

British Birds of Prey

HOBBIES & MERLINS

#7

The Eurasian hobby and the merlin are two small falcons native to the UK. Both species are notable for catching most of their prey 'on the wing'. This means that insects and smaller birds are caught with the talons mid-air, and transferred to their beak whilst still flying.

There are about 2,800 breeding pairs of the Eurasian hobby in the UK (referred to as just the hobby, although there are other species elsewhere). They are present in the UK during the summer months, breeding within central and southern England, and will migrate to as far as southern Africa and Asia during the winter.



▲ Eurasian hobby

▼ Merlin



Merlins are the smallest bird of prey found in the UK, slightly smaller than the hobby and kestrel at just 25cm fully grown! An adult male can weigh as little as 125g, though the female may be as much as 300g!


During the winter, merlins migrate to lowland and coastal areas of the UK, along with most of the Icelandic population. There are thought to be around 1,000 breeding pairs in the UK, which breed upland in northern England and Scotland during the summer.

Hobbies & Merlins



WORD SEARCH

- HOBBY
- MERLIN
- FALCON
- HUNTER
- RAPTOR
- TALONS
- PREDATOR
- PREY
- MIGRATE
- NATIVE



HOBBY FACT FILE

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| SCIENTIFIC NAME | <i>Falco subbuteo</i> |
| DISTRIBUTION | UK, Europe (summer) Asia, Africa (winter) |
| WILD POPULATION | 2,800 UK pairs est. |
| WINGSPAN | Approx. 70 to 90cm |
| SIZE & WEIGHT | Approx. 28 to 36cm long, 150g to 350g |
| LIFESPAN | Usually 5 years in the wild |
| MAIN DIET | Insects, small birds |

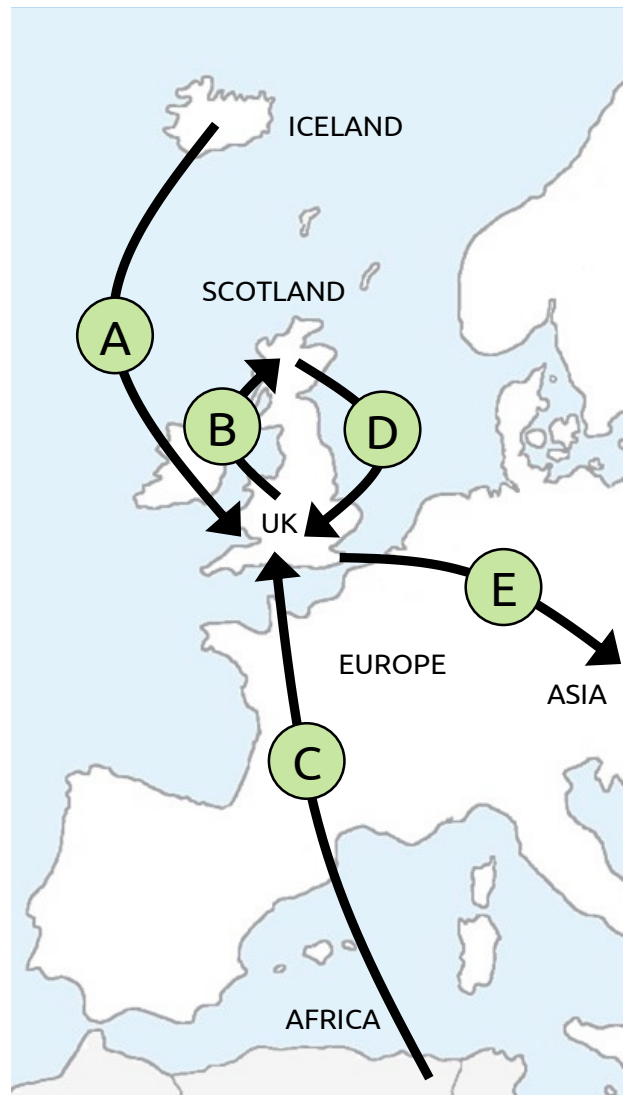
Hobbies & Merlins

Migration is the seasonal movement of an animal from one place to another, to move a region that is cooler or warmer.

