



# The Visual Guide to **SINGAPORE RAPTORS**

Find this guide online at  
**[singaporebirds.com/raptor-guide/](https://singaporebirds.com/raptor-guide/)**

**Created by** Lee Wee Meng, Raghav Narayanswamy, Sin Yong Chee Keita, and Sng Chen Xi, with inputs from the BirdSoc SG team

**Photos by** Adrian Silas Tay (AST), Ayuwat Jearwattanakanok (AJ), Francis Yap (FY), Goh Cheng Teng (GCT), Jared Tan (JT), Max Khoo (MK), Raghav Narayanswamy (RN), Sin Yong Chee Keita (SYCK), Yap Swee Peng (YSP), Yip Jen Wei (YJW), and Zheng Yifei (ZYF)

**Images are not to scale**



Bird Society  
of Singapore



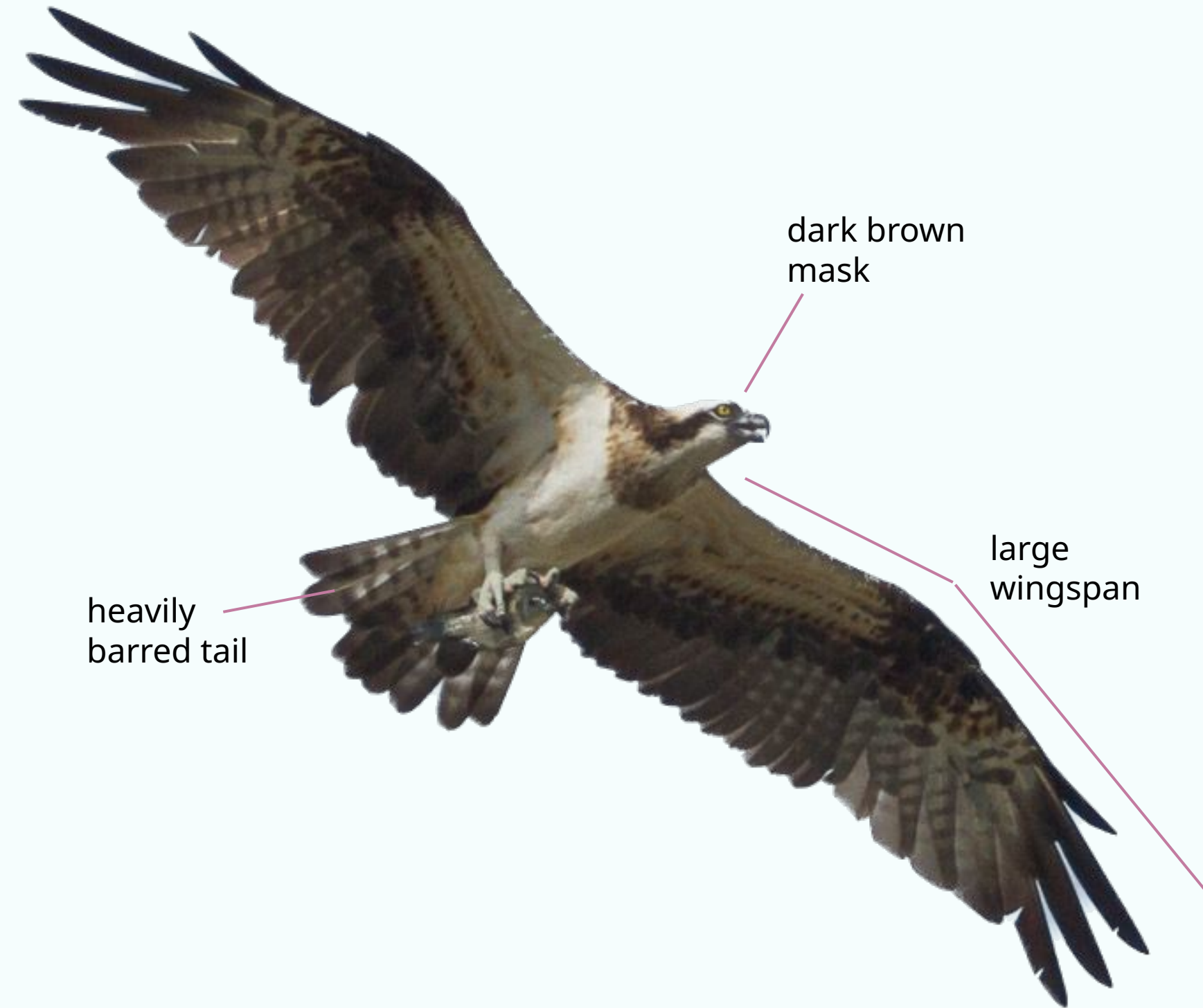
**@birdsocsg**



***birdsociety.sg***  
***singaporebirds.com***



# Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*



**Uncommon migrant, visitor**  
55–63 cm  
Peak: mid Oct–early Mar

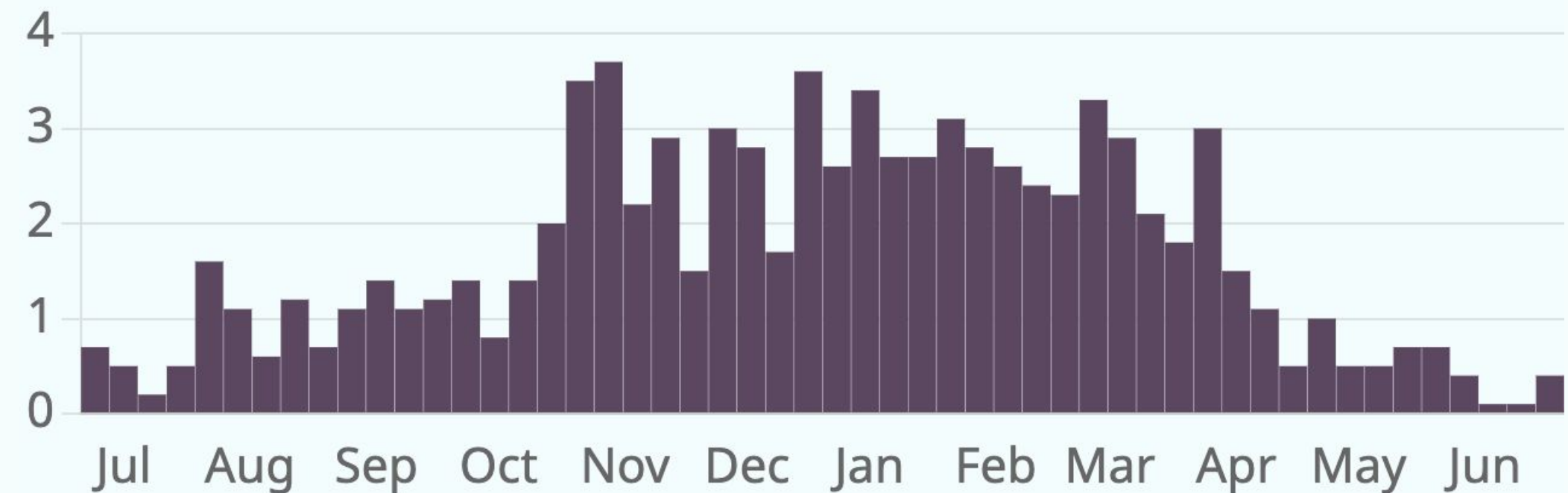
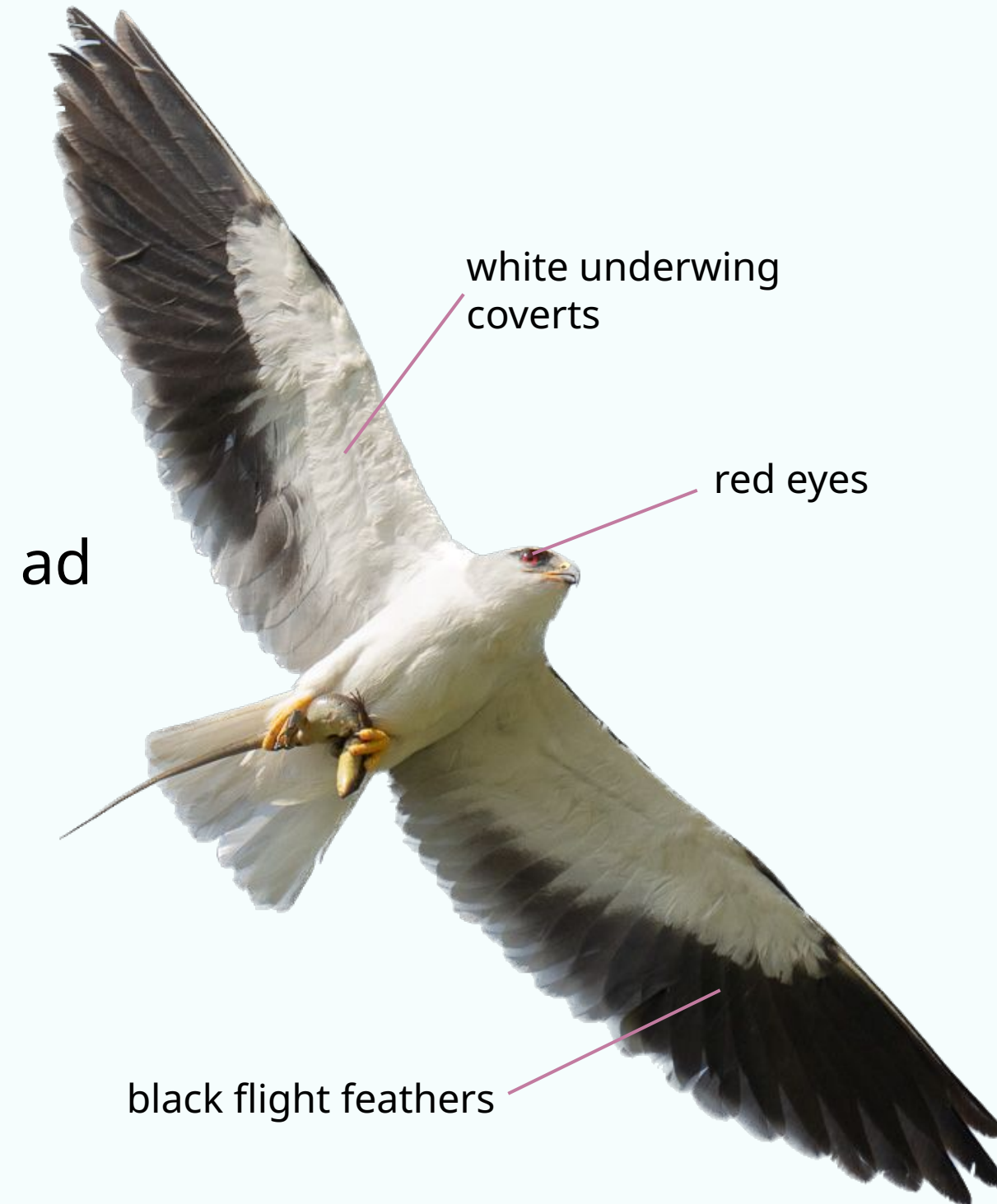


Photo credit FY.

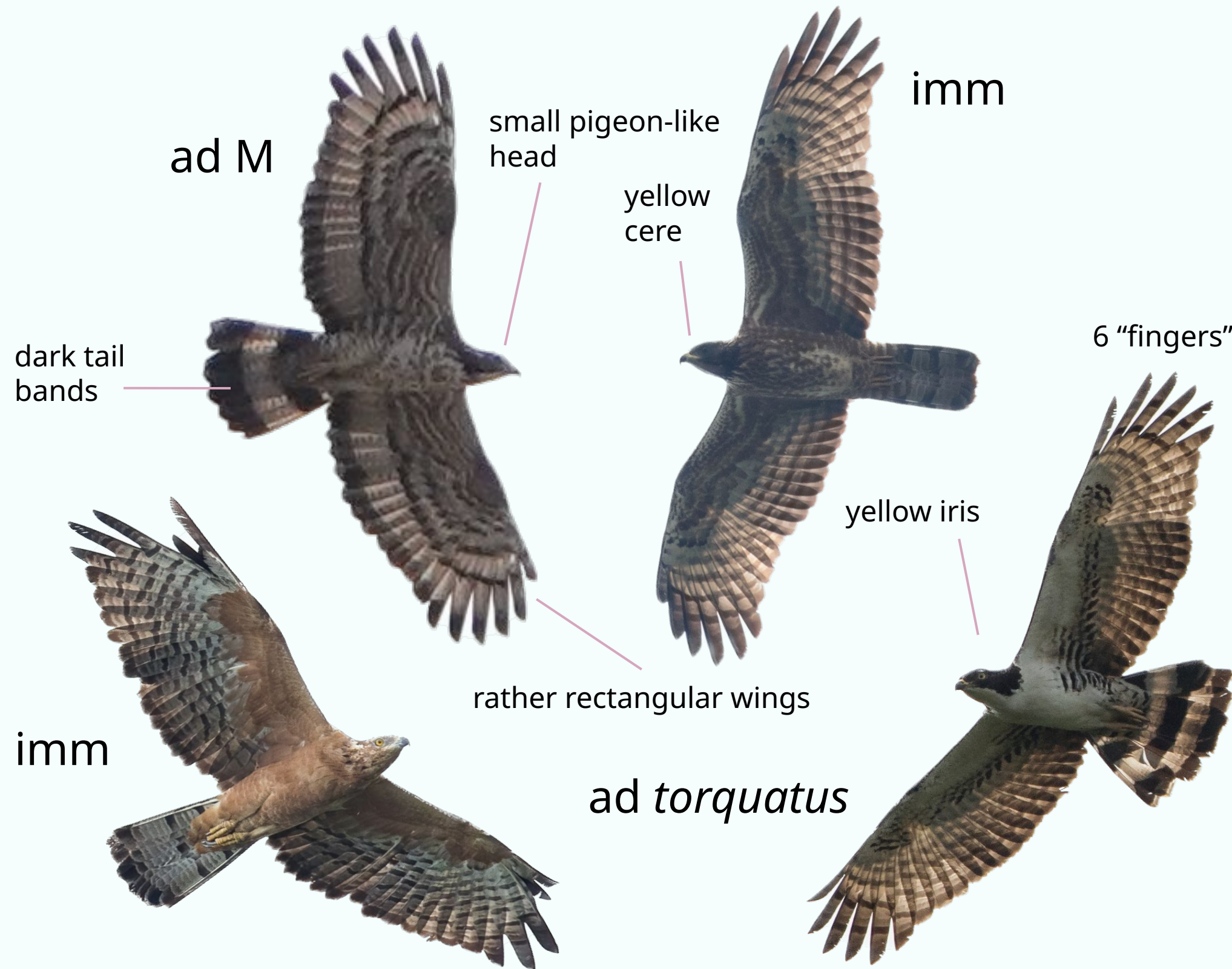
# Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus*



**Uncommon resident**  
31–35 cm



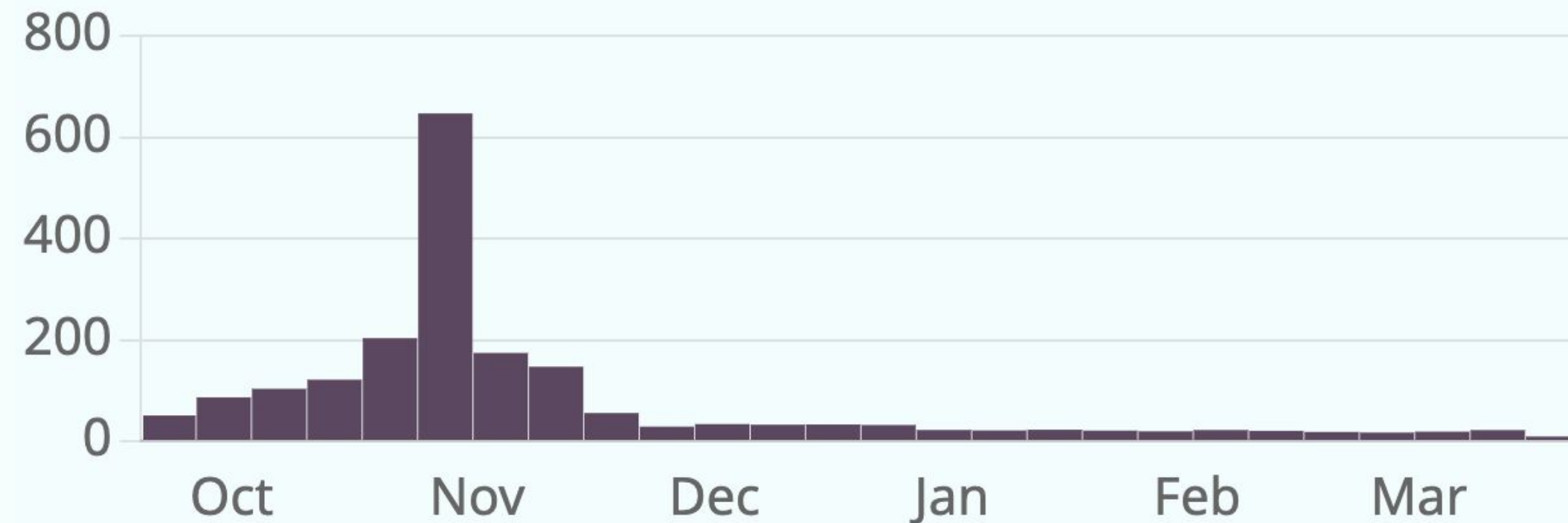
# Crested Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus*



