

PENNSYLVANIA NORTHERN HARRIER PROJECT

Uncovering the life history of Pennsylvania's dwindling northern harrier breeding populations.



MALE NORTHERN HARRIER

Hawk Mountain Sanctuary is launching a new endeavor to survey and track breeding northern harriers to understand habitat requirements of this state threatened species.



FEMALE

Hawk Mountain seeks landowners with extensive grassland, or marsh, habitats to report sightings of northern harriers between May and July. Harriers nest on the ground relying on taller vegetation to hide the nest in open grassland and marshes.

These medium sized hawks are often seen flying low over open fields as they hunt, often displaying their white rump patches at the base of the tail.

Males are a pale grey on top with white underneath whereas females are brown on top with heavy streaking across a paler belly. Both have owl like facial disks.

Secretive when nesting, males will perform undulating sky dances when courting a female.

The PA Breeding Bird Atlas noted a 48% decline between the 1980's to 2010. They appear to return to nest sites annually as long as the habitat remains for their nest.



Timeline

2026-2029

WHAT TO REPORT:
ANY HARRIER
ACTIVITY SEEN
BETWEEN MAY 15-JULY
31

NESTLINGS FLEDGE
IN EARLY JULY

SOME INDIVIDUALS
WILL BE OUTFITTED
WITH TRACKERS TO
DETERMINE HABITAT
USE AND DISPERSAL

TO FIND OUT MORE SEARCH "FARMLAND RAPTORS" AT WWW.HAWKMOUNTAIN.ORG



FEMALE NORTHERN HARRIER

TO REPORT HARRIER ACTIVITY, OR IF INTERESTED IN SUPPORTING THIS EFFORT PLEASE CONTACT:

BRACKEN BROWN:
BRACKENBROWN@HAWKMOUNTAIN.ORG
OR CALL 570-943-3411 EX 103

This project is funded through grants from DCNR Wild Resources Conservation Program and PA Game Commission

Photos taken by T. Sepkovic, D. Brandes, H. Heskin, and HMS archives