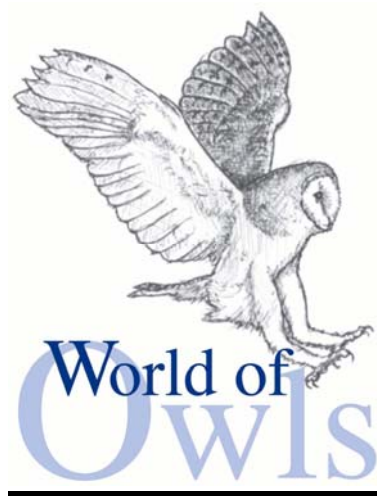


An introduction to birds of prey & Wildlife.



A handbook for teachers by Toei Foster

In association with



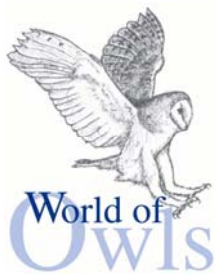
This pack is designed to help educate children about owls, birds of prey, wildlife, conservation and general pet care.

Many topics are covered, as you can see below, and it is entirely up to you what subjects you cover. All sheets can be photocopied and handed out to the class. We hope that you find the information in this teacher's handbook useful. For further information check out our website: www.worldofowls.com

This booklet is copywrited World of Owls Co Ltd .R.

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The 'World of Owls'

The 'World of Owls' is a charitable organisation dedicated to the welfare of owls and other birds of prey. The primary objective of 'The World of Owls' is to ensure the survival of owls and other birds of prey throughout the world.

'The World of Owls' objectives will be achieved by rescue, conservation, education, research and restoration of their natural habitat.

The moment Harry Potter hit our cinema screens World of Owls began getting calls about the suitability of owls as family pets.

Owls are magnificent birds; few avian families have such diversity in its ranks. Owls are found right around the world and they have all got one thing in common, diminishing numbers in the wild thanks to the pressures of man. Owls are birds of prey; they are not budgerigar's content with a small cage and a mirror. They need specialised feeding, large outdoor free-flight aviaries and advanced knowledge in their care.

Owls will never become freely available like kittens or puppies. However, they can be bought.... at a price! Current demand has driven up prices by unscrupulous bird dealers, eager to cash in on the craze are willing to supply a growing, ill informed, market.

We have had a call from a vet telling us of a 'concerned' parent who asked him to remove the talons from a Barn owl destined to become a child's Christmas present. An owl without talons could not perch properly or feed properly, naturally the vet refused to carry out this barbarity. Owls talons are like our toes – we couldn't balance to stand or walk without our toes!

We need to educate people that owls do not make suitable pets. Most of our birds are rescued, mainly from people who have bought baby owls as pets because they thought they would make a 'cool' pet. A fully-grown owl has razor sharp talons and a tendency to smell and make a lot of mess. Most people don't realise just how much trouble it is to look after an owl and start to neglect them. We have to pick up the pieces of these situations that bad owners create by not looking after their owl.

We are the only specialist organisation in Northern Ireland that is dedicated to the welfare of owls amongst other birds of prey, both in captivity and in the wild.

Did you know...

- That despite the fact that 21 owl species are listed in the 'Red Data Book' of species in danger of extinction, no global survival plan currently exists for any owl species?
- That there are 227 known species of owls in the world yet we don't know the wild population of any of them?

- That at this moment some 2000 sub-species already require captive breeding if they are to survive?
- Our zoo community only has the space to save about 900 sub-species by breeding them in captivity?
- This is why the World of Owls and colleagues in O.T.A.G. (Owl Taxon Advisory Group) strive to raise funds and work to save wild animals and their wild habitats in countries where they occur naturally.
- We only have about 50-60 sub-species in our global conservation breeding programmes at the moment.
- Less than 10% of these have enough unrelated founders for them to survive in the long term. All the others urgently require new blood to enter the captive breeding population if we are to save them.
- There are three species of owl which are indigenous to Northern Ireland and these are:
 - The European Barn Owl
 - The Long-eared Owl
 - The Short-eared Owl

These are described in more detail in these notes

What are owls?

