

**PRELIMINARY STUDY OF THE FAUNA OF RODENTS IN THE
NORTHERN KHORASAN WITH THE AID OF PELLETS FROM THE
PREY BIRDS**

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Summary

Prey Birds make up two order of the Aves class: Falconiformes and Strigiformes; some of them are myophages as: *Buteo*, *Otus* and *Asio* genera which live in northeastern Iran. Safeguarding and protection of these birds are essential because they control the fauna of rodents, one of the main plant pests. Myophages regurgitate indigested part of the bait including bones, hair etc., in the form of skein, this is called pellets. Pellets are usually found in the resting area of the prey birds. Morphological and biometrical studies of the separated parts from the skeleton specially the teeth would help to identify the rodents at the level of family, genera, and species.

Study on the pellets from Northern Khorassan, indicated that the majority of samples belong to the family of Microtidae and few of them to the family of Muridae and Cricetidae, and in Northeasten Khorassan the majority of rodents belong to the family of Gerbillidae. In this study besides distinguishing the taxa of *Pitymys afganus* and *Gerbillus sp.*, resulted information concerning the

density and dynamic of population, and their ecological characteristic. So far this research seems beneficiary in regard with practical and theoretical problems about plant pests.

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