**Very common migrant,  
uncommon visitor**

55–65 cm

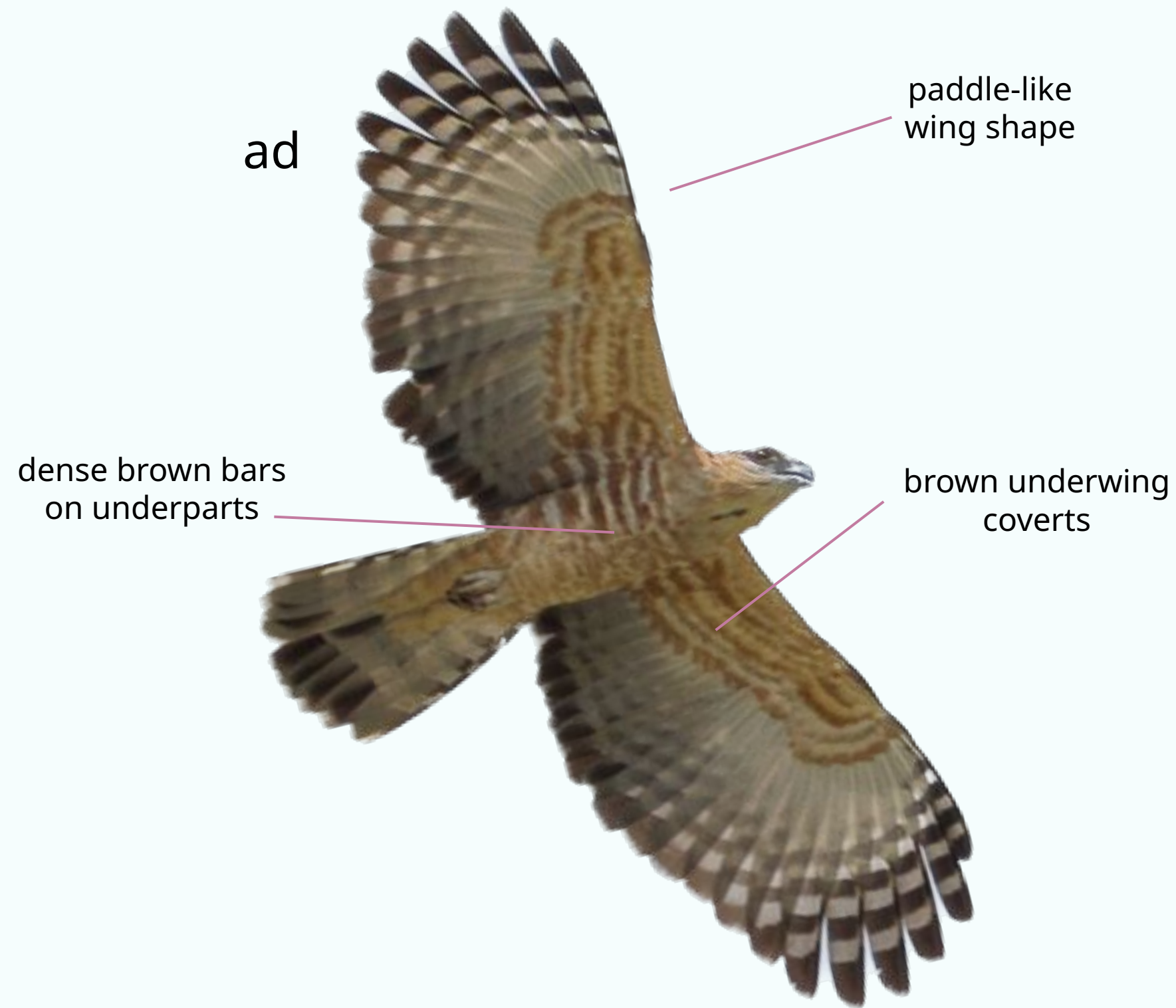
Peak: late Oct–mid Nov



**Photo credit** (clockwise from top left) RN, AST, AST, AST.



# Jerdon's Baza *Aviceda jerdoni*



**Uncommon migrant**  
41–48 cm  
Peak: Nov–Mar

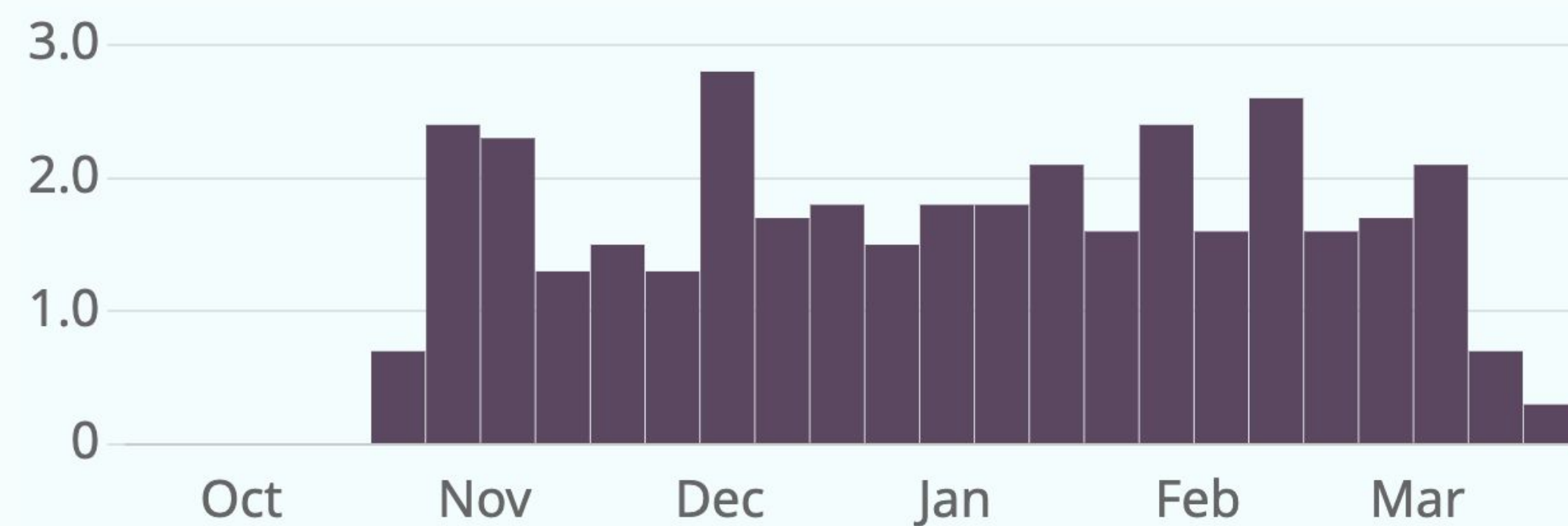
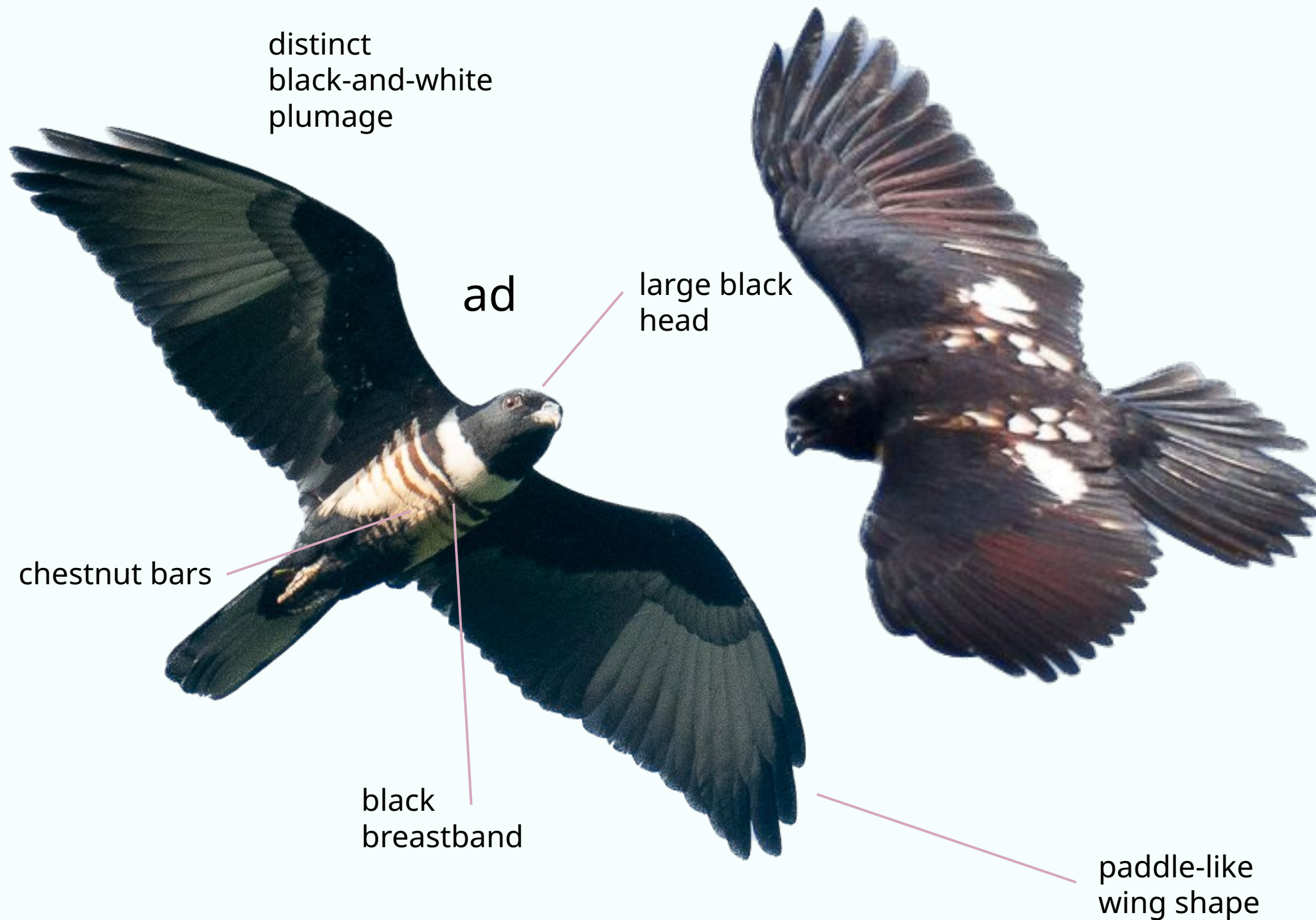


Photo credit FY.

# Black Baza *Aviceda leuphotes*



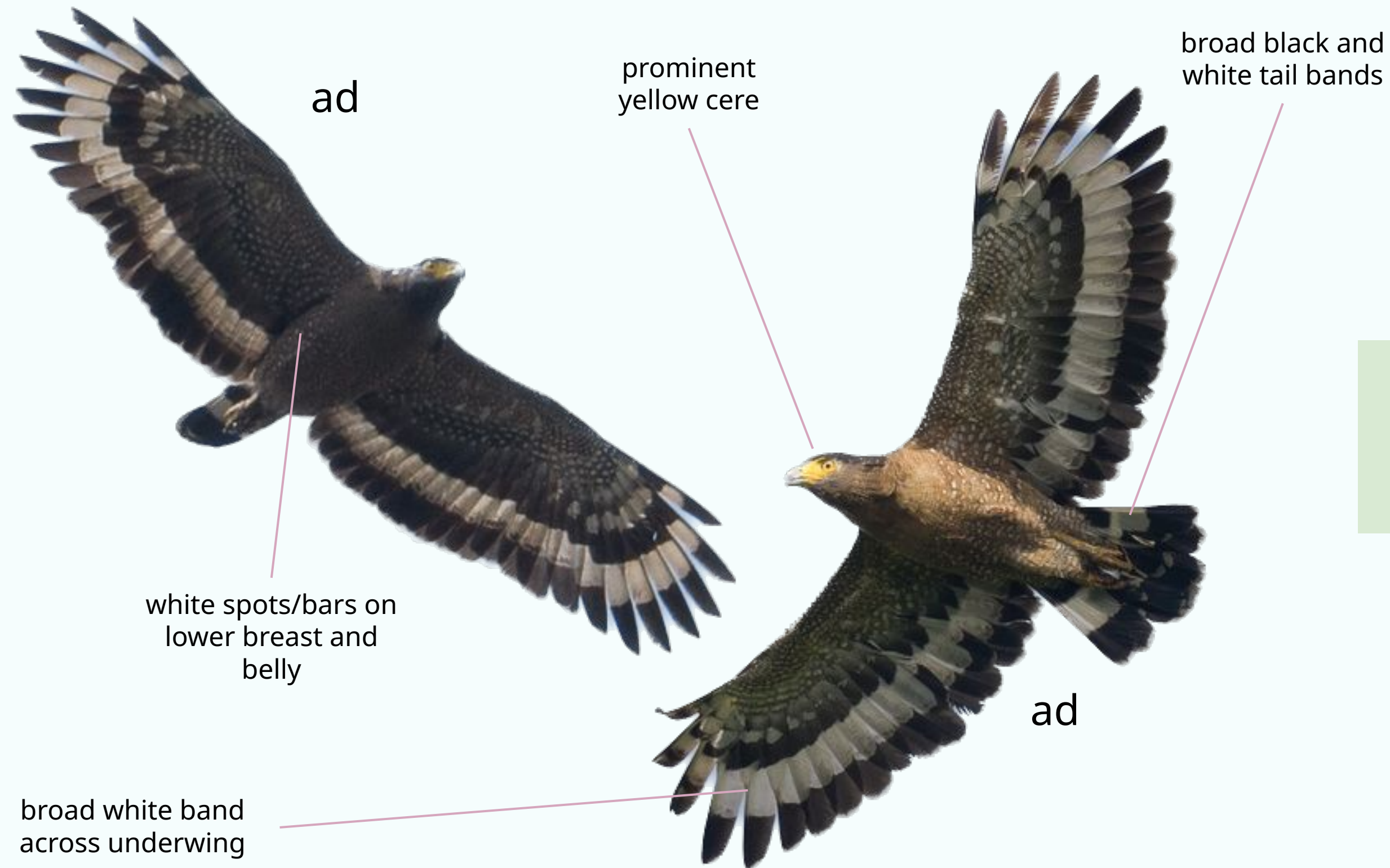
**Uncommon migrant**  
31.5–33 cm  
Peak: early Nov