All owls are a predator, which means that they are specially developed to capture and kill living things. They are superbly designed killing machines. Under its feathers an owl has a sharp hooked bill and strong arched claws, very good ears and eyes it can fly in silence.

There are about 227 owl species in the world. The largest owl is the European Eagle Owl, which can be up to 75cm long. The smallest is the Elf Owl, which can be as small as 11-13 cm long.

You can tell by the colour of an owl's eyes the time of day that it goes hunting. Owls with yellow eyes hunt during the day, owls with dark eyes hunt during the night, owls with orange eyes hunt at dusk or dawn. Most owls are nocturnal and hunt at night, but can also be seen hunting at dusk. Some owls, such as the Little Owl or the Short-eared Owl are diurnal, i.e. they hunt during the day.

Owls see in the same way that humans do, with both eyes straight ahead. This is called binocular vision and enables the bird to judge distances accurately. Their eyes have adapted to be able to see when it is almost dark. But like us, in total darkness they can see nothing, they always need some light to see.

To look from side to side, the owls have to swivel their heads and they can see virtually all around themselves, up to 270 degrees. Like all birds of prey, owls have three eyelids - A top lid, a bottom lid and a third transparent membrane, which can move sideways to cover the eye at an incredible speed. This prevents damage to the eye when the owl is taking prey and feeding young.

Owls have extremely sensitive hearing, which helps them to locate their prey. They do not have visible ears; the tufts on the heads of some owls are often referred to as ears but are just small plumes of feathers. The real ears are set at the edge of the facial disc and sounds are directed by the short stiff feathers round the facial disc to the openings on the side of the head. In many species the ear openings are asymmetrical. One ear is larger than the other and is often placed higher on the side of the head than the other. This system is so effective that the owl is capable of locating and taking prey virtually by sound alone. Owls often bob and twist their heads and this is to get still more information on what they can see and hear by 'taking a reading, from several different positions. This makes an owl able to hear the softest rustle of mice, vole, rat, mole, bird or insects and to locate the sound precisely.

Basically, owls don't have a sense of smell, so they can't 'sniff' out prey. Almost all of the diurnal birds of prey (eagles, hawks and so on) are the same as owls and have no sense of smell. However there is one that does; the Turkey Vulture has developed a sense of smell so that it can find carcasses hidden in the undergrowth of the rainforests of South America.

Apart from specialised eyes and ears owls have other adaptations to assist their hunting; their plumage is soft and, except in the case of fish eating species and a few diurnal species, the flight feathers have fine, comb-like fringes which deaden the sound made by the movement of the wings through air. Not only does this mean that prey can't hear the approach of the owls, but the owl can still use its own hearing while airborne, without interference from the rush of air through its feathers. The owl's feathers are also coloured and patterned so that the bird is camouflaged and not easily seen. Owls, which live in deserts, are usually sandy-brown, owls that live in areas that have snow are usually white, owls that live in woodland areas are usually brown and owls, which live in rocky areas, are grey.

Most owls swallow their food whole, which is then broken down inside their body. About eight hours later, the owl regurgitates a pellet, which contains, parts of the owl's prey that cannot be digested - bones, fur and insect parts. An owl's pellets are usually found under its roost or nest site and give us useful information about its prey at different times of the year. They also give us information on the condition of the owl by what the pellet contains.

An owl has, like other birds, a territory. In defence of his territory he chases away male members of the same species. He lets them know he is the boss in his area with his voice. An owl lives alone most of the year. This living alone is called 'solitary' life. Occasionally, especially in the winter, small species of owl roost together in one area. Life in the animal kingdom is the 'survival of the fittest'.

Owls mate in the spring. A male will only allow female owls into his territory; he chases away other males. Different species of owls have different preferences for nest sites and types of nests; they nest in tree holes, in barns, on the ground or in old nest sites of other birds.

