

## A Hen Harrier named Gort E

Do you live in the Slieve Aughties area? Are you originally from the Slieve Aughties area? Each winter, maybe around Christmas, do you head into Galway City?

If your answer to any of these questions is 'YES', then you share very much in common with one of Ireland's rarest birds, a Hen Harrier named Gort E.

A young female Hen Harrier, born near Gort in 2008, and wing-tagged with the letter 'E' Gort E, decided to return to her roots in the Slieve Aughties in 2010. She successfully bred (a rare achievement in the Slieve Aughties) and reared two young female chicks, which will carry the hopes of future generations to sustain a continued presence of Hen Harriers in the Aughties. The Slieve Aughties is one of Ireland's and indeed Europe's most important areas for Hen Harriers. This bird has spent her first two winters (2008 and 2009) in and around Lough Corrib outside Galway City, and volunteers involved in the Irish Hen Harrier Winter Survey (now in its 6th year) are on standby to see if she will return to her winter residence, once matters have come to a conclusion at her breeding site. Interestingly, she switched allegiances for the summer months, in that she was born on the Galway side of the Aughties, but has moved into the Banner side to breed, perhaps the males in Clare are more attractive?! We'll hopefully continue to see and hear of this intrepid soul, and do keep an eye out for her colleagues (tagged and untagged) when you are in the area, or anywhere for that matter.

Sightings of Hen Harriers can be sent to [harriers@environ.ie](mailto:harriers@environ.ie) and are greatly appreciated, as they provide important information as to the important areas for Hen Harriers. Being a rare and endangered bird, not everyone can get to see Hen Harriers, they way the move, their food passes, or their electrifying sky dances, so you are lucky in the Aughties!



Photo: Gort E passes food to her young chick in an aerial food pass  
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