



Male

Kestrel

Pocaire gaoithe

Wingspan 75cm, Length 34cm
Widespread, one of the county's commonest raptors. Breeds in a diverse range of habitats from tree-holes to ruined houses and sea cliffs. Hovers while hunting. Feeds predominantly on small mammals, birds and lizards, but also takes frogs and invertebrates.



Female



Female

Hen Harrier

Cromán na gearc

Wingspan 110cm, Length 48cm
Scarce and local raptor, declining due to loss of habitat to commercial afforestation. Resident in the uplands of East Galway, particularly the Slieve Aughtys. Feeds on small mammals and birds. Winter numbers boosted with an influx of continental birds.



White-tailed Eagle

Iolar mara

Wingspan 220cm, Length 85cm
Re-introduced after a long absence of over one hundred years. Now breeds locally in the county at several locations at inland lakes. Feeds on fish, waterfowl and occasionally carrion.



Peregrine

Fabhcún gorm

Wingspan 103cm, Length 42cm
The fastest bird on the planet, found throughout the county. Nests in quarries, on cliffs and on ruins. Feeds primarily on birds, which it catches in the air after a high speed 'stoop'.

Buzzard

Wingspan 120cm, Length 54cm

Clamhán

Recently returned as a breeding bird to Galway after a long absence. Common in farmland in East Galway strongholds, still scarce west of the Corrib. Nests in woodland. Feeds on rats, crows and rabbits, in addition to scavenging carrion.



Raptors of Galway



Barn Owl

Scréachóg reilige

Wingspan 89cm, Length 34cm
Nocturnal species. Widespread but scarce in Galway, primarily found in the east of the county. Nests in ruined buildings and occasionally in tree cavities. Hunts rats, mice and other small mammals.



Long-eared Owl

Ceann cait

Wingspan 95cm, Length 36cm
Widespread and common owl, though extremely elusive. Can be found across the county, where it nests in old crows nests in tree copses, often in woodland, gardens or golf courses. Feeds on small mammals such as rats and mice.

Sparrowhawk

Wingspan 62cm, Length 34cm

Widespread, quite common across the county although elusive. Breeds in woodland and frequents gardens. Hunts birds, which it ambushes with low fast flight. Often seen soaring on warm days.



Female

Merlin

Wingspan 56cm, Length 28cm

Smallest raptor in Galway. Very elusive. It is a localised breeder, and breeds on bogs in Connemara and East Galway, where it uses old crows nests. Hunts small birds. Numbers boosted by influx of continental birds in winter.



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