**Photo credit** FY (all).



# Crested Serpent Eagle *Spilornis cheela*



**Uncommon resident**  
56–74 cm

**Photo credit** FY (all).

# Changeable Hawk-eagle *Nisaetus cirrhatus*

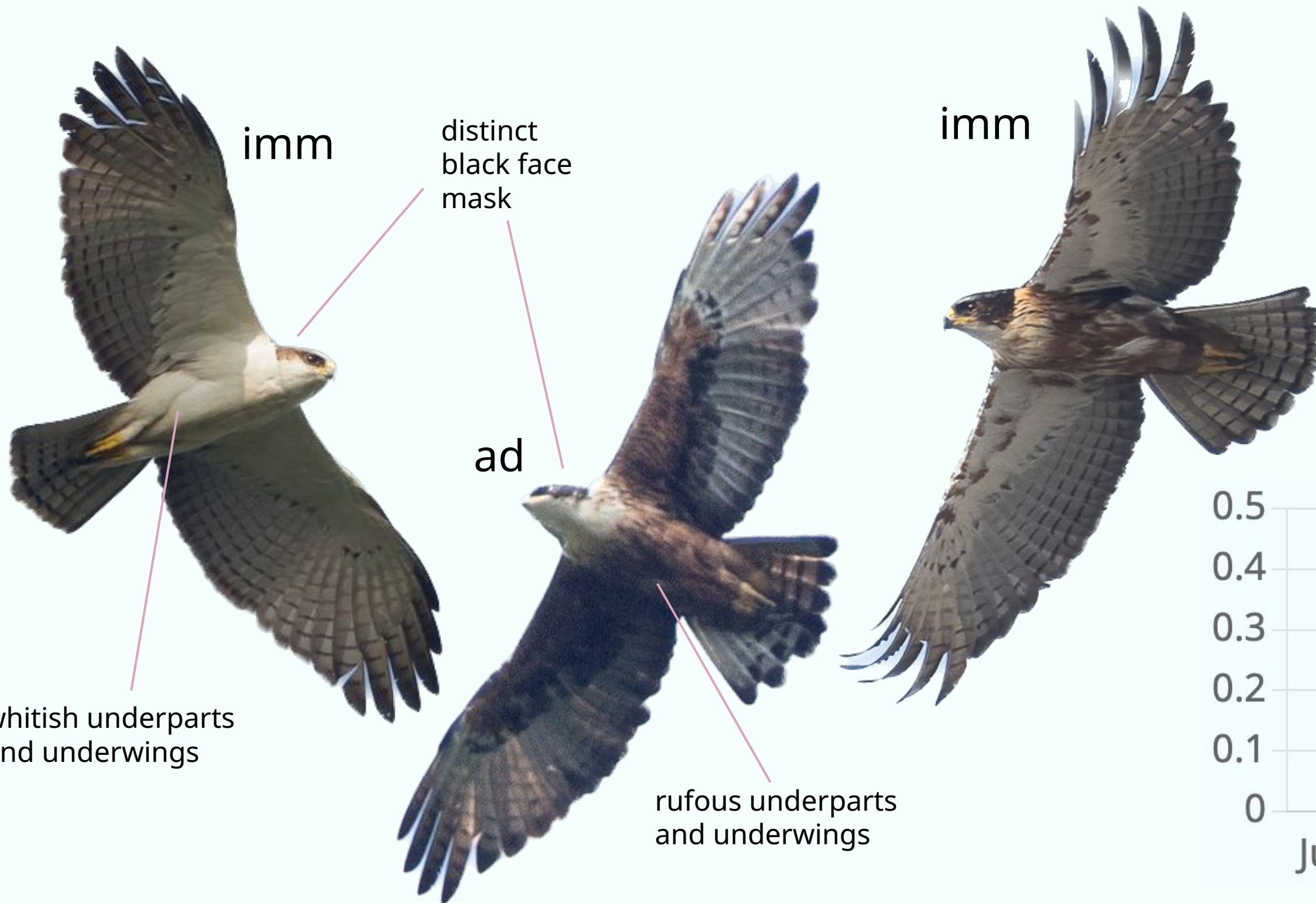


**Common resident**  
61–75 cm

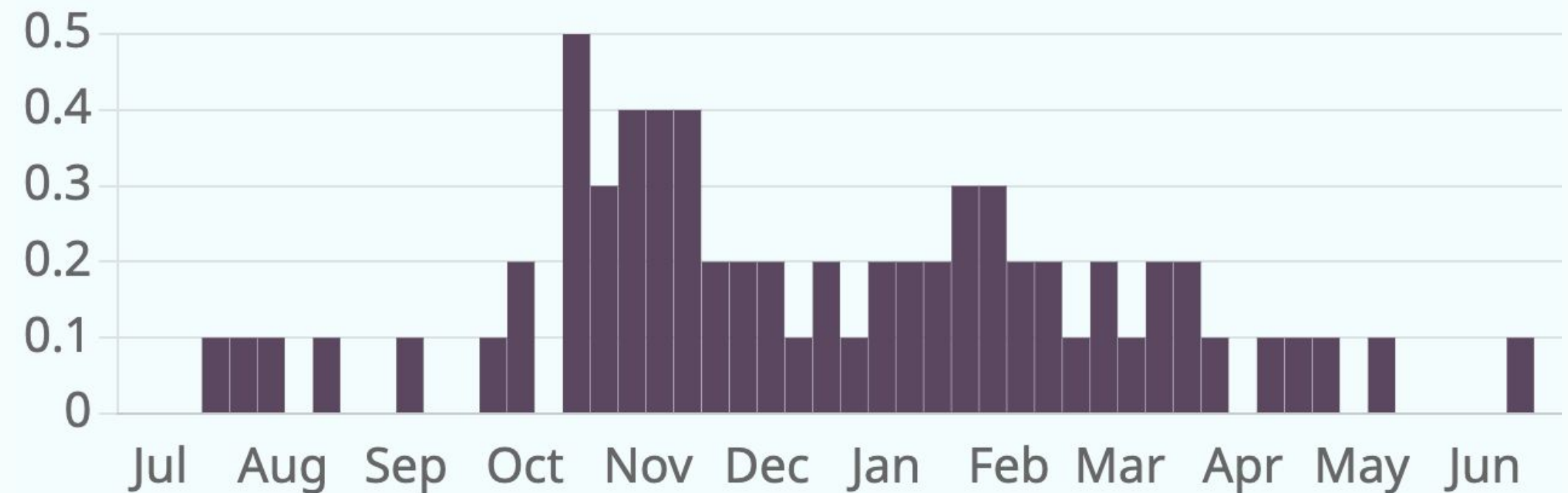
**Photo credit** (left to right) SYCK, FY, FY.



# Rufous-bellied Eagle *Lophotriorchis kienerii*

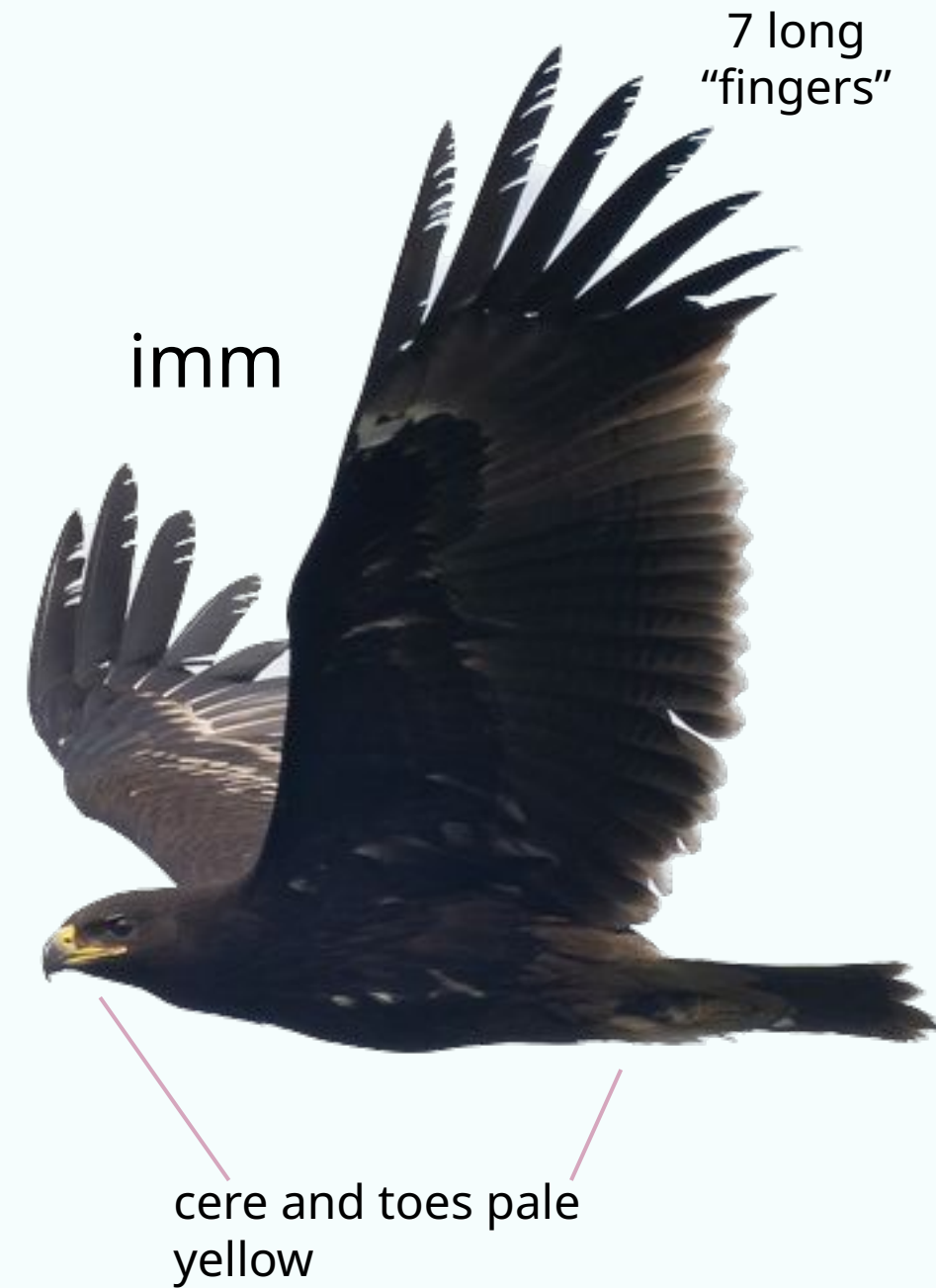
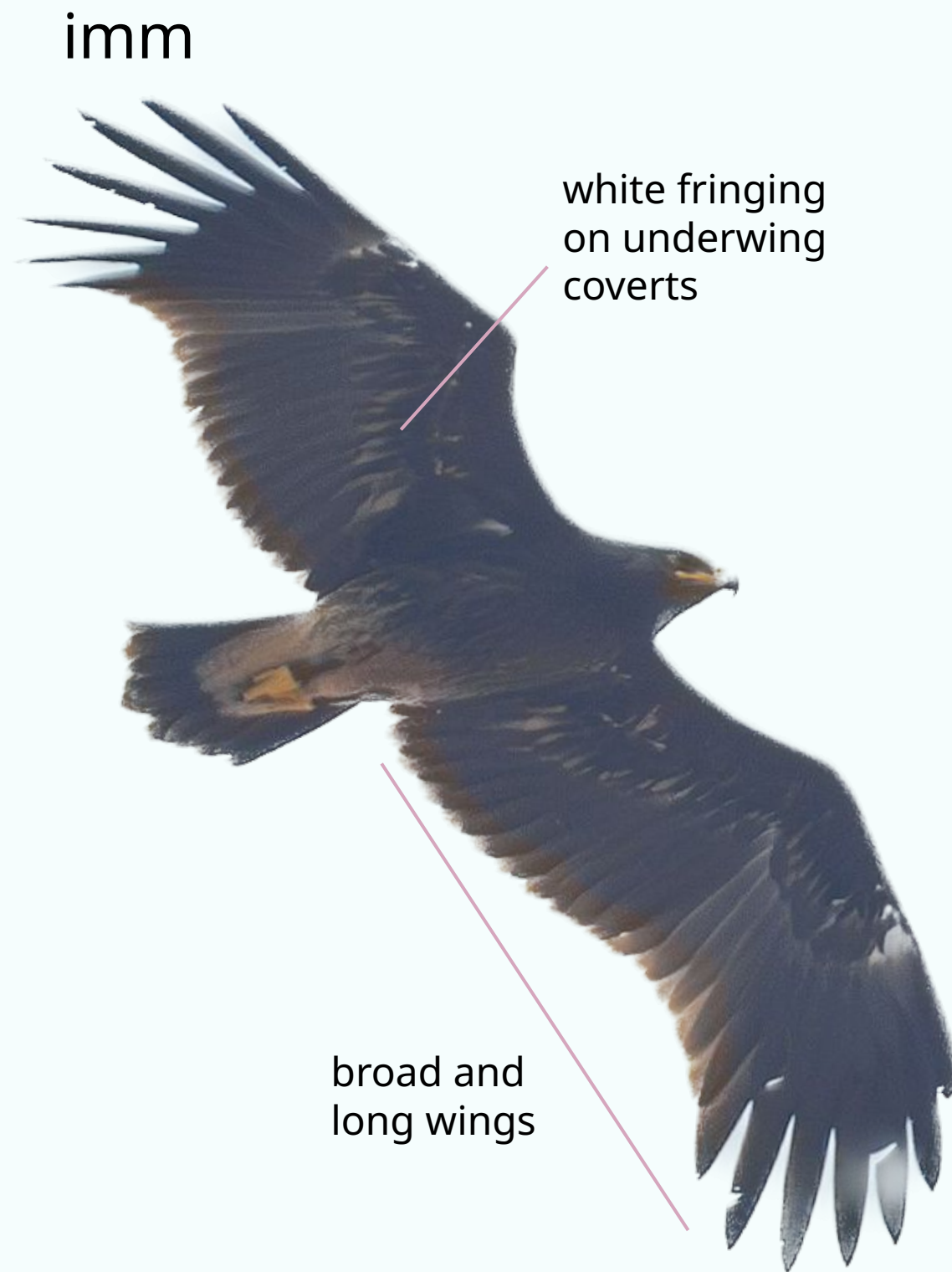


**Rare migrant, visitor**  
53–61 cm  
Peak: late Oct–late Nov

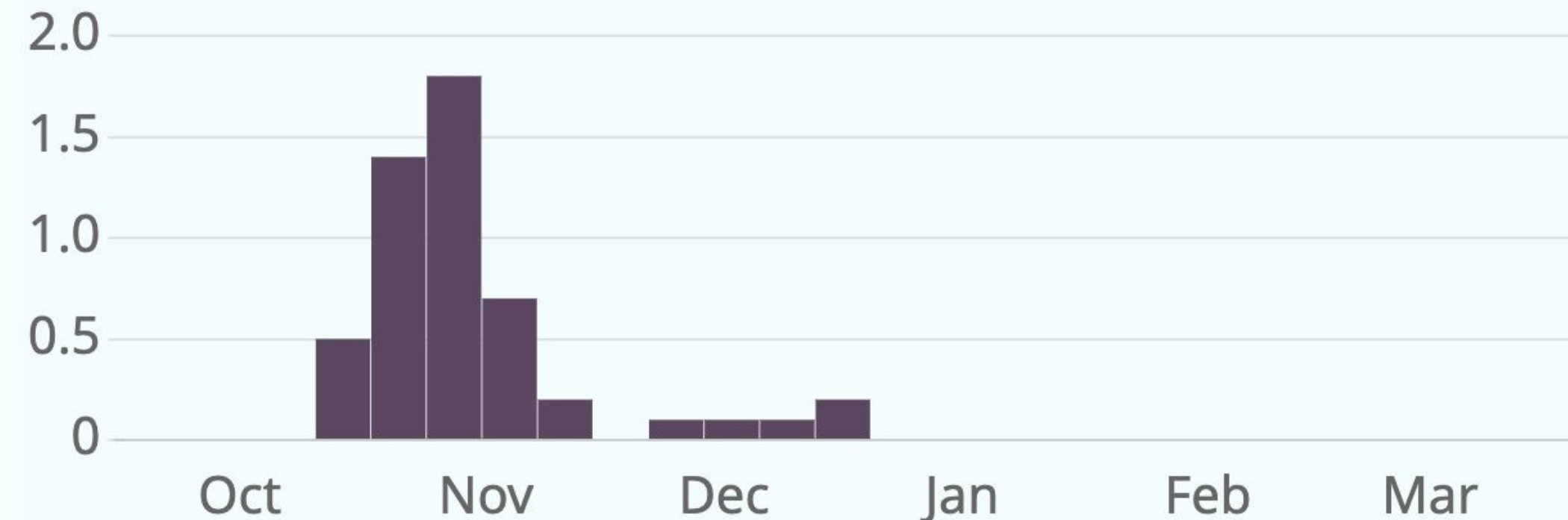


**Photo credit** (left to right) FY, SYCK, SYCK.

# Greater Spotted Eagle *Clanga clanga*



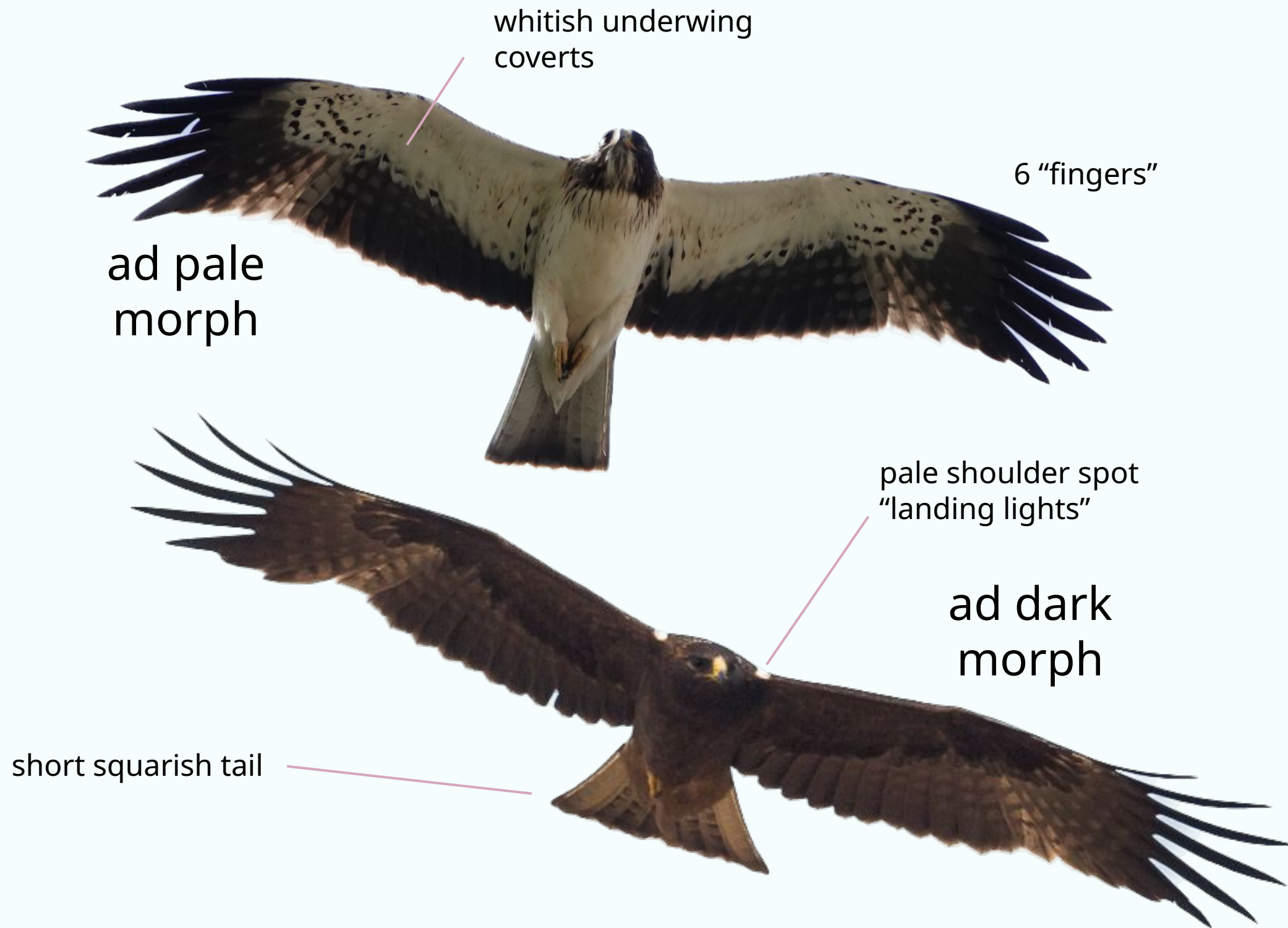
**Rare migrant**  
65–72 cm  
Peak: early Nov



