII); right female (25-XII).



Hen Harrier. 2nd year autumn. Rump pattern: top left male with all feathers moulted (25-XII); top right male with some retained juvenile feathers (25-XII); left female (25-XII).

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Hen Harrier. Juvenile. Rump pattern: top left male with moulted feathers (14-II); top right male with un-moulted feathers (14-II); left female (30-I).



Hen Harrier. 2nd year autumn. Male: tail pattern (25-XII).



Hen Harrier. 2nd year autumn. Female: tail pattern (25-XII).



Hen Harrier. Adult. Male: tail pattern (08-III).



Hen Harrier. Juvenile. Male: tail pattern (14-II).



Hen Harrier. Adult. Female: tail pattern (30-I).



Hen Harrier. Juvenile. Female: tail pattern (30-I).

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Hen Harrier. Adult. Pattern of primary coverts: top male (08-III); bottom female (30-I).



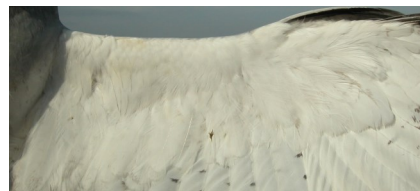
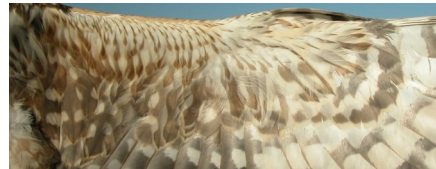
Hen Harrier. 2nd year autumn. Pattern of primary coverts: top male (25-XII); bottom female (1 adult feather; 2 juvenile feather) (25-XII).



Hen Harrier. Juvenile. Pattern of primary coverts: top male (14-II); bottom female (30-I).



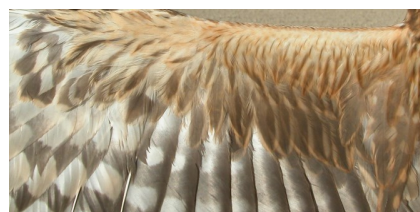
Hen Harrier. Adult. Pattern of underwing coverts: top male (08-III); bottom female (30-I).



Hen Harrier. 2nd year autumn. Pattern of underwing coverts: top male (25-XII); bottom female (25-XII).



Hen Harrier. Juvenile. Pattern of underwing coverts: top male (14-II); bottom female (30-I).



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Hen Harrier. Adult. Male: pattern of primaries (08-III).



Hen Harrier. 2nd year autumn. Male: pattern of primaries (25-XII).



Hen Harrier. Adult. Female: pattern of primaries (30-I).



Hen Harrier. 2nd year autumn. Female: pattern of primaries (1 adult feathers; 2 juvenile feathers) (25-XII).



Hen Harrier. Juvenile. Male: pattern of primaries (14-II).



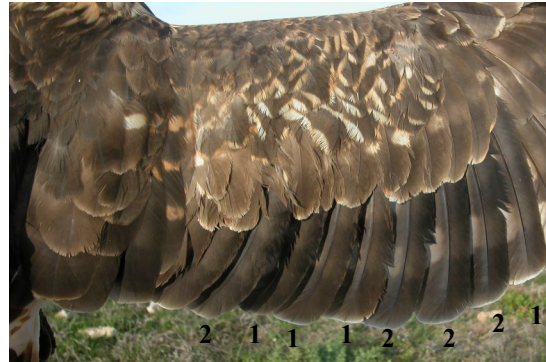
Hen Harrier. Adult. Male: pattern of secondaries(08-III).



Hen Harrier. Juvenile. Female: pattern of primaries (30-I).

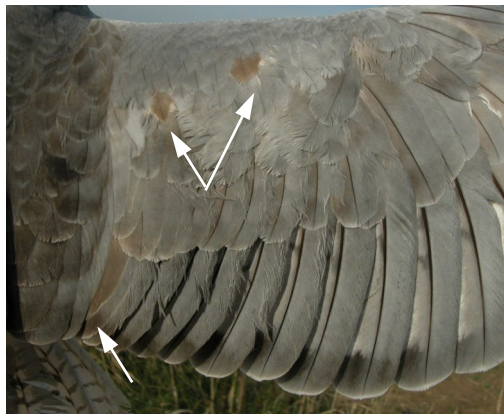


Hen Harrier. Adult. Female: pattern of secondaries



Hen Harrier. 2nd year autumn. Male: pattern of secondaries and wing coverts with all feathers moulted (25-XII).

Hen Harrier. 2nd year autumn. Female: pattern of secondaries (1 adult feathers; 2 juvenile feathers) (25)



Hen Harrier. 2nd year autumn. Male: pattern of secondaries and wing coverts with juvenile feathers retained (25-XII).

Hen Harrier. Juvenile. Male: pattern of secondaries (14-II).



Hen Harrier. Adult. Female: pattern of wing (30-I).

Hen Harrier. Juvenile. Female: pattern of secondaries (30-I).



Hen Harrier. 2nd year autumn. Male: pattern of wing with all feathers moulted (25-XII).



Hen Harrier. Adult. Male: pattern of wing (08-III).



Hen Harrier. 2nd year autumn. Male: pattern of wing with juvenile feathers retained (25-XII).



Hen Harrier. 2nd year autumn. Female: pattern of wing (1 juvenile feathers; 2 adult feathers) (25-XII).



Hen Harrier. Juvenile. Male: pattern of wing (14-II).



Hen Harrier. Juvenile. Female: pattern of wing (30-I).