The female lays eggs at 2-4 day intervals and the incubation usually begins as soon as the first egg is laid. The owl incubates the eggs during a period of 29-35 days, depending on species. As a result of staggered laying, the size of the young in a nest varies. The oldest may be eight times heavier than the smallest. If food is scarce then the largest chick is feed first and is the one to survive. The weaker ones are allowed to starve. If sufficient food is available more chicks can be reared, because there is more to go round. Both parents bring them food, and feed the young small pieces of prey because the young can't swallow a whole mouse. After 7 to 12 weeks (depending on species) the chicks are the same size as their parents and they fly out and hunt for themselves.

The Barn Owl (Tyto Alba)

Size: 34cms

Weight: 240-350g

Wingspan: 85-93cms

As its name indicates, the Barn Owl likes weathered old barns to nest in but will also nest in hollow trees and rock crevices. Barn Owls have a white, heart-shaped face with a clearly defined disc lined with short, stiff, slightly rippled feathers. The eyes are small, dark and close set. It has spindly legs, and the upper body is an orange-buff, delicately spotted with grey brown and white. The under parts are white. The bill is an ivory colour. The female is larger with a greyer back and usually a more spotted front. Barn Owls do not hoot. While flying they mark their territory with a wild shriek.

The Barn Owl is a stealthy hunter and a master of silent approach and attack. It can often be seen flying low over fields at dawn and at dusk, but it will hunt throughout the day when necessary. Its small body and large wings allow it to glide and hover over ditches and hedges. It is often seen on fence posts or sitting on top of road signs, waiting for prey to pass beneath. Barn Owls are unable to hunt in wet weather; their feathers get waterlogged, so they can starve during long wet spells. Cold winters with deep snow also make hunting difficult and reduce the population through starvation. The chief problem for barn owls, however, is the loss of habitat, and this reduces potential nest sites and the number of hunting grounds, as well as the amount of food. Barn Owls survive mainly on small animals like: short-tail voles, mice and rats, the voles in particular are very important to them, however in Northern Ireland there are no short-tail voles so the Barn Owls have had to adapt to mice being their main prey.

The eggs are laid at intervals of one or two days and incubation starts with the first egg. As a result, the size of the young in a nest varies. The oldest may be eight times heavier than the smallest and when food is scarce the largest is fed and the weaker ones are allowed to starve.

The Barn Owl is the widest distributed owl in the world they are found in North, Central and South America, Europe, Africa, Southern and South East Asia and Australia. The Barn Owl likes habitats with coarse, rough grassland and scrubby forest edge.



The Long-eared owl (Asio otus)

Size: 36cms

Weight: 200-400g

Wingspan: 90-100cms

The Long-eared Owl has long ear tufts and orange eyes and it hunts mainly at dusk. Its speckled plumage provides excellent camouflage in its woodland habitat. The bill and claws are black. It roosts upright by tree trunks or on the ground, pulling itself into a tall thin shape, often with one wing pulled around in front of the body like a cloak. When it feels safe and undetected it can sink into a round dumpy ball of feathers.

The long ear tufts, which give the owl its name, can be raised up like ears of a curious cat, or flattened back over the head so that they are difficult to see. The ear tufts have nothing to do with hearing; its real ears are long, vertical slits on each side of the facial disc giving the owl sensitive, acute hearing. It is unclear what purpose the ear tufts serve, but they possibly aid with camouflage. Hunting Long-eared Owls concentrate on the edge of woodland and open spaces with rough grasslands and over young trees and waste ground of all kinds. They fly low and pounce on small mammals, such as mice, rats and also on roosting birds.

The Long-eared Owl starts incubation from the very first egg and only if there is plenty of food will the smaller weaker chicks be fed. The nest site is in old nests of the other birds, e.g. magpies or crows, in trees. Parent owls are very aggressive and fearless in defence of their young. Its preferred habitat is coniferous forests, but occasionally deciduous woodland. It needs trees to roost and nest in but hunts over open areas.

The Long-eared Owl is the most commonly sighted Owl in Northern Ireland. The wild distribution of the Long-eared Owl is North America, Europe, Middle East, Asia and parts of Africa. They like habitats with forest, isolated thickets, and woodland and marsh edge.