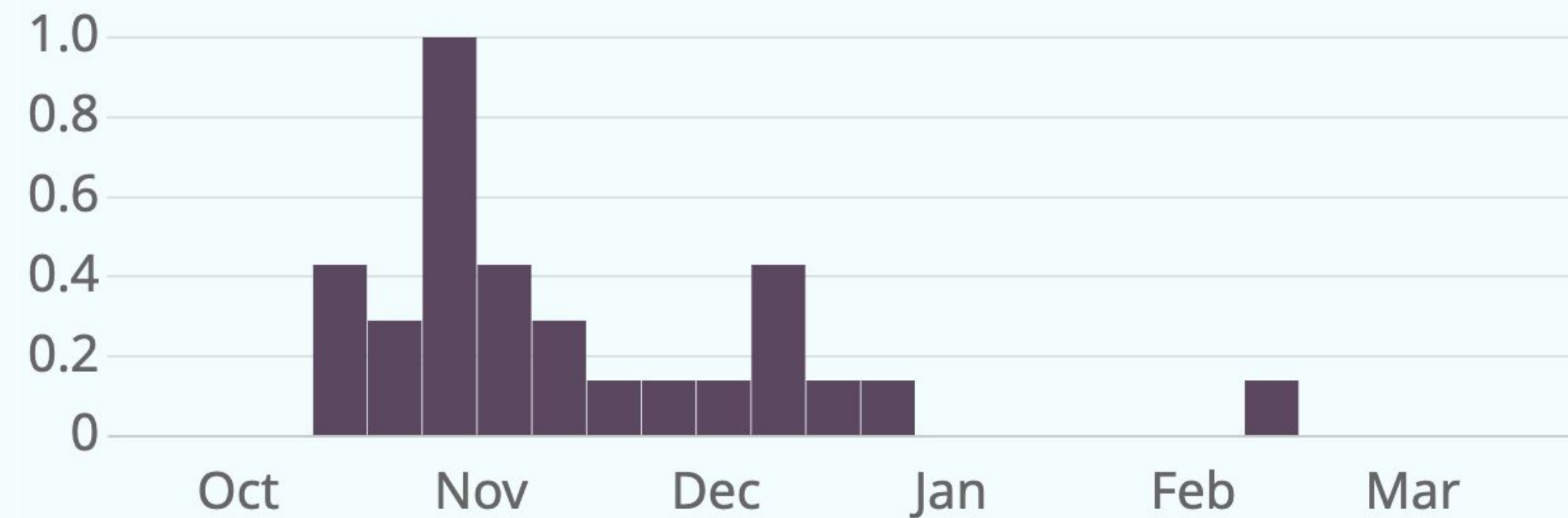
**Photo credit** (left to right) YJW, FY.



# Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus*

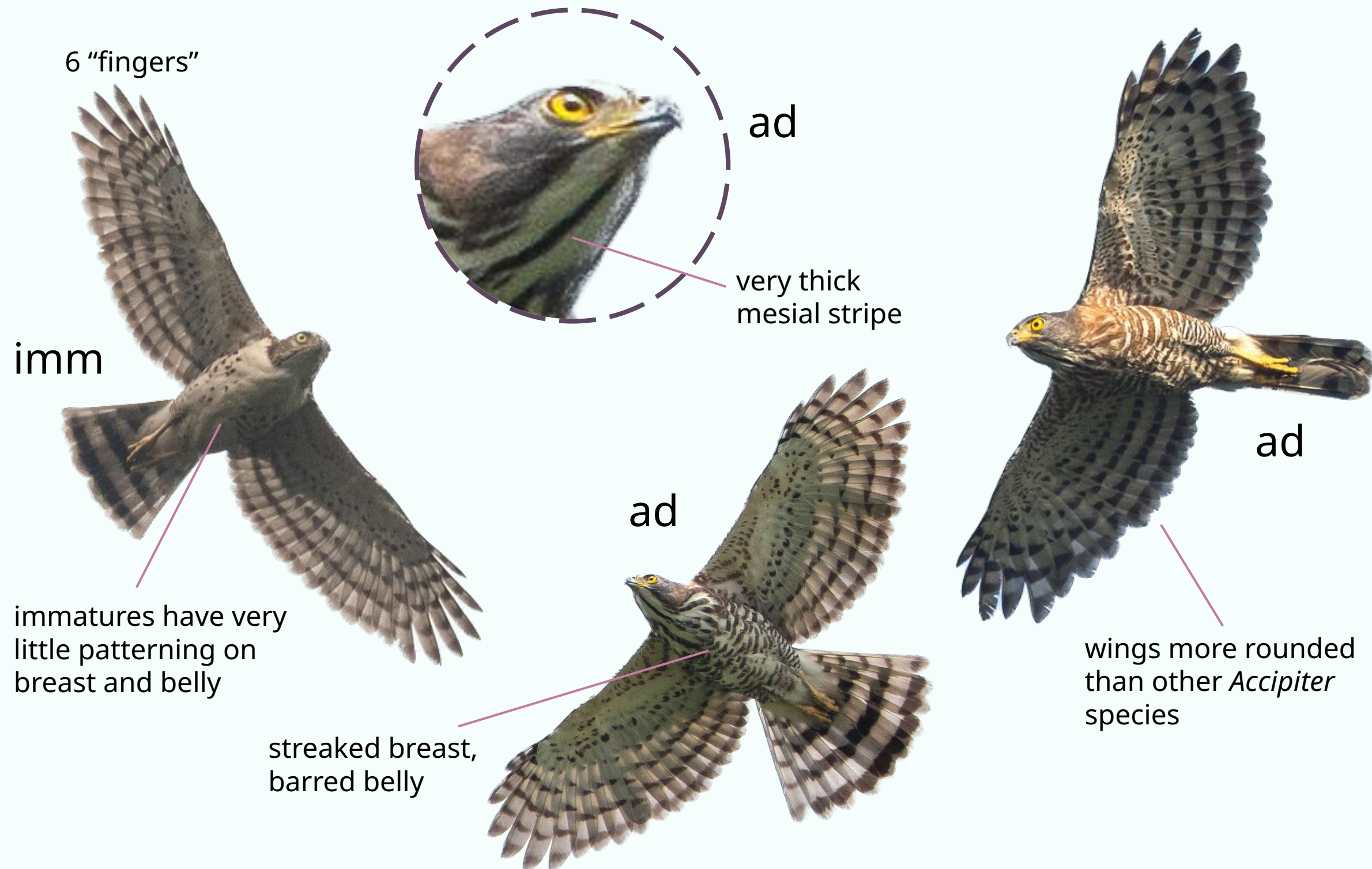


**Rare migrant**  
50–57 cm  
Peak: early Nov



**Photo credit** (top to bottom) RN, FY.

# Crested Goshawk *Lophospiza trivirgata*

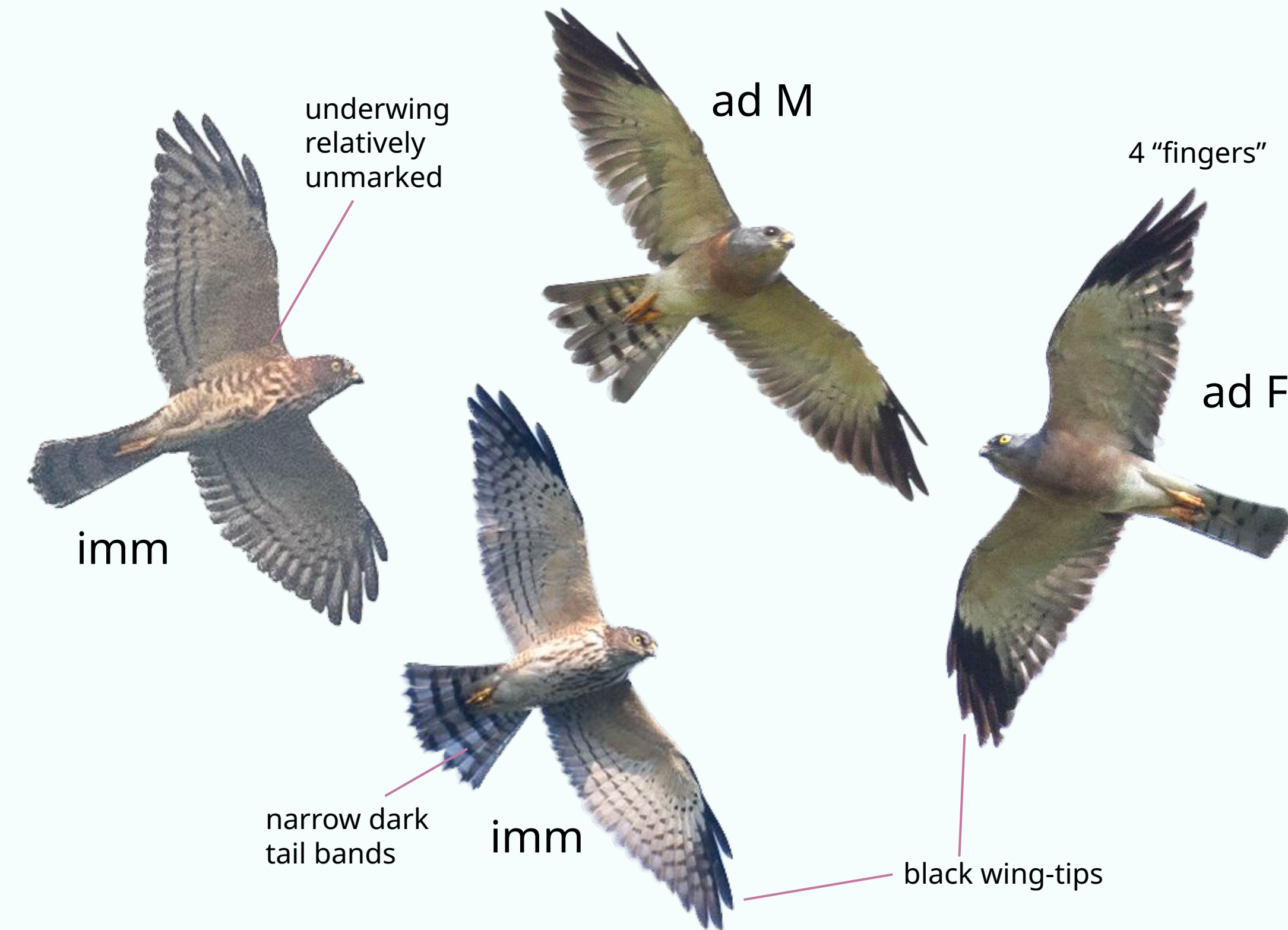


**Uncommon resident**  
40–46 cm

**Photo credit** (left to right) FY, AST (ad, top), AST (ad, bottom), FY.



# Chinese Sparrowhawk *Tachyspiza soloensis*

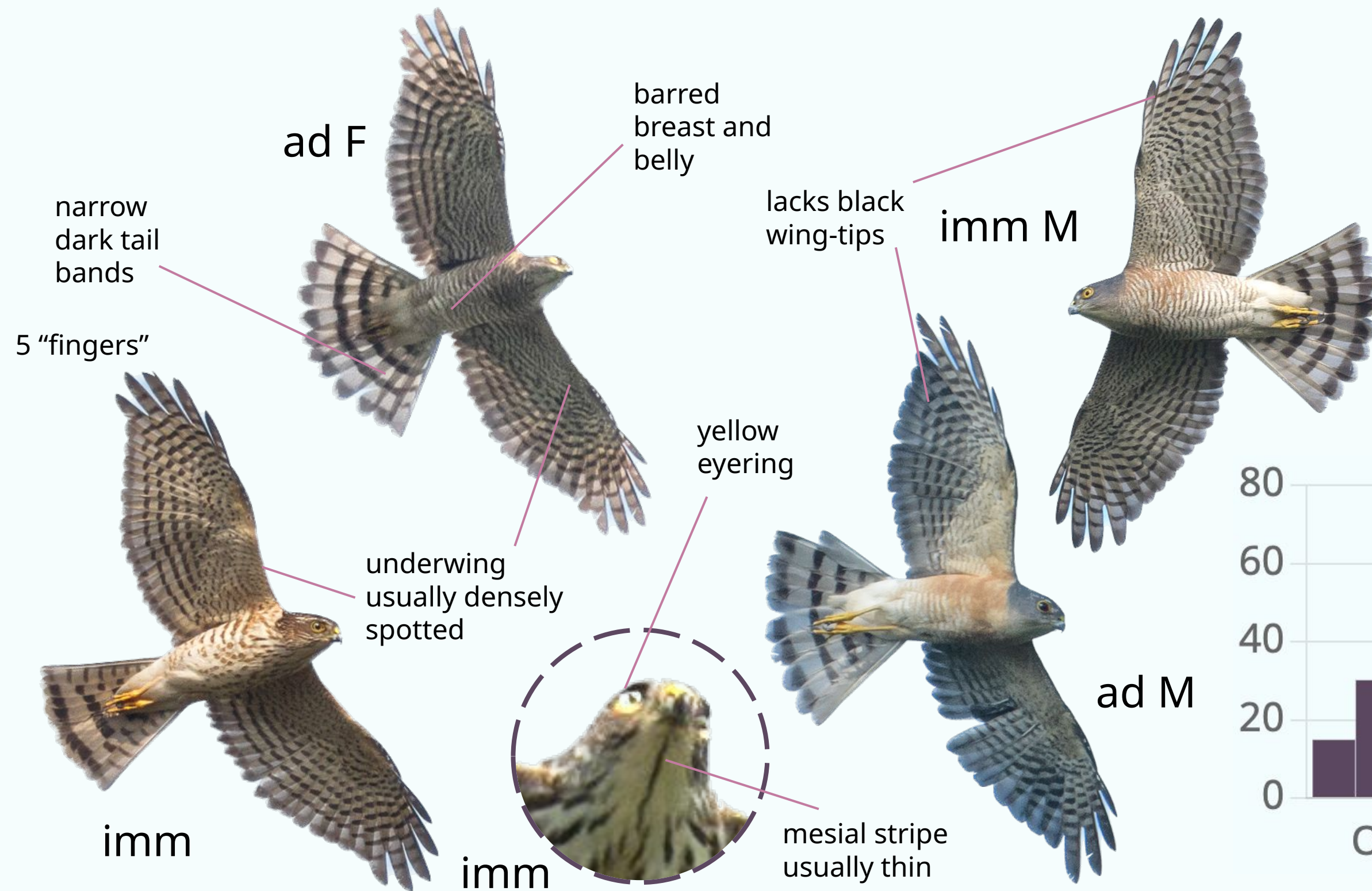


**Common migrant**  
29–35 cm  
Peak: mid Oct–early Nov



Photo credit (left to right) FY, FY, FY, AST.

