

British Birds of Prey

SPARROWHAWK

#15

The Eurasian sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*) is a diurnal raptor, belonging to the accipiter genus of birds, like goshawks. They are widespread across the UK, only being absent from the very north of Scotland.

As with other birds of prey, the females are larger (reverse sexual dimorphism). Sparrowhawks have one of the greatest size differences, with the female weighing up to twice as much!

Female sparrowhawks are called spars, and males are called muskets.



British Population



About 35,000
breeding pairs estimated

Numbers are stable

 Found here

Size & Weight



Head to tail - 30 to 40 cm

Wingspan - 60 to 80 cm

Weight -
120 - 340 g

Lifespan



3 years

Wild average



15 years

Maximum

Main Diet



Birds

(about 97% of their total diet)



Bats

Huxley's Birds of Prey Centre, Horsham



As their name suggests, sparrowhawks hunt other birds, with sparrows and finches making up about 97% of their diet. The female may hunt larger birds such as pigeons.

Like many other birds of prey, sparrowhawks have paler coloured underparts (chest) and darker upperparts (head, wings and back). This is called countershading, a method of camouflage found in many animals to break up their outline. Their eye colour changes as they age, from a yellow when young to an orange or red when matured.

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

Word Search

EURASIAN

SPARROW

HAWK

ACCIPITER

SPAR

MUSKET

DIURNAL

HUXLEY'S

Crack the Code

Use the code to decipher the sentences below, and find out some more facts about sparrowhawks!
The first one has been started for you.

A = ○	E = ∪	I = ⊗	M = ⊙	Q = ●	U = ▼	Y = ⊖
B = ⊠	F = ▽	J = ▾	N = ◻	R = ◻	V = ⚡	Z = ◆
C = ▲	G = ◻	K = ⚡	O = ★	S = ⊗	W = ◻	
D = ⊕	H = ◆	L = ∪	P = △	T = ◆	X = ▼	

⊠◆★◻◆ ◻⊙◻◻◻ ◻◻⊕ ◻ ∪★◻◻

Sparrowhawks have S H O R T W I N G S _____

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▲◻◻ △∪◻▲◆ ▽◻◻∪∪◻ ⊗◻ ◆◆∪ ◆◻∪∪◻

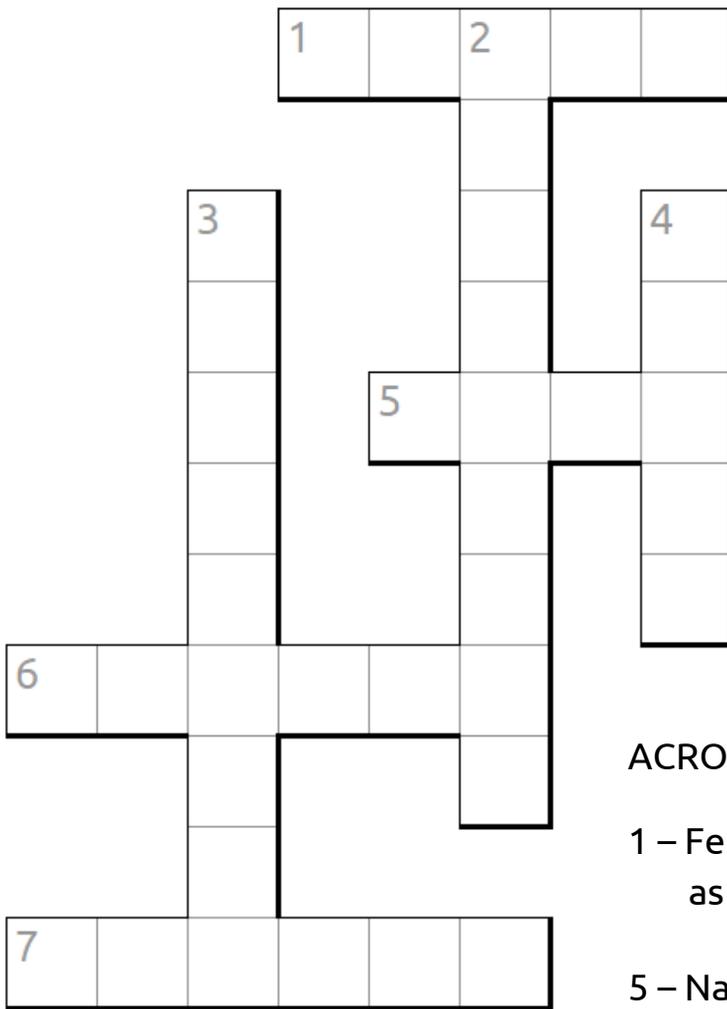
⊙◻∪∪◻ △∪◻▽★◻⊙ ◻◻ ◻∪◻⊗◻∪ ⊕◻◻▲∪ ★▽

⊕⊗⚡⊗◻◻ ◻◻⊕ ▲⊗◻▲∪⊗◻◻ ◆★ ◻◆◆◻◻▲◆ ⊙◻◆∪◻

Crossword

Solve the clues to complete the crossword about sparrowhawks.

All the answers can be found somewhere in this activity pack!



ACROSS

1 – Females can be twice as _____ as the male

5 – Name for a female sparrowhawk

6 – Colour an adult's eyes might turn

7 – Name for a male sparrowhawk

DOWN

2 – The genus of birds that sparrowhawks belong to

3 – Where sparrowhawks often hunt

4 – These make up about 97% of a sparrowhawk's diet