The Short-eared Owl (Asio Flammeus)

Size: 38cms

Weight: 260-340g

Wingspan: 95-100cms

The Short-eared owl is possibly the one of the easiest to see as it is active during the day. As the name suggests, the short-eared owl does have ear tufts, but because they are only short, they are often hard to detect. The ear tufts have nothing to do with its hearing, as like all owls its real ears are openings on the side of its head, behind the facial disc.

A yellow eyed bird, active during the day. It is a slender, streamlined bird with a buff and dark brown back, paler underneath with dark streaks on the throat and chest. The claws are black and the bill a dark horn-colour with a much lighter tip. They are difficult to see when at rest on the ground, its preferred resting place.

The prey of Short-eared Owls is almost exclusively made up of small mammals such as mice, voles and shrews. The owl prefers an open moorland and heath land habitat, but also likes young conifer plantations. It prefers to perch on posts or on the ground, and is seldom seen in trees.

The nesting site is on the ground; six to eight eggs are laid. The male hunts; presenting food to the female in special food passes. If food is plentiful, only the male hunts. For such large owls, they fly at a very young age, when only 24 to 27 days old. The young rely on their parents for at least seven weeks.

The wild distribution is North and South America, Caribbean, Europe and Asia



The Little Owl (Athena Noctua)

Size: 23cms

Weight: 150-230g

Wingspan: 95-100cms

The Little owl is appropriately named, as it is Northern Ireland's smallest owl. It is a rather dark, liver brown with paler spots and with freckling on the forehead. The under parts are dull white, densely marked with smears, streaks and spots of brown. The face is pale with dark and light eyebrows low over the glistening yellow eyes giving the bird a typically fierce quizzical frowning expression.

They prefer open country and hedgerows for hunting and avoid dense woodland areas. Little Owls eat invertebrates such as cockroaches, earwigs, moths, earthworms and a few small mammals. When they have young to feed, Little Owls will also take small birds such as sparrows. Little Owls hunt mostly in daylight hours. A hunting Little Owl has an intent, determined air as it bobs about, peering at the ground.

Little Owls nest in holes in stonewalls, disused rabbit warrens or holes in trees. They usually like to choose a hole with more than one exit. They lay three to five eggs. Incubation of the eggs is sometimes delayed until the full clutch is laid. Incubation takes about four weeks.

The Little Owl's preferred habitat is open farmland and wasteland in urban areas, but it avoids woodland. The Little Owl is on the decline due largely to loss of habitat, pesticide poisoning and accidents with the increasing traffic on our roads.

The wild distribution of the Little Owl is Europe, Central and Eastern Asia, North Africa and the Middle East.



The European Eagle Owl (Bubo bubo)

Size: 58-71cms Weight: 3000-4200g Wingspan: 150-250cms

The European Eagle Owl's upper parts are brown-black and tawny-buff, showing as dense freckling on the forehead and crown, stripes on the nape, sides and back of the neck, and dark splotches on the pale ground colour of the back. A narrow buff band freckled with brown buff, runs up from the base of the bill, above the inner part of the eye and along the inner edge of the black-brown, "ear-tufts".

The facial disc is tawny-buff, speckled with black-brown, so densely on the outer edge of the disc as to form a "frame" around the face. Chin and throat are white continuing down the centre of the upper breast

The whole of the under parts except for chin, throat and centre of upper breast is covered with fine dark wavy barring, on a tawny-buff ground colour. Legs and feet are likewise marked on a buff ground colour but more faintly.

The tail is tawny-buff, mottled dark grey-brown with about six black-brown bars. The bill and claws are black; the iris of their eyes is orange.

European Eagle Owls have various hunting techniques, and will take prey on the ground or in full flight. They may hunt in forests, but prefer open spaces. European Eagle Owls will eat almost anything they move - from beetles to roe deer fawns. The major part of their diet consists of mammals (rats, mice, foxes, hares etc.), but birds of all kinds are also taken, including crows, ducks, grouse, seabirds, and even other birds of prey. Other prey taken includes snakes, lizards, frogs, fish, and crabs.