# Japanese Sparrowhawk *Tachyspiza gularis*



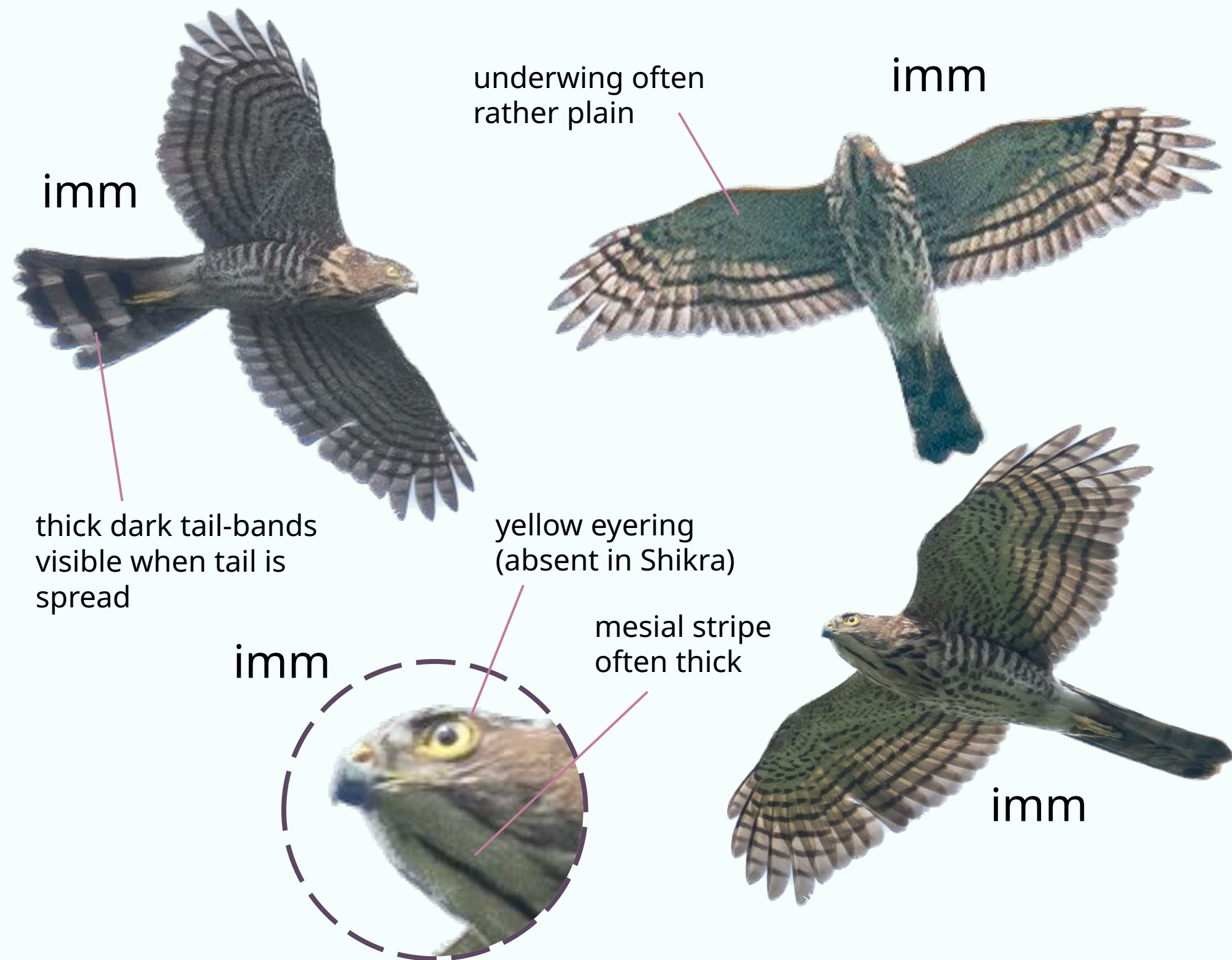
**Common migrant**  
25–31cm  
Peak: mid Oct–mid Nov



**Photo credit** (left to right) FY, FY (ad F), AST (imm), GCT, FY.



# Besra *Tachyspiza virgata*

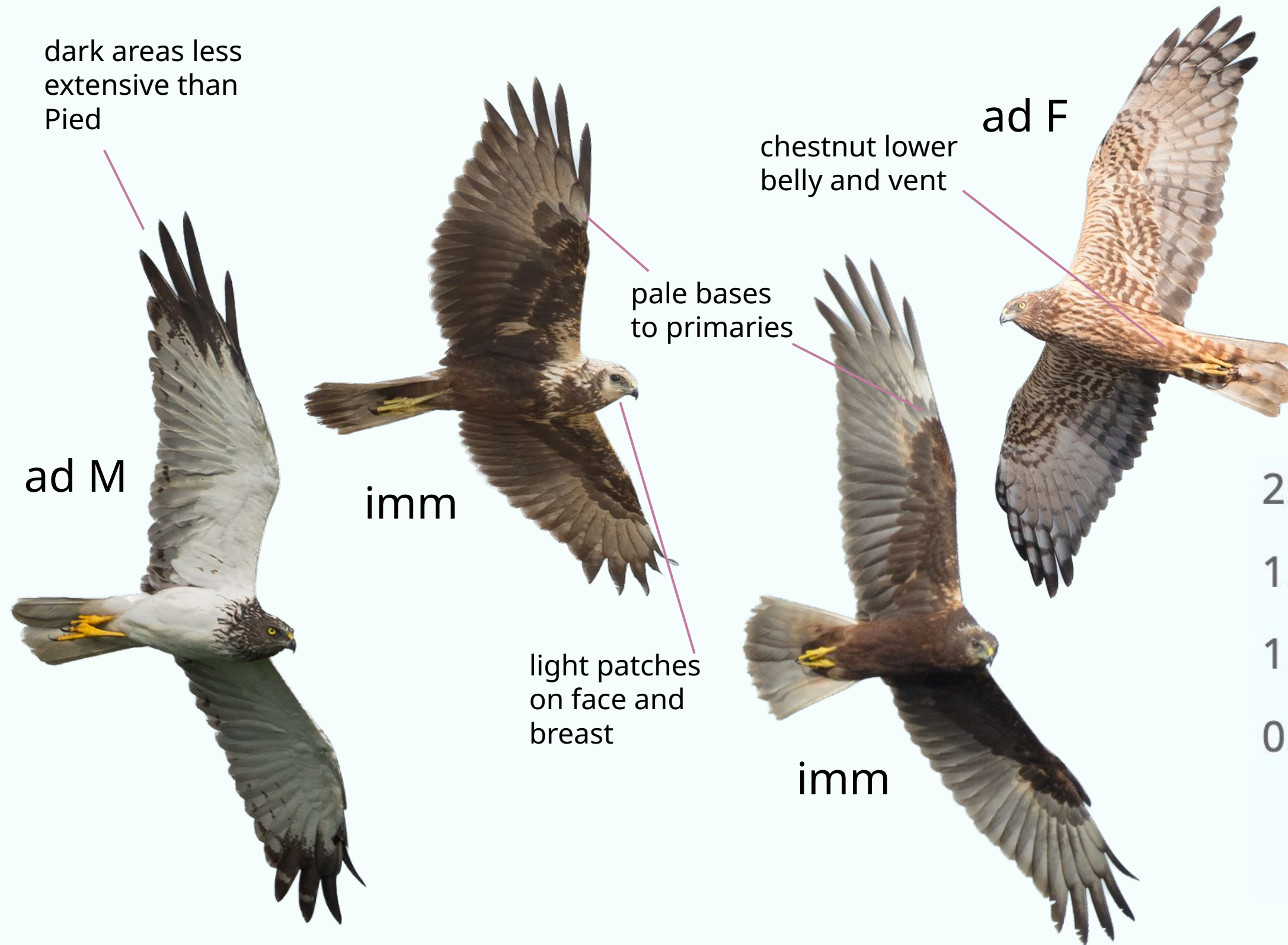


**Rare migrant**  
26–32 cm  
Most records: mid Oct–mid Nov

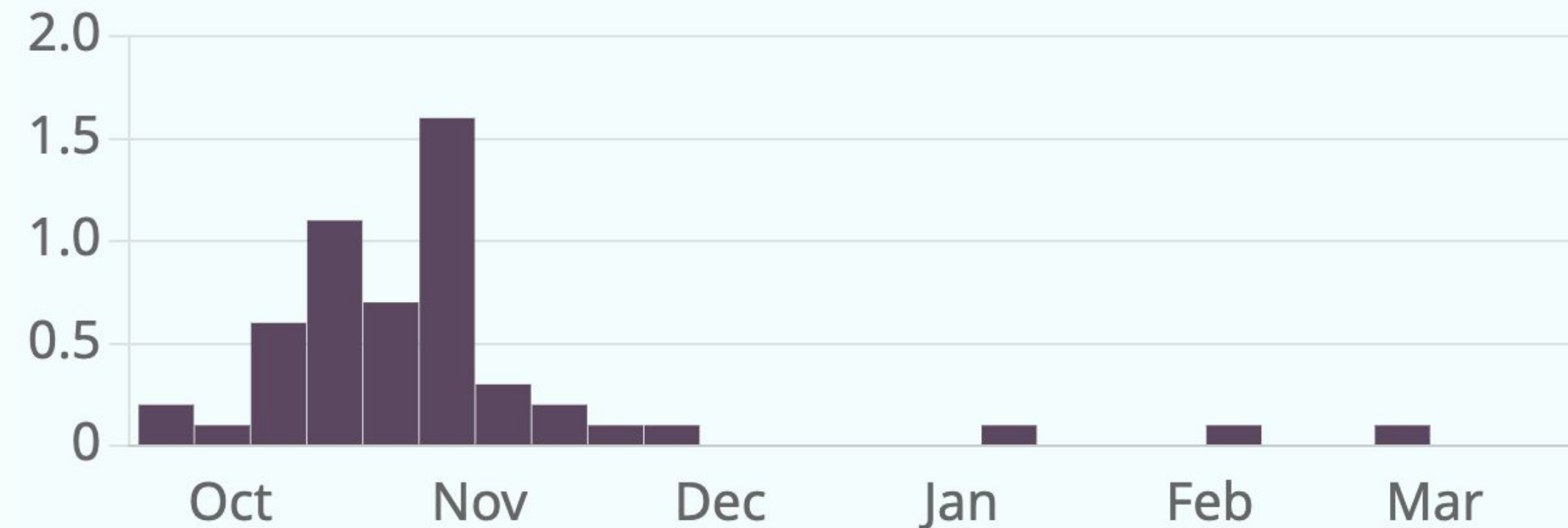


Photo credit FY (all).

# Eastern Marsh Harrier *Circus spilonotus*



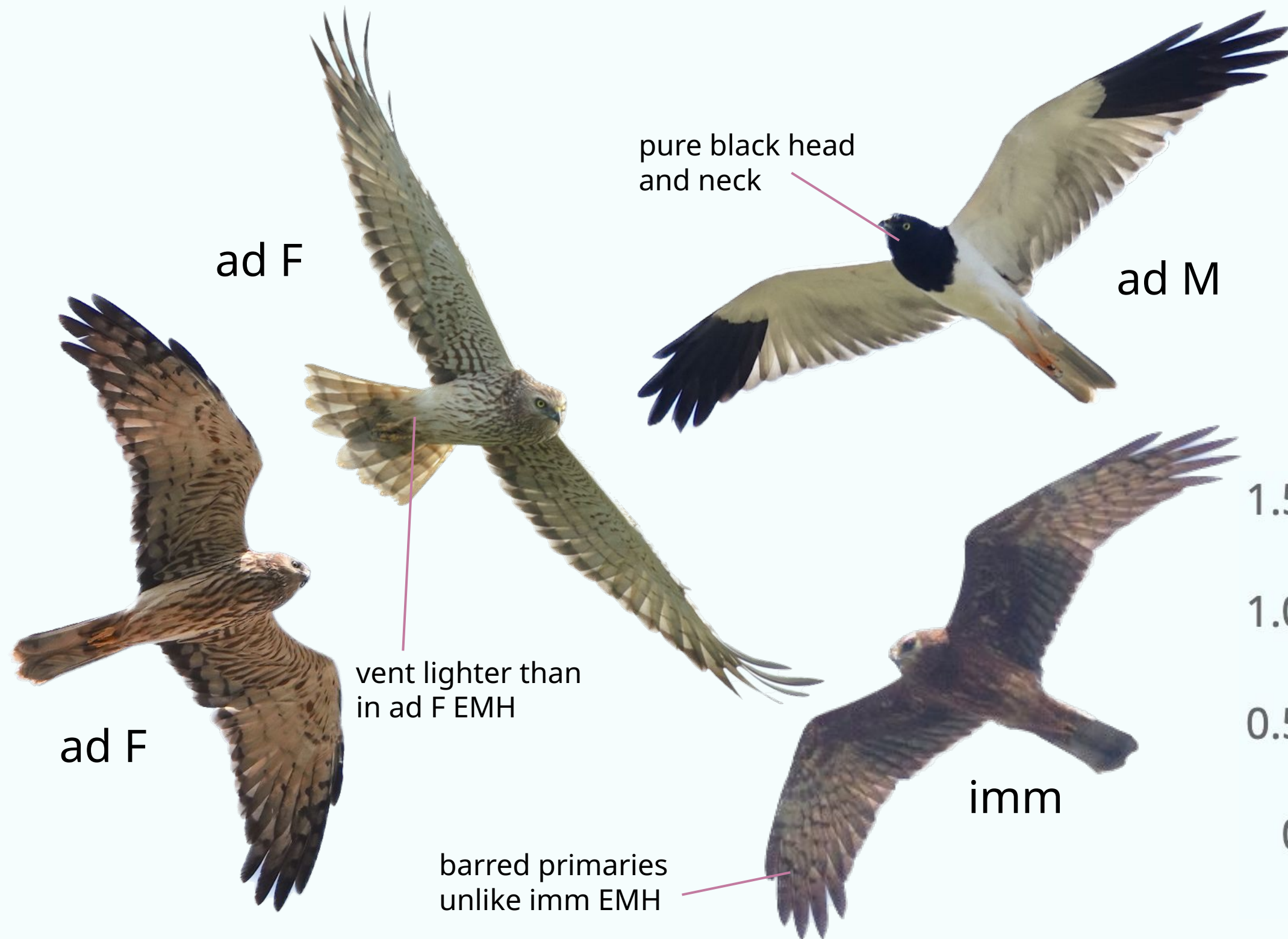
**Uncommon migrant**  
48–56 cm  
Peak: mid Oct–early Nov



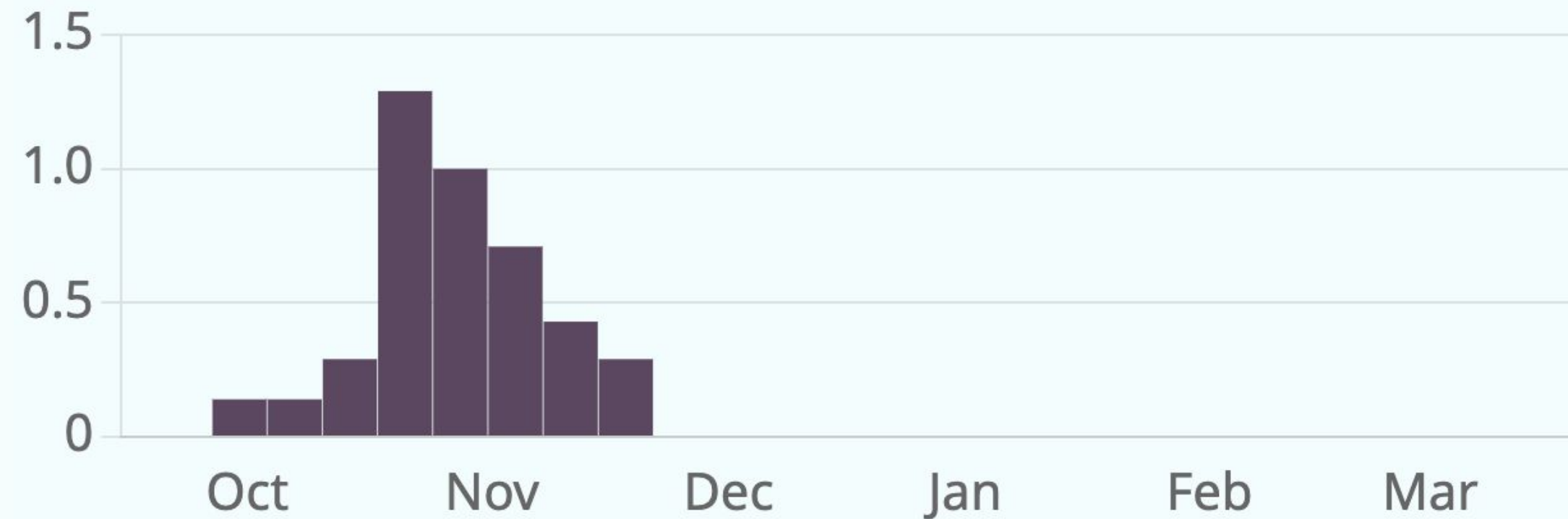
**Photo credit** (left to right) FY, FY, GCT, SYCK.



