

BIRDS OF PREY

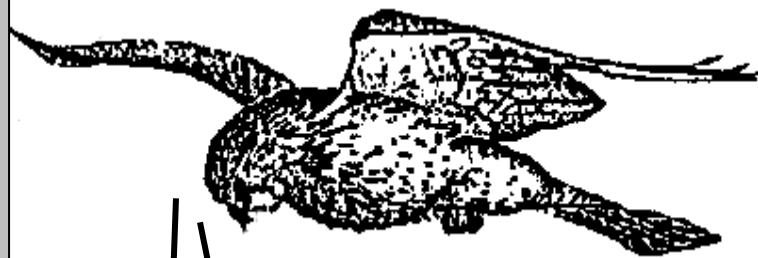
Different birds have different adaptations for the particular type of food they eat. A bird that preys on other animals has to have very specialised body parts, in order to catch and eat its prey.



Look down from the top of the lookout. Imagine you are a harrier, Do you think that you would be able to see a mouse in the grass from that height?

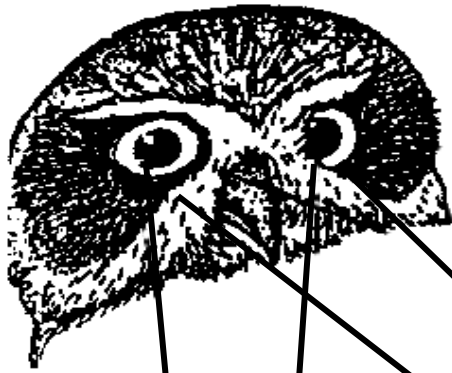
Remember that the harrier would be a lot higher than you are and also be moving!

Do you think a harrier has strong eyesight or weak?

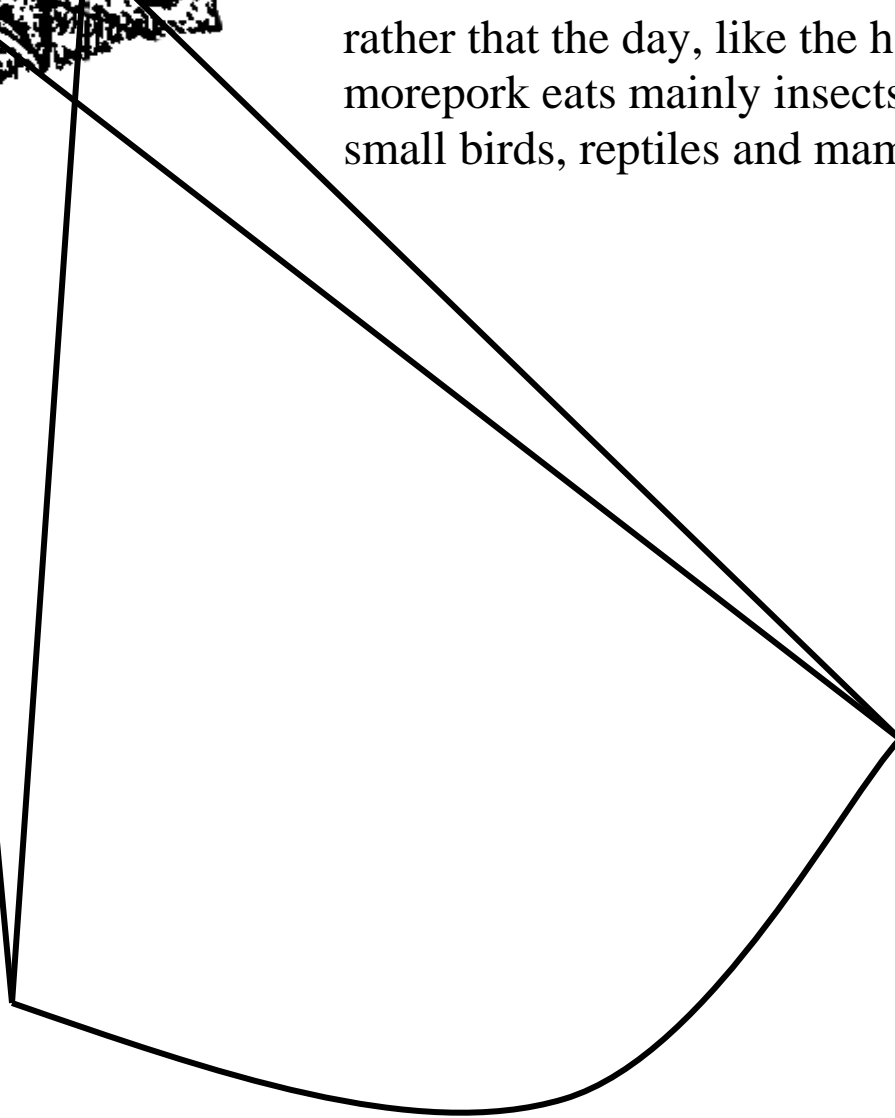


Hawk's eye view





The morepork is another bird of prey, however, it is different from the harrier in many ways. The morepork is an owl, which means that it hunts at night, rather than the day, like the harrier. The morepork eats mainly insects, but also small birds, reptiles and mammals.



Sketch what you think a morepork's leg looks like. Watch the morepork's at the reserve carefully to get the features of the legs correct.

Look at the shape and location of the morepork's eyes.

In which direction can it see?

A: only to the front

B: only to the side

C: to the side, front and back

D: to the side, front, back and up



The morepork, like all owls, has eyes that face forward, like you. The reason its eyes are like that is to give the owl the ability to see directly in front of it. This helps the owl when hunting at night, like other owls, the morepork can turn its head nearly all the way round.

Like other nocturnal animals, the morepork has sensitive eyes that allow it to see better at night, however the morepork also uses other senses to help it find its prey at night.

What do you think the other main sense is that owls use to catch their prey at night?

Close your eyes when you are in the forest, and be very quiet. Listen to the sounds of the forest. Do you think that you would be able to hear the rustle of a mouse in the undergrowth, like a morepork?

All birds of prey have strong beaks and talons for capturing, holding and eating prey.

This is a typical predators foot better for gripping than walking. It has razor-sharp talons.



What do you think the strong, curved beak of the Harrier and falcon would be good for?

What do you think diurnal means?



The New Zealand Falcon is another bird of prey found in this country. Like the harrier it is a diurnal hunter. The falcon is a rare bird of prey.

Name: _____