The most common type of prey depends largely on relative availability, but is usually mice and rats. In some coastal areas, they have been known to feed mainly on ducks and seabirds.

Favoured nest sites are sheltered cliff ledges, crevices between rocks or cave entrances in cliffs. They will also use abandoned nests of other large birds. If no such sites are available, they may nest on the ground between rocks, under fallen trunks, under a bush, even at the base of a tree trunk. Or they will make a scrape in the ground. No nesting material is added. Very often pairs for life, this is called monogamy. They are territorial, but territories of neighbouring pairs may partly overlap.

Laying generally begins in late winter, sometimes later. One clutch per year of 1-4 white eggs is laid. They are normally laid at 3 days intervals and are incubated by the female alone, starting from the first egg, for 31-36 days. During this time, she is fed at the nest by her mate.

Once hatched, the young are brooded for about 2 weeks; the female stays with them at the nest for 4-5 weeks. For the first 2-3 weeks the male brings food to the nest or deposits

it nearby, and the female feeds small pieces the young. At 3 weeks the chicks start to feed themselves and begin to swallow smaller items whole. At 5 weeks the young walk around the nesting area, and at 52 days are able to fly a few metres. They may leave ground nests as early as 22-25 days old, while elevated nests are left at an age of 5-7 weeks.

Fledged young are cared for by both parents for about 20-24 weeks. They become independent between September and November in Europe, and leave the parents' territory (or are driven out by them). At this time the male begins to sing again and inspect potential future nesting sites.

Young reach maturity in the following year, but normally breed when around 5 years old.

European Eagle Owls may live more than 60 years in captivity. In the wild, about 20 years may be the maximum. They have no real natural enemies; electrocution, collision with traffic, and shooting are the main causes of death.

European Eagle Owls occupy a variety of habitats, from coniferous forests to warm deserts. Rocky landscapes are often favoured. Adequate food supply and nesting sites seem to be the most important factors.

Wild European Eagle Owls are distributed throughout North Africa, Europe, Asia and the Middle East.



Kestrel (Falco tinnunculus)

Size: 32-39cms

Weight: 13-30g

Wingspan: 65-82cms

Despite the fact that kestrels have declined in Britain in the last few years, they are still the commonest bird of prey in Europe. Their habit of hovering, particularly near motorways, mean that they are also one of the easiest to spot.

They have long, pointed wings and a long tail. Both sexes are the same size and have brown upper-parts and creamy under-parts, but the male also has a blue/grey head and tail. They are covered with black speckles and have a barred tail.

These birds are commonly seen hovering about 10-50m (30-50ft) above the ground, searching for prey.

Kestrels mainly hunt small mammals, particularly mice, but they also feed on small birds, reptiles and insects.

Their preferred habitat is open country, plains and cultivated land.

Kestrels nest on a ledge, in a tree hole or in a disused nest. The clutch of 3-6 eggs is incubated by the female, and the chicks hatch after 27-31 days. The egg-laying date varies according to the geographical location. In Europe and Asia it is typically April to May, but in Africa, it can vary from August to December.

In the wild Kestrels are distributed over Europe, Africa and Asia.

Kestrels are not considered to be globally threatened and are the commonest bird of prey in Europe. British populations have fallen in recent years.



Barn Owls



The Barn Owl is sandy brown with a white Breast. It has small dark eyes and spindly legs. It is nocturnal and hunts at dusk. It flies silently across fields as it hunts for mice. It has very good hearing and can hear the softest sound. The Barn Owl has a curved beak and sharp claws, called talons. It uses its talons to catch its prey. They live in old barns and holes in trees.

1. What does the Barn Owl look like?

2. What does a Barn Owl eat?

3. What does **nocturnal** mean?

4. What are **talons**?

5. Where do Barn Owls live?

6. What are Barn Owls good at?

Dangers for Barn Owls

Barn Owls like to nest in old barns but will also nest in a hollow tree. Unfortunately a lot of these barns are now broken down. This makes it harder for the Barn Owl to find a suitable nesting spot. A Barn Owl lays 4 to 5 eggs. This is an average, which means they sometimes lay more eggs and sometimes less. Within four months a baby Barn Owl is fully-grown and capable of hunting for its own food. It is now an adult, and will leave the nest to find a place of its own.