# Pied Harrier *Circus melanoleucos*

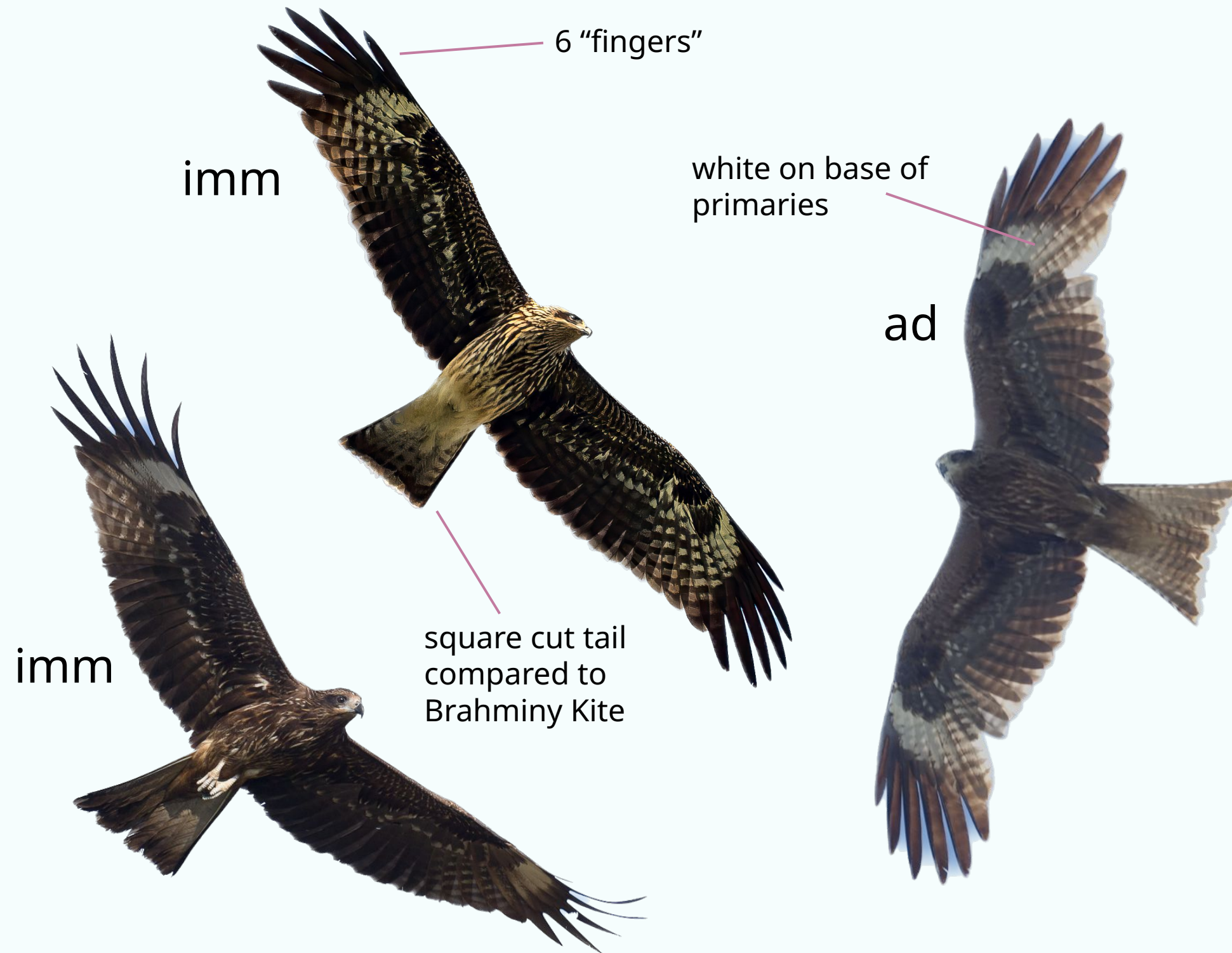


**Rare migrant**  
43–46 cm  
Most records: late Oct–late Nov

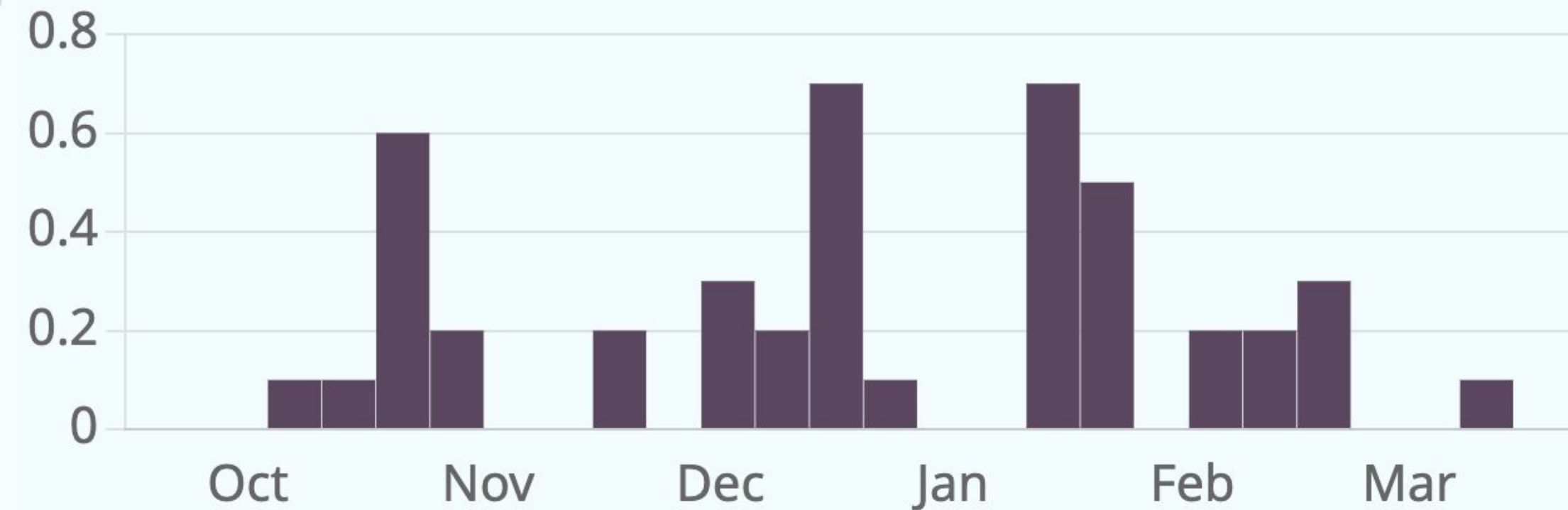


**Photo credit** (left to right) RN, GCT, RN (ad M), FY (imm).

# Black Kite *Milvus migrans*



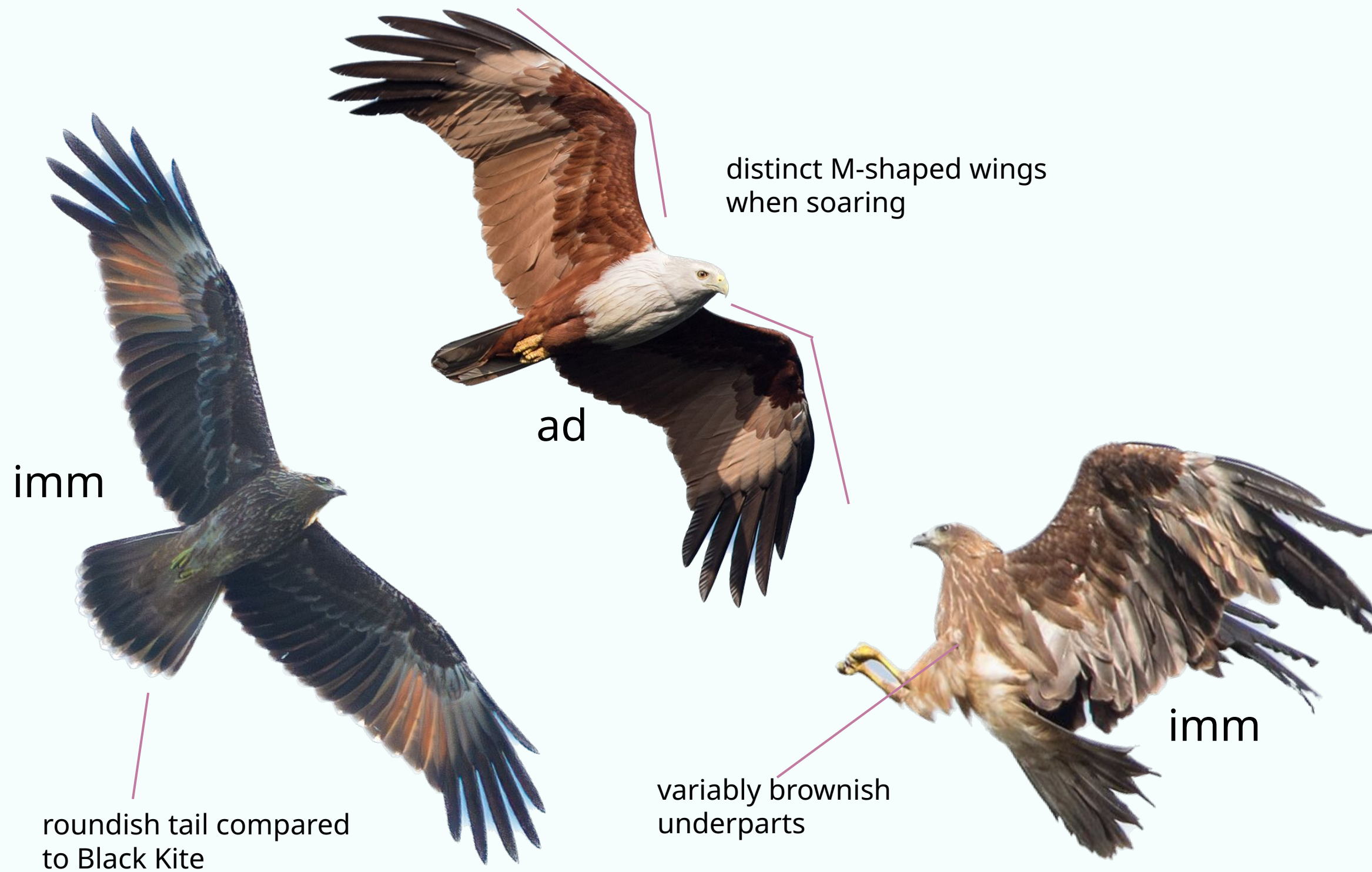
**Rare migrant**  
61–66 cm  
Peak: late Dec–late Jan



**Photo credit** (left to right) FY, ZYF, RN.



# Brahminy Kite *Haliastur indus*



**Very common resident**  
44–52 cm

**Photo credit** (left to right) YJW, SYCK, SYCK.

# White-bellied Sea Eagle *Ichthyophaga leucogaster*

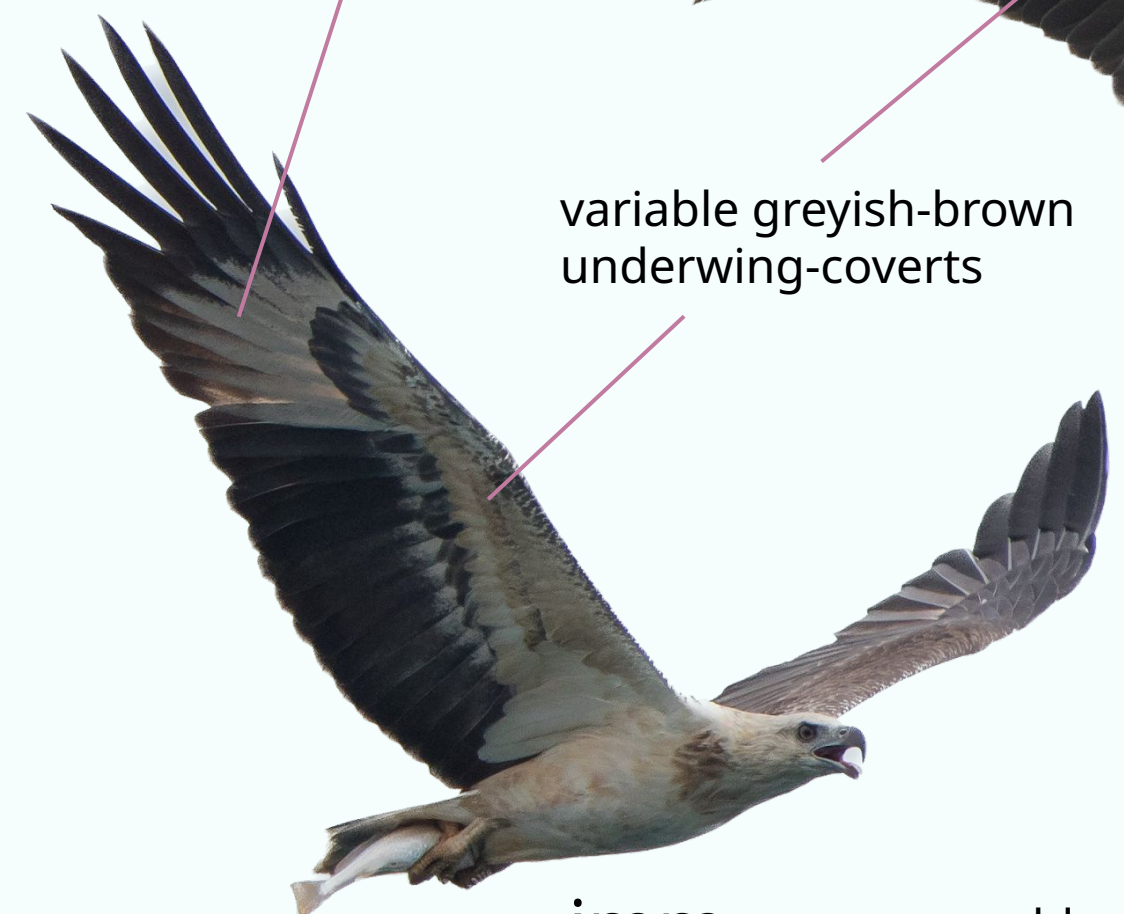


imm



much white on  
inner primaries

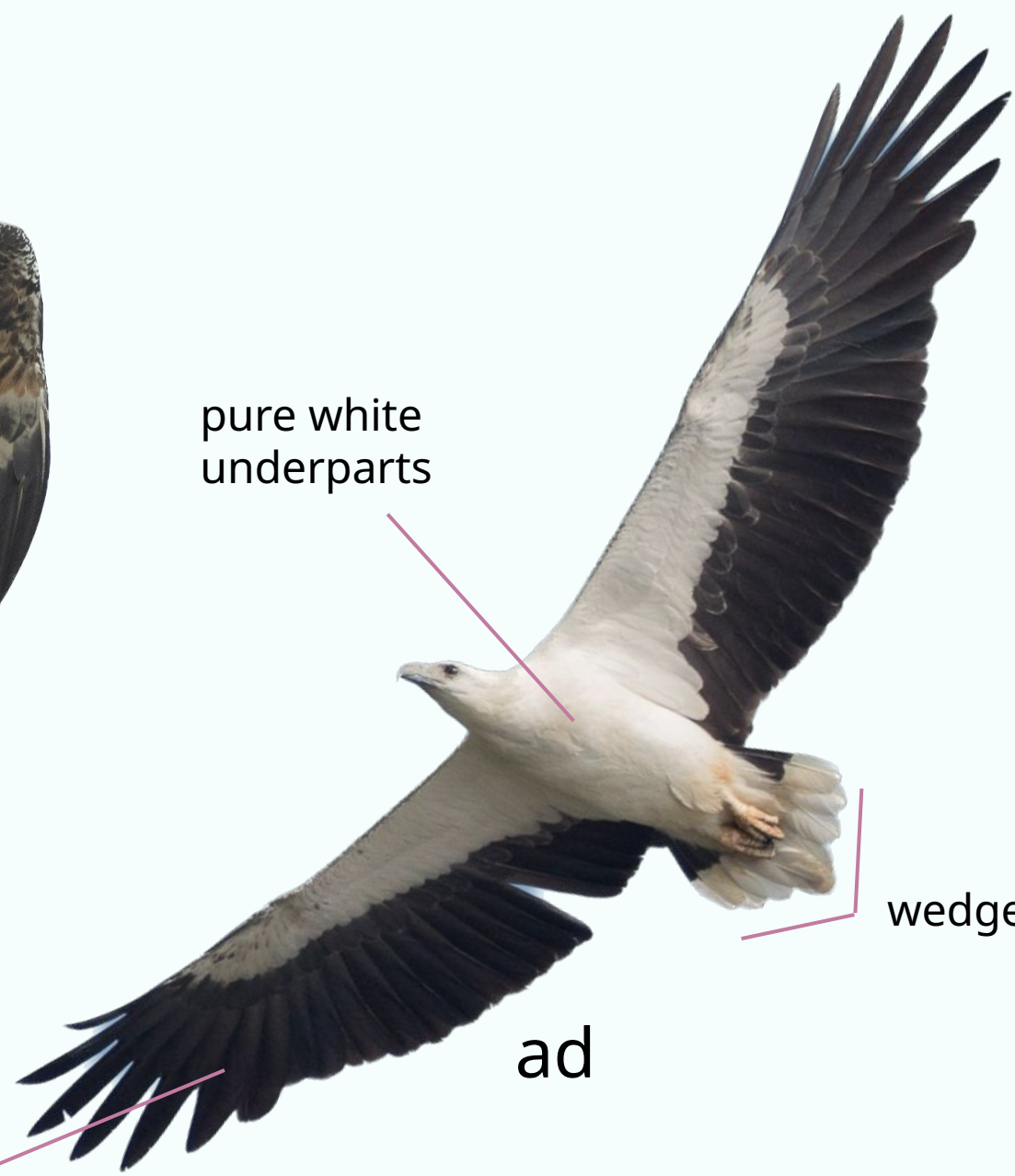
variable greyish-brown  
underwing-coverts