Each arrow on the map represents a migration path of either a hobby or a merlin. Using the information on the previous pages, can you work out which bird each arrow represents?

Can you tell whether they are migrating for the summer or winter climate?

- A – _____ Season: _____
- B – MERLIN Season: _____
- C – _____ Season: _____
- D – _____ Season: WINTER
- E – _____ Season: _____



SCIENTIFIC NAME

Falco columbarius

DISTRIBUTION

UK, Europe, Asia, N. America

WILD POPULATION

900 to 1,500 UK pairs est.

WINGSPAN

Approx. 50 to 65cm

SIZE & WEIGHT

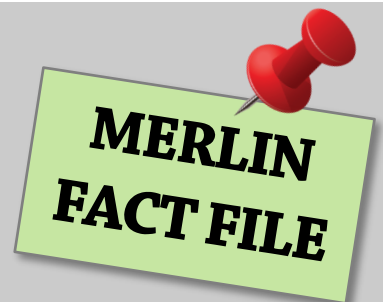
Approx. 25 to 30cm long, 150g to 300g

LIFESPAN

Usually 3 years in the wild

MAIN DIET

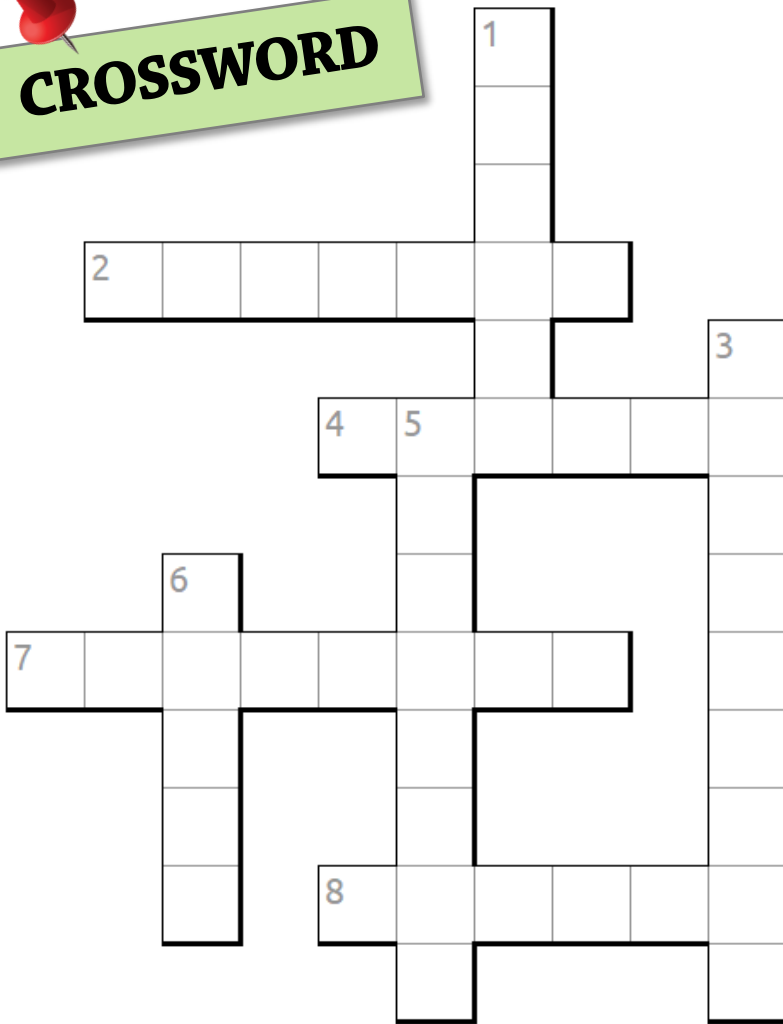
Small birds



Hobbies & Merlins



CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 2 – You won't find any hobbies in the UK during this season
- 4 – The UK's smallest bird of prey
- 7 – Part of the UK where merlins can be found during the summer
- 8 – Hobbies and merlins belong to this family of bird

DOWN

- 1 – Some birds _____ to different regions depending on the season
- 3 – Hobbies and merlins catch most of their prey _____
- 5 – The type of hobby found in the UK
- 6 – These birds migrate to south or central England to breed