Barn Owls are great hunters; they are masters of the silent attack. But there is a price to pay for this silent flight! Because their feathers are velvety and furry, they cannot wax their feathers, as this would ruin their silent flight. And because they cannot wax their feathers they are not waterproof. This means that Barn Owls can't hunt during rainy days, and will starve if the rain continues for too long.

Barn Owls hunt mainly for short-tailed voles. Short-tailed voles need long grass to live in. This long grass grows well along the roads, and so the short-tailed vole lives there, with the result that the Barn Owls hunt there. This is why a lot of Barn Owls get killed in road accidents.

What are the three most threatening dangers to the Barn Owl?

1.

2.

3.

Word search!

Can you find the words hidden in the word search puzzle?

B L O N G E A R E D O W L S
T A W Y A R T K P N N I S H
U D R U L A B T O Q E H F O
W O K N A K E I P N S R E R
Y A T I O L A P K E T P A T
N F T S L W S R T A L W T E
W W L E T A L E P E X L H A
O O P K R I O D R S O A E R
K L P A E P S A T R A N R E
O T A L O N R T U W F R S D
S B E A K P T O K N M U H O
A A N G E A G R O S H T G W
F O O D C H A I N F A C O L
F O O C V L I T T L E O W L
O W L T R A W N Y P L N A S
S I L E N T F L I G H T N R

- Barn Owl
- Food chain
- Nest
- Predator
- Silent Flight
- Beak
- Little Owl
- Nocturnal
- Rare
- Talon
- Feathers
- Long eared Owl
- Pellet
- Short eared Owl
- Waterproof

Knowledge Quiz

The sentences A to J describe a particular word; can you match the sentence with the word it describes? Write the number beside each question to join each pair!