imm

black flight feathers

pure white  
underparts



ad

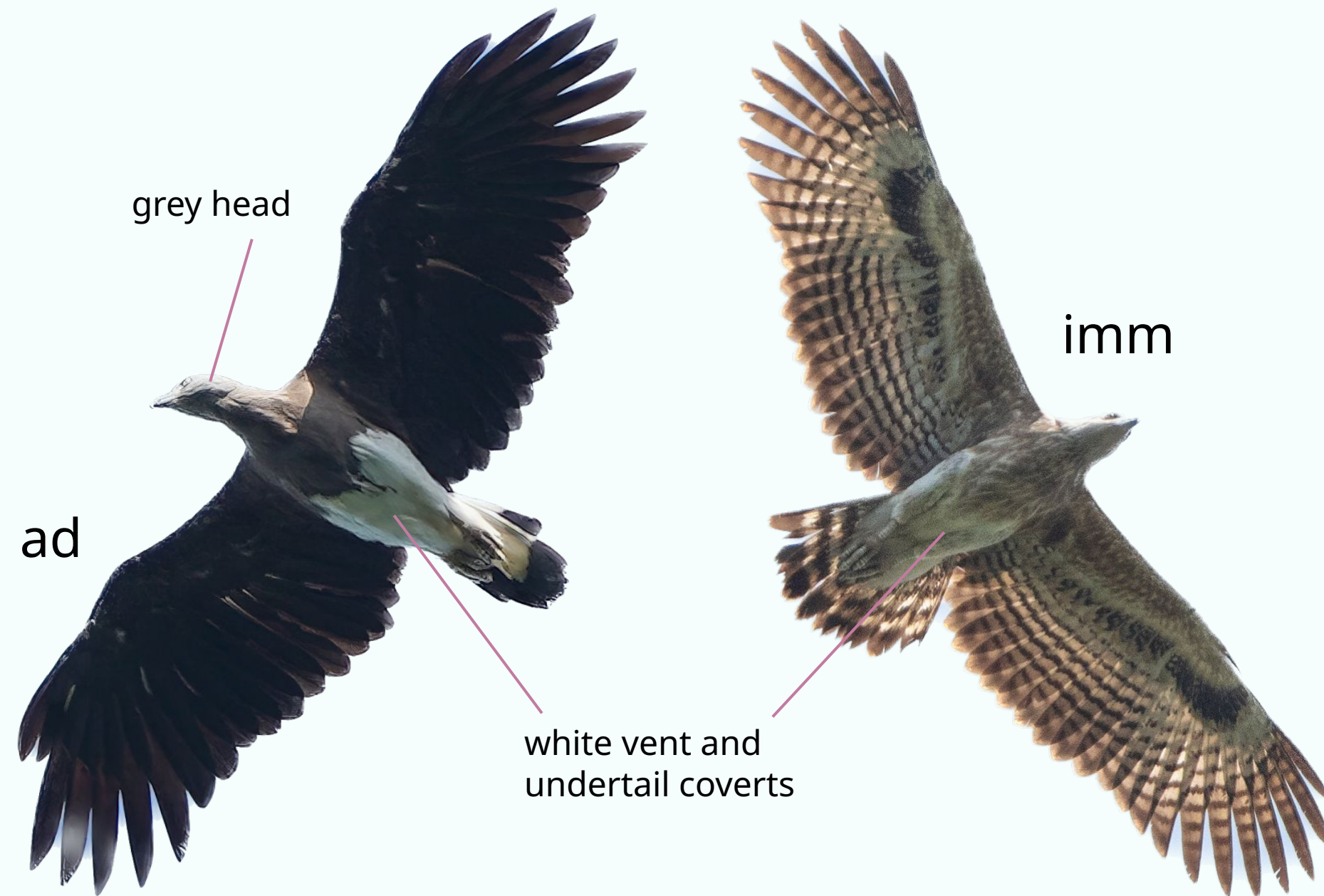
wedged tail

**Very common resident**  
70–85 cm

**Photo credit** (left to right) AST, YJW, FY.



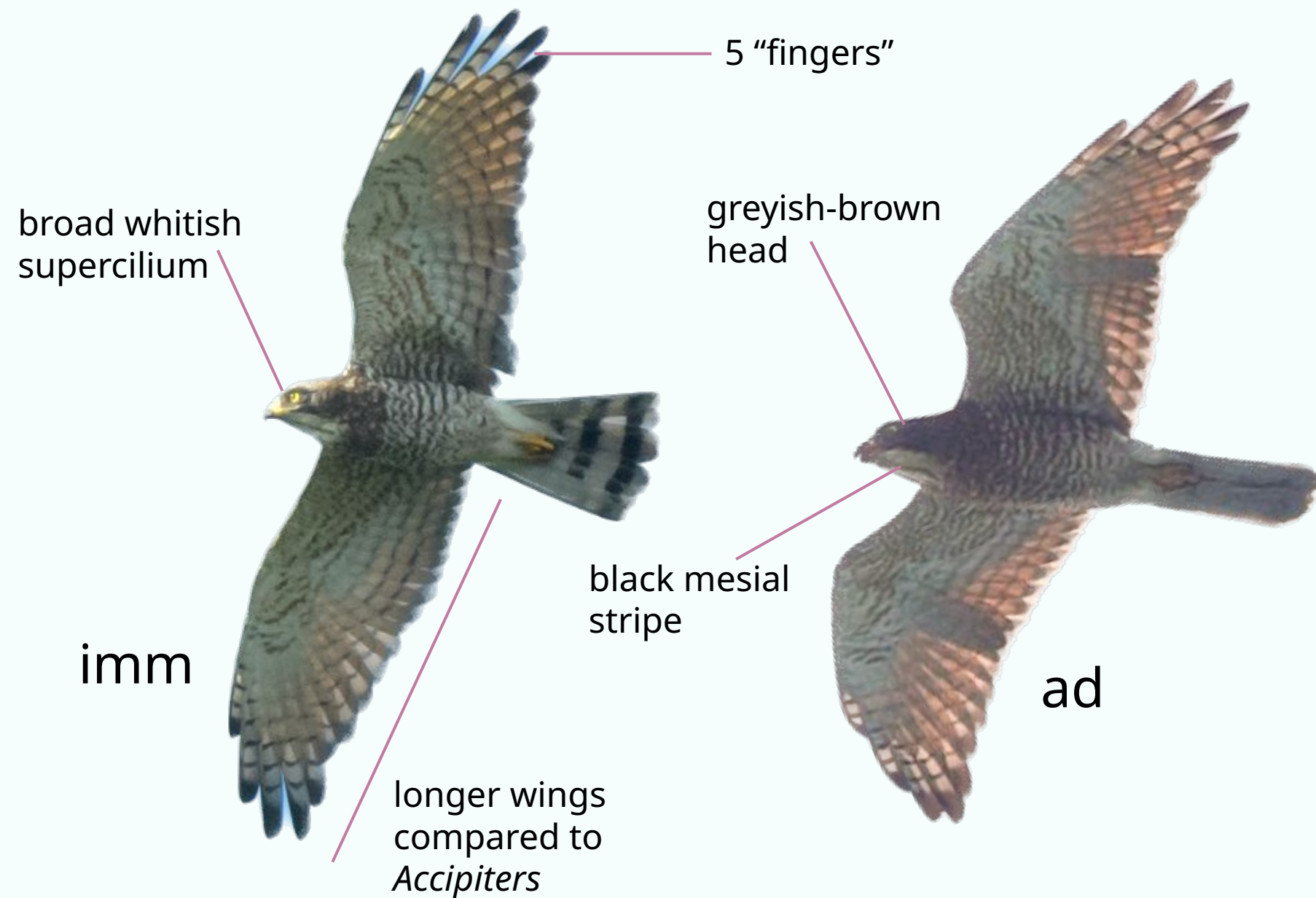
# Grey-headed Fish Eagle *Ichthyophaga ichthyaetus*



**Common resident**  
69–74 cm

**Photo credit** (left to right) JT, SYCK.

# Grey-faced Buzzard *Butastur indicus*



**Uncommon migrant**  
41–49 cm  
Peak: late Oct–early Nov



**Photo credit** (left to right) GCT, FY.



# Eastern Buzzard *Buteo japonicus*



Note: very similar shape and size as Common Buzzard

**Rare migrant**  
51–57 cm  
Most records: early Nov–late Nov

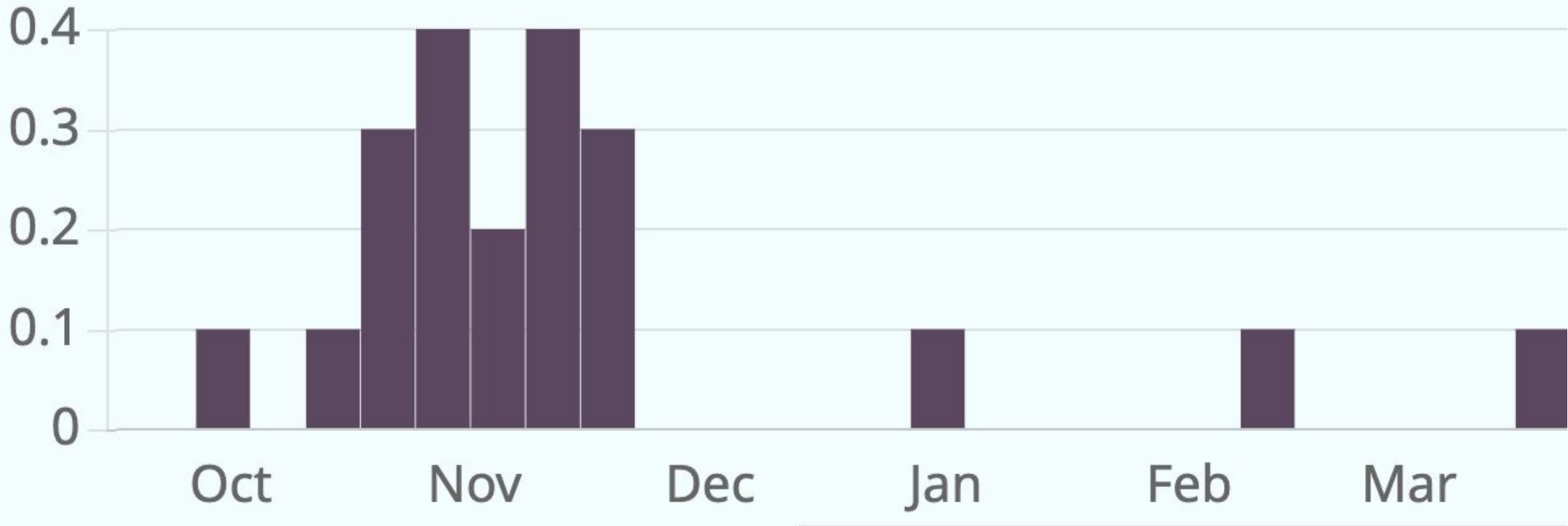
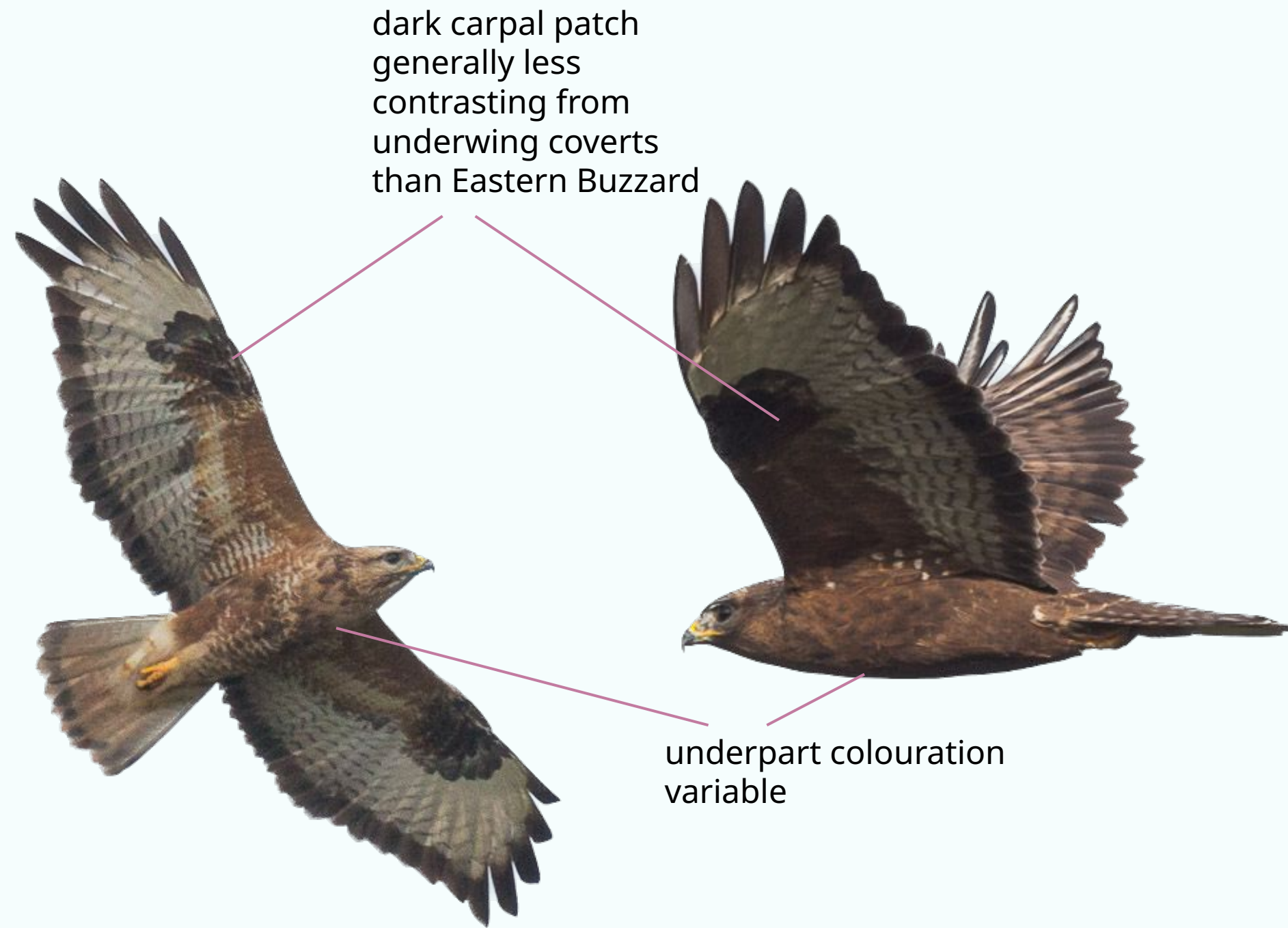


Photo credit FY.

# Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*



Note: very similar shape and size as Eastern Buzzard

**Uncommon migrant**  
39–47 cm  
Most records: late Oct–mid Nov

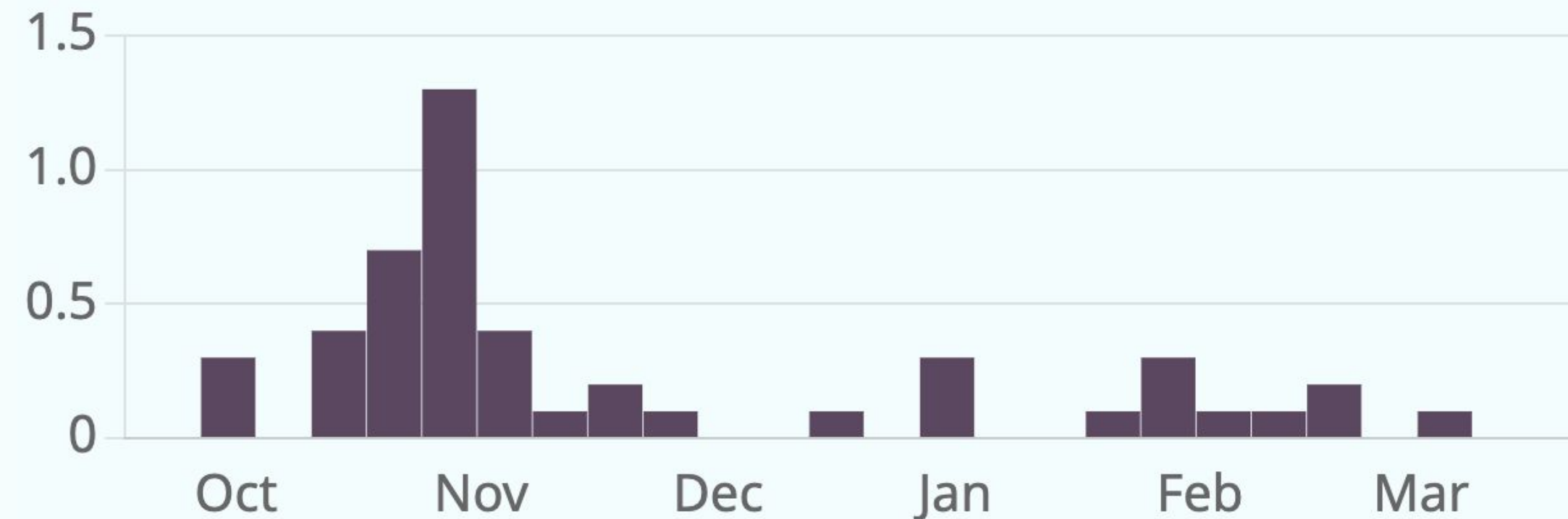
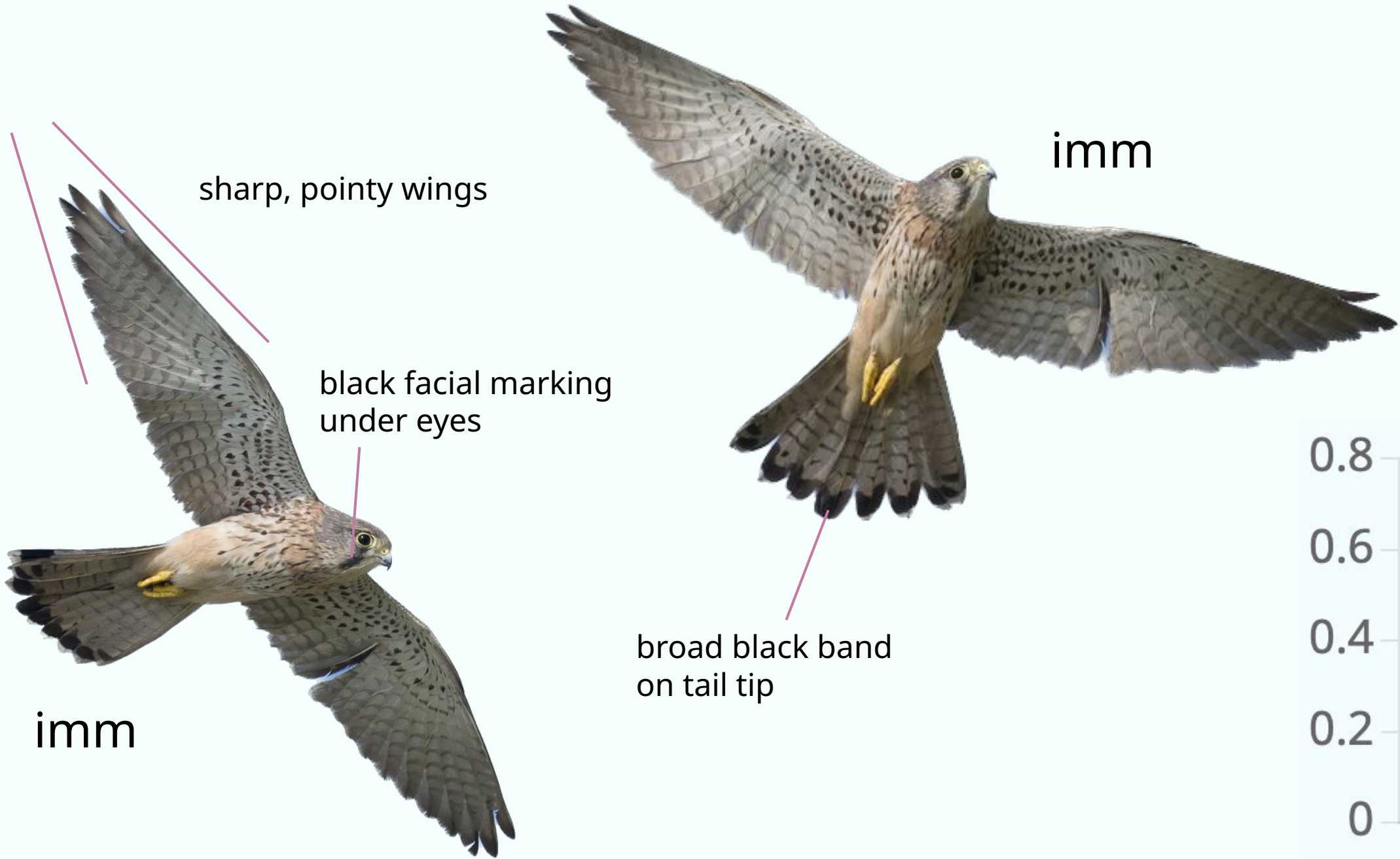


Photo credit FY (all).



# Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*



**Rare migrant**  
30–34 cm  
Most records: early Nov

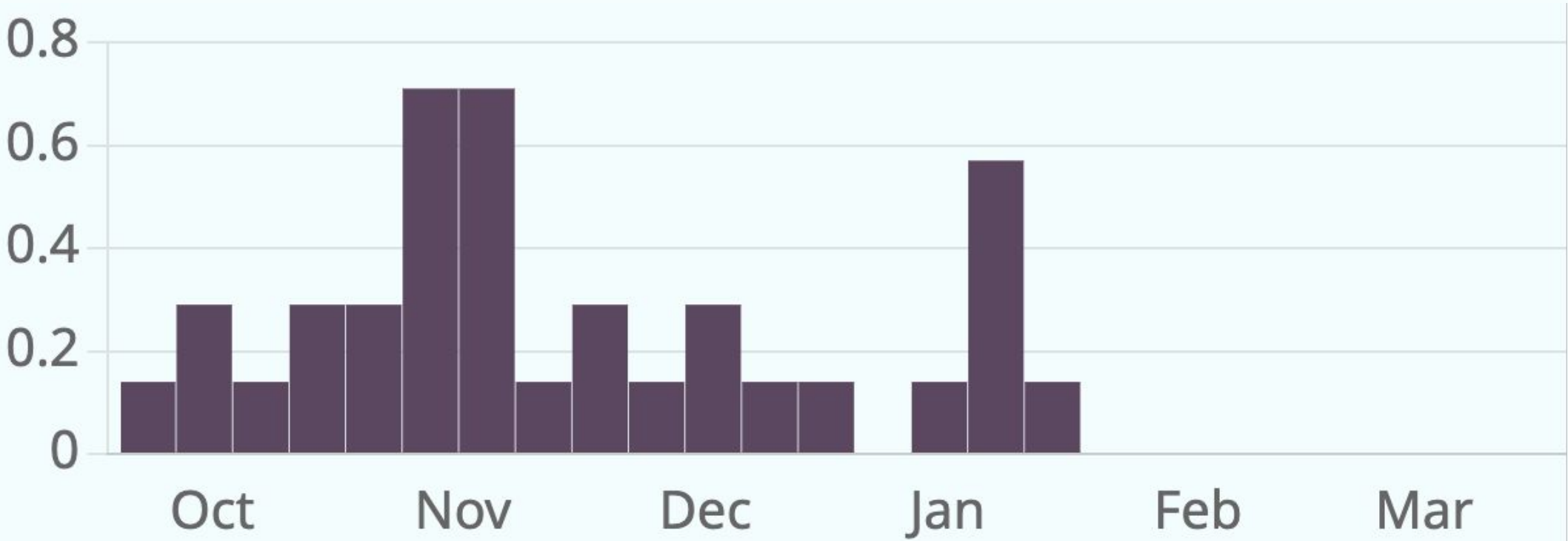
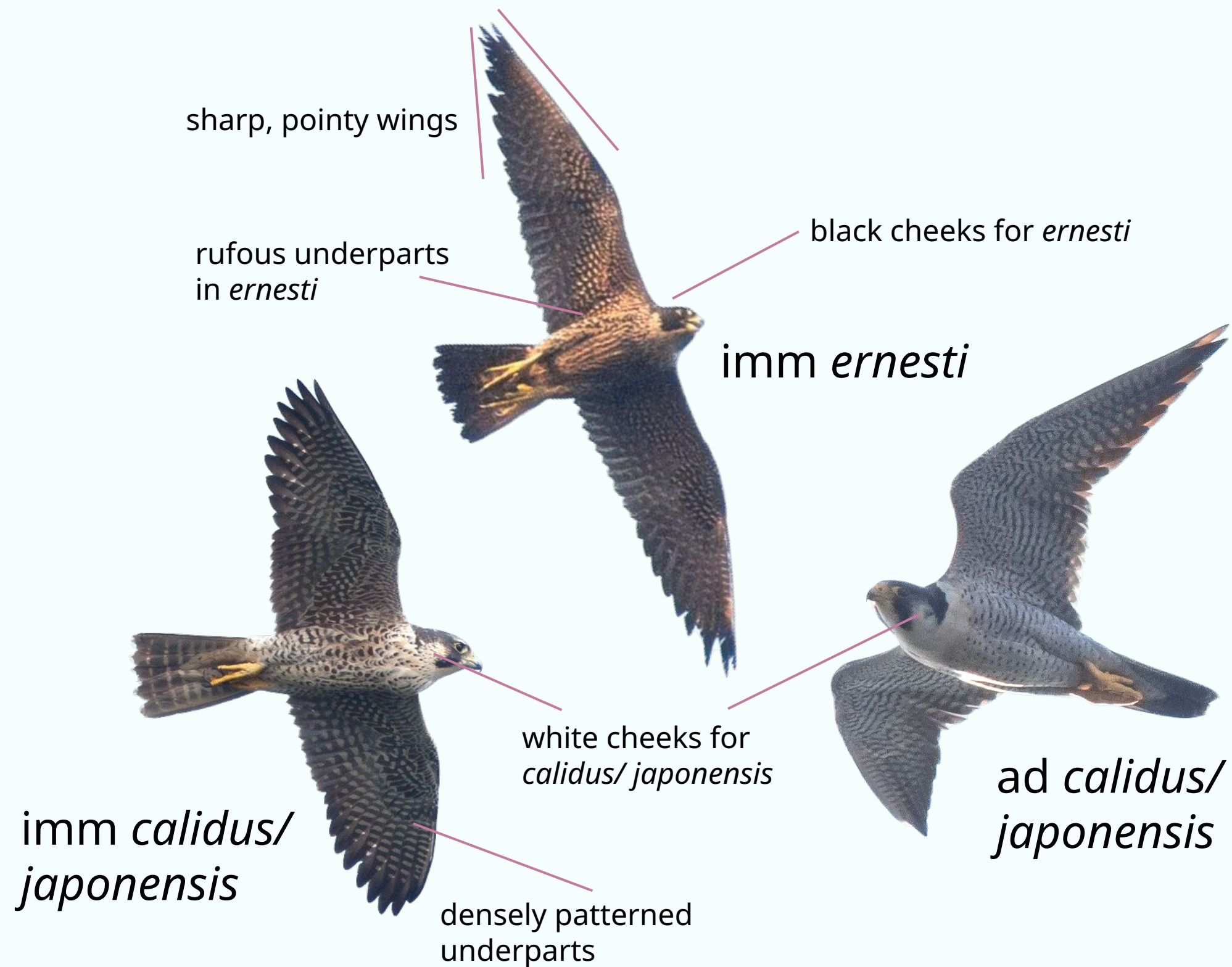


Photo credit FY (all).

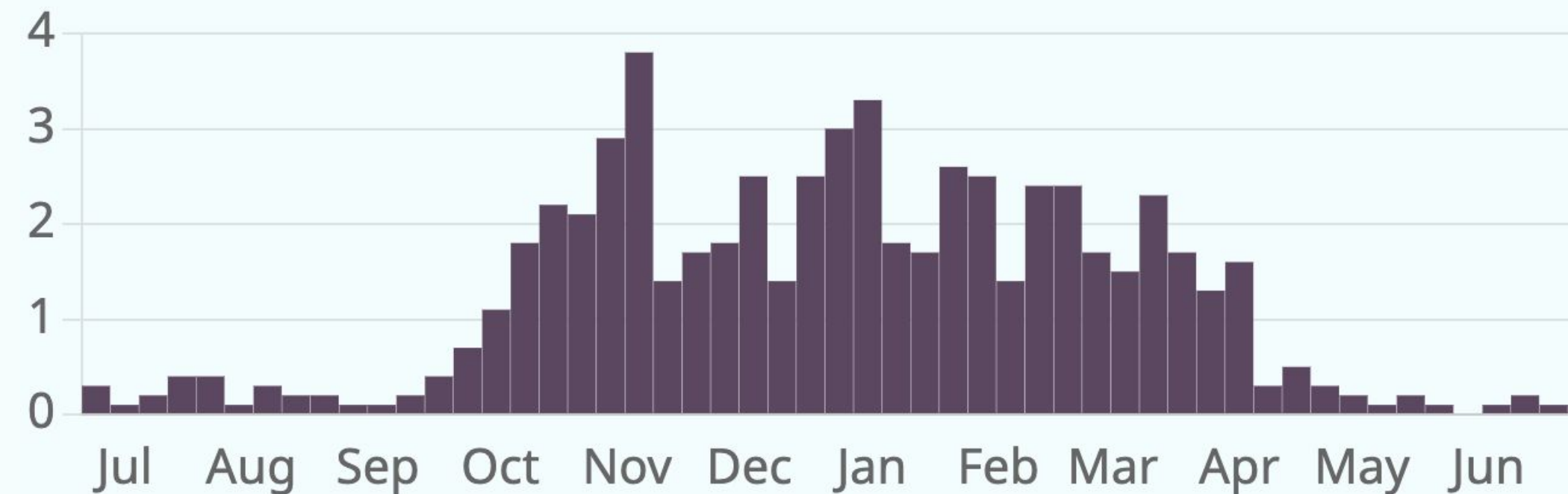
# Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*



**Uncommon migrant, rare visitor**

38–48 cm

Peak: mid Oct–late Mar



**Photo credit** (left to right) FY, FY, AST.



Or maybe you just landed  
yourself a **MEGA!**



**Bat Hawk**  
*Macheiramphus alcinus*

**Short-toed  
Snake Eagle**  
*Circaetus gallicus*



**Eastern  
Imperial Eagle**  
*Aquila heliaca*



**Shikra**  
*Tachyspiza badia*



**Lesser Kestrel**  
*Falco naumanni*



**Steppe Eagle**  
*Aquila nipalensis*



**Eurasian Hobby**  
*Falco subbuteo*



**Amur Falcon**  
*Falco amurensis*



**Eurasian  
Sparrowhawk**  
*Accipiter nisus*



**Cinereous Vulture**  
*Aegypius monachus*



**Himalayan Vulture**  
*Gyps himalayensis*

Photo credit for title panel (left to right): AST, FY,  
AST, FY, RN, AST.  
Photo credit for this panel (left to right) top row:  
YSP, FY, FY, GCT (Shikra), MK (Kestrel); middle row:  
FY, AJ, FY; bottom row: RN, FY, FY.



# There are other migratory birds overhead as well...


## Swifts and Needletails

**Pacific Swift**  
*Apus pacificus*



**Common migrant**  
18–19.5 cm

**Swifts**

PACIFIC	COMMON
	
	

Pacific has a white rump which Common lacks; also note the more diffuse, larger white throat of Pacific

**White-throated Needletail**  
*Hirundapus caudacutus*



**Uncommon migrant**  
21–22 cm

**Silver-backed Needletail**  
*Hirundapus cochinchinensis*



**Rare migrant**  
20.5–22 cm

**Brown-backed Needletail**  
*Hirundapus giganteus*





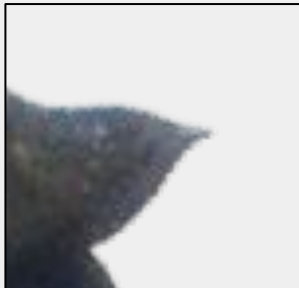
**Rare migrant and visitor**  
21–24.5 cm

**Common Swift**  
*Apus apus*



**Vagrant**  
17 cm

**Needletails**

WHITE-THROATED	SILVER-BACKED	BROWN-BACKED
		

White-throated is the only one with a white throat. Silver-backed has a light brown throat which can be difficult to pick out.

Swifts spend their lives in the air. Their legs are weak, adapted for clinging to vertical structures, where they build their nests.

## Swallows and Martins

**Eastern Red-rumped Swallow**  
*Cecropis daurica*



**Common migrant**  
16–17 cm



**Asian House Martin**  
*Delichon dasypus*



**Uncommon migrant**  
12–13 cm

**Siberian House Martin**  
*Delichon lagopodum*



**Vagrant** 13–14 cm

**House Martins**

SIBERIAN	ASIAN
	

**Siberian has a more extensive white rump**

**Barn Swallow**  
*Hirundo rustica*



**Very common migrant**  
15 cm

**Sand Martin**  
*Riparia riparia*

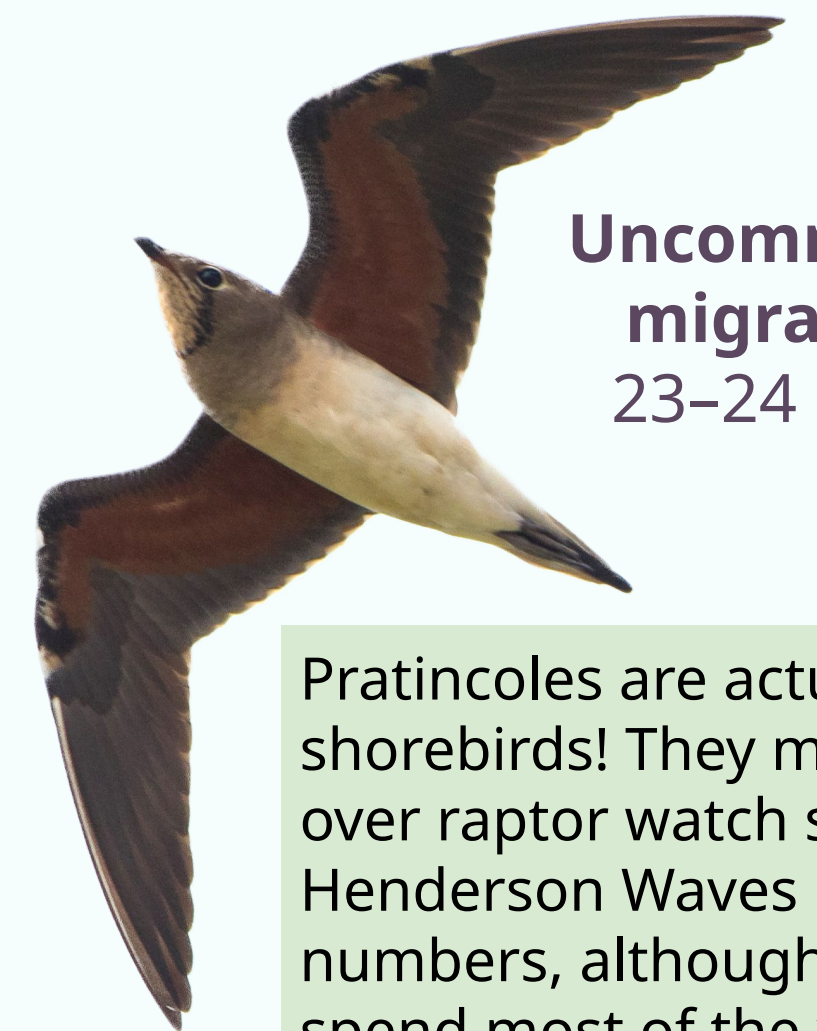


**Rare migrant**  
11.5–13 cm



## Pratincole

**Oriental Pratincole**  
*Glareola maldivarum*



**Uncommon migrant**  
23–24 cm

Pratincoles are actually shorebirds! They migrate over raptor watch sites like Henderson Waves in large numbers, although they spend most of the winter at wetlands where they hawk for insects in flight.

Swallows are fast, agile flyers that capture small insects in flight. Unlike swifts, they do perch. Not pictured here is the resident **Pacific Swallow**.

**Photo credit** (left to right) Swallows and Martins, top row: FY, FY, FY, FY, FY; Swallows and Martins, bottom row: YJW, AST, FY; SHM vs AHM: YJW, RN.

**Photo credit** (left to right) Oriental Pratincole: AST; Pacific Swift: FY, FY; Common Swift: AJ, AJ; Pac Swift vs Common – Pac: FY, FY, Common: AJ, AJ; Needletail comparison: FY, SYCK, FY; All needletails: FY.