

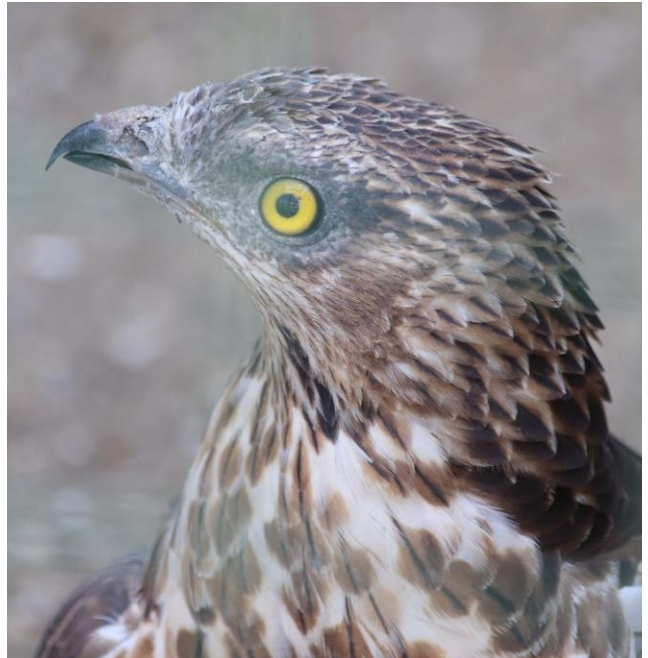
British Birds of Prey

HONEY BUZZARD

#16

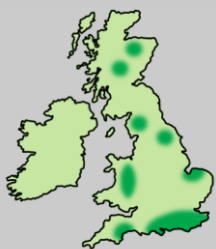
The European honey buzzard (*Pernis apivorus*), or common pern, is a large bird of prey that feeds mainly on insects and insect larvae. Uniquely, they are specially adapted to raid wasp and hornet nests.

Despite the name, they are actually more closely related to kites than buzzards. They are a migratory species, breeding in Europe during the summer and spending winters in Asia or Africa, using magnetic orientation to sense their way. There are about one hundred breeding pairs estimated in the UK.



▲ Carmen is our resident honey buzzard, who has been at Huxley's for 25 years!

British Population



About 100 breeding pairs estimated

Numbers are increasing

■ Found here

Size & Weight



Head to tail - 50 to 60 cm

Wingspan - 135 to 150 cm

Weight -
600g to 1 kg

Lifespan



6 years

Wild average



30 years

In captivity

Main Diet



Wasps and
hornets



Insects



Small
mammals



Small
birds



Huxley's Birds of Prey Centre, Horsham

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The honey buzzard's global population is estimated at about 160,000 pairs. Although they may be seen soaring like common buzzards, they typically hide themselves in forests, where they build their nests out of twigs and line them with leaves.

Breeding in the UK, they are most commonly found in the New Forest, though the nest sites are kept secret to protect them from egg collectors.

Wordsearch

HONEY

KITE

WASPS

BUZZARD

INSECTS

HORNETS

MIGRATORY

PERN

LARVAE

CARMEN

Z	P	T	S	C	T	Z	E	X	E	U	T	P	X	I	E	E
E	P	O	T	F	T	M	O	I	F	E	J	O	I	L	S	P
U	H	F	K	E	A	W	G	Q	N	D	N	S	T	D	L	Z
T	I	Q	L	E	N	T	O	Y	O	Q	B	C	N	R	J	Q
A	S	C	N	R	Q	R	I	G	N	R	X	T	E	S	M	Z
H	O	T	O	C	U	L	E	E	S	A	L	H	Y	P	R	F
L	L	I	V	E	S	Z	L	P	V	M	W	R	R	C	G	B
A	A	M	P	S	K	E	S	P	U	I	L	I	P	Z	V	W
H	Z	F	O	O	J	A	C	A	C	Y	D	M	N	D	A	E
L	C	P	B	I	W	V	E	N	O	R	H	T	E	R	A	L
A	O	N	Y	O	Y	R	O	T	A	R	G	I	M	T	Y	E
E	C	E	A	J	V	A	R	Z	S	T	E	N	R	O	H	H
E	E	O	X	E	U	L	Z	W	E	S	Y	S	A	P	S	P
M	O	I	F	S	A	U	J	M	T	F	R	E	C	N	V	J
T	N	V	P	N	B	Z	X	L	I	E	S	C	N	N	E	H
G	I	S	P	T	S	T	D	B	K	G	E	T	O	O	L	S
I	W	O	E	I	K	V	K	N	A	T	R	S	L	O	H	G





Male honey buzzards have a blue-grey head, whilst the female's is a dark brown. Interestingly, they have very similar plumage to the more powerful common buzzard. It is thought that this deters goshawks from attacking them. Asian birds typically have plumage more similar to local hawk-eagles for the same reason.

Although small mammals, birds and reptiles are also taken as prey, they spend much of their time excavating wasp nests on the forest floor.

Contrary to the name, honey buzzards do not feed directly on honey. Can you unscramble some of the things they might eat?

Anagrams

L A R V A E

— — — — —

S P A W S

— — — — —

T H R O N E S

— — — — —

C E M I

— — — — —

D R I B

G E G S

— — — — —

T U F I R (rarely)

— — — — —



Match the Facts

Honey buzzards are specially adapted to be able to raid wasp nests. Can you draw in the lines to match each adaptation to its benefit?

Adaptation

Long toes and talons

Dense feathers on the head, almost like scales

Nostrils are long and thin

Certain chemicals in their feathers

Benefit

Protects against stings

Acts a deterrent to wasps, they'll avoid it

Ideal for digging into nests

Prevents the openings from becoming clogged up with dirt or soil