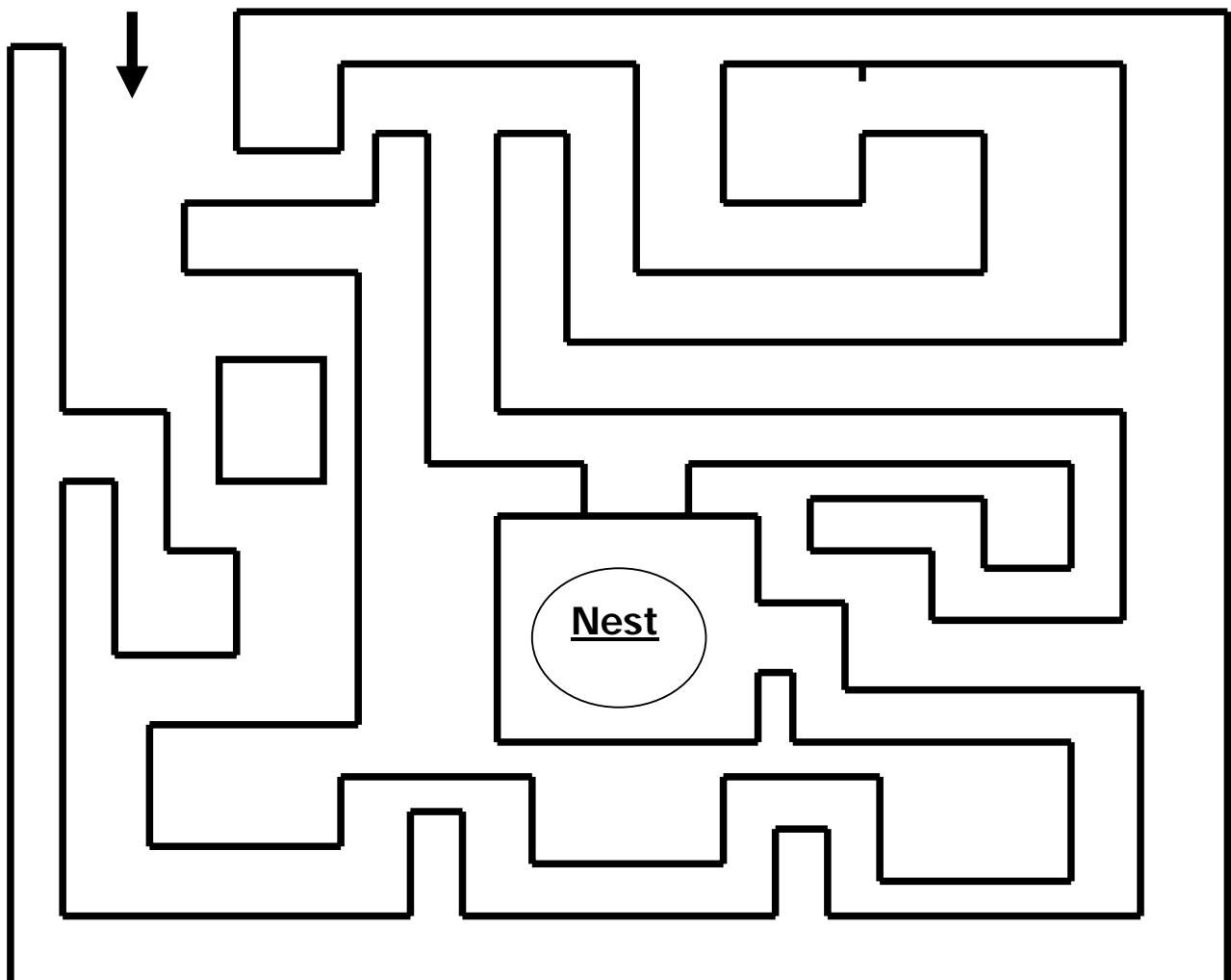
- A. An animal eaten by other animals?
- B. Period between laying of the eggs and hatching?
- C. Try to save world wildlife?
- D. Anything to do with birds?
- E. N. Ireland's most common owl?
- F. Natural environment, which an animal lives?
- G. All the animals of a species in a specific area?
- H. Animal that's spends much of its time living alone?
- I. An animal that hunts during the daytime?
- J. An animal that hunts at night?
- K. An animal that hunts first thing in the morning and last thing at night?
- L. An animal that hunts anytime?

- 1. Crepuscular
- 2. Nocturnal
- 3. Opportunist
- 4. Diurnal
- 5. Solitary
- 6. Population
- 7. Habitat
- 8. Long-Eared Owl
- 9. Conservation
- 10. Prey
- 11. Incubation
- 12. Avian



Can you help me?

It's starting to rain and my feathers aren't waterproof. I was playing outside, and now I have lost my way home. Can you show me the way to my nest?



Answer sheet

Word search

B **L** **O** **N** **G** **E** **A** **R** **E** **D** **O** **W** **L** **S**
T **A** W Y A R T K P N **N** I S **H**
U D **R** U L A B **I** O Q **E** H **F** **O**
W O K **N** A K **E** I P N **S** R **E** **R**
Y **A** T I **O** **L** A P K E **I** P **A** **I**
N F **I** S **L** **W** S **R** T A L W **I** **E**
W W L **E** T A **L** **E** P **E** X **L** **H** **A**
O O **P** K **R** I O **D** **R** S O **A** **E** **R**
K L P A E **P** S **A** T R A **N** **R** **E**
O **T** **A** **L** **O** **N** **R** T U W F **R** **S** **D**
S **B** **E** **A** **K** P T **O** K N M **U** H **O**
A A N G E A G **R** **O** S H **I** G **W**
F **O** **O** **D** **C** **H** **A** **I** **N** **F** A **C** O **L**
F O O C V **L** **I** **T** **I** **L** **E** **O** **W** **L**
O W L T R A W N Y P L **N** A S
S **I** **L** **E** **N** **T** **F** **L** **I** **G** **H** **T** N R

Knowledge quiz

A = 10
B = 11
C = 9
D = 12
E = 8
F = 7
G = 6
H = 5
I = 4
J = 2
K = 1
L = 3



Charity Reference XR41606

Who are 'wildlife rescue (Northern Ireland)'?

