

# Hen Harrier Tagging Scheme

A joint project between National Parks and Wildlife Service, Irish Raptor Study Group, University College Cork and COFORD is underway, tagging Hen Harriers to see where they go for the winter, how far they go from their natal areas, and where they end up breeding in subsequent years. Do they return to natal areas? Do they come back to the same sites year after year? How long can they live for in Ireland? In a bid to understand this, Hen Harriers are being tagged and ringed (under licence) as chicks. In 2007, 45 chicks were ringed/tagged in 4 regions, namely the Slieve Aughties (4), West Clare (10), North Kerry (20) and Ballyhouras (11).

All birds born and tagged in 2007 have a RED tag on their left wing. From this, we can tell how old the bird is in future. The tag on the right wing identifies where the bird has come from. AUGHTIES - BLACK, WEST CLARE - GREEN, NORTH KERRY - RED, BALLYHOURAS - YELLOW. Each individual bird has its own number or letter written on both tags. A Hen harrier factsheet explaining the tagging system can be downloaded. <http://www.npws.ie/en/media/Media,5186,en.pdf> [375KB]

Tagged birds can and have been found outside of the four areas where tagging has taken place. Sightings of non wing-tagged Hen Harriers are also welcome! We are also looking for volunteers for the National Hen Harrier Winter Roost Survey, now in its third year. We have currently accounted for 70 winter hangouts of the Hen Harrier in Ireland through this survey but many places remain unaccounted for.

## Hen Harrier National Winter Roost Survey

The Hen Harrier Winter Roost Survey is now entering its 3rd year. At this point, there are now approximately 70 sites across the country where Hen Harriers are known to frequent over the winter months. This is phenomenal and much needed information for the conservation of this beautiful annex I species. If we are to know anything about this bird, the 7 months of the year for which it is not involved in its breeding season are important to say the least! We are finding out much new information about the ecology of the Hen Harrier in Ireland through combined records from observers across the country. Who would've known Hen Harriers hang out in Kilkenny over the winter months? Who would've thought of communal roosts in Mayo? A Hen Harrier from West Clare flying up to Inisowen?

Anyone with any information on Hen Harriers, either sightings at roosts or casual sightings, of birds with or without tags, or indeed willing to take part in the National Winter Roost Survey is encouraged to contact **Barry O'Donoghue: 087-9110715** or [harriers@environ.ie](mailto:harriers@environ.ie). Comments and queries are also welcome.  
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<http://www.wcwc.ie/>

*For further information please go to the Hen Harrier project website*

<http://www.ucc.ie/en/planforbio/Training/HenHarrierCircuscyanecologyandrequirementsforconservation/>