Wildlife Rescue (Northern Ireland) is an independent, local charity that responds to sick and injured wild animals. This service is mainly to provide advice when a sick or injured wild animal is reported, however with an ever-increasing volunteer network we may be able to provide direct action.

NO ONE WITHIN WILDLIFE RESCUE IS PAID AND IT IS NOT GOVERNMENT ASSISTED.

WE RELY ON THE GENEROSITY OF PUBLIC AID AND CONCERN!

We do not deal with pets or domestic animals (except Exotic)

The success relies on a network of volunteers to respond to calls in their local areas as well as individuals with specialist knowledge of wildlife. Casualties are reported on the central Helpline telephone number and the details are passed to the nearest available volunteer. Once the situation has been assessed, appropriate action is initiated. If the animal requires attention, it is taken (if possible) to a specialist carer, rehabilitator or veterinary surgeon. Where appropriate, release back to the wild is arranged or assisted.

Wildlife Rescue volunteers come from all walks of life and shares a common interest in helping wildlife. Volunteers can help in several ways and **no previous experience is needed** - just enthusiasm! If you would like to find out more about becoming a volunteer, telephone our Helpline or visit our website.

The work of Wildlife Rescue (Northern Ireland) is subject to the provisions of the Wildlife Order (Northern Ireland) 1985 and any other applicable legislation.

E-mail help@wildliferescue-ni.com

Website www.wildliferescue-ni.com

Wildlife Rescue (Northern Ireland) is a registered company limited by guarantee
Accepted as a charity by the Inland Revenue under reference XR41606

Executive Director: Mrs. Elaine Gibb

Wildlife Rescue are licensed registered rehabilitators

Injured Wildlife

Most wild animals are capable of inflicting serious bites or scratches, especially if they are frightened or in pain.

Foxes, Badgers, Geese, Swans, Sea birds and birds of prey etc, can all be extremely dangerous!

No matter how great your concern

NEVER PUT YOURSELF AT RISK!

Three magic words should be thought of here!

LEAVE IT ALONE!

It would be in your best interests to leave any wild animal alone and contact the HELPLINE for advice.

Any animal that is seriously injured should be referred to a Veterinary Surgeon as soon as possible.

Injured wildlife should be reported to our

HELPLINE 07759 879 878

Young animals on their own or without a parent have not necessarily been abandoned - Don't go near them or attempt to pick them up - get advice.

After advice should an animal be taken into care, it should be kept in secure, dark, quiet conditions, and disturbed as little as possible. Keep them well away from family pets, most wild animals will see your cute cat or lovable dog as a natural predator and will suffer undue stress, which can lead to shock and even death.

Help and Advice

07759 879 878

Ways to help Wildlife

1. Always keep dogs and cats under control. Don't let them run loose. Cats can disturb, maim, or kill nesting birds as well as young birds just out of the nest during breeding season.

The bacteria transmitted in a cat bite will quickly cause infection and become life threatening. If cats are permitted outside, put at least two bells on their collar to help alert birds that danger is nearby, giving them extra time to escape.

2. Before you cut down or prune trees and shrubs, check very carefully for nesting birds.

You could unintentionally destroy a nest by trimming too closely or destroy the habitats provided in the tree. It is always best to leave dead trees or snags standing. They provide food and shelter for many birds throughout the year. As an added benefit, you can enjoy the wildlife attracted by snags!

3. Never feed wildlife. Natural diets are always more nutritious for wildlife than human food. Bird feeders can be stocked with balanced mixes of different seed, appropriate for the birds in your area. Old bakery goods do not supply nutritional levels for good health, especially when birds are preparing for migration or breeding.

4. Many birds depend on insects in and around our backyards. So, limiting the use of insecticides can help protect the health of our wildlife and water resources too. Instead of using dangerous chemicals, contact local conservation groups to obtain ideas for environmentally safe alternatives.

5. Reflections from windows can confuse birds. This may cause them to fly into the glass or repeatedly peck at what they see as their competition. Some simple remedies include breaking up the reflections with stickers, or a little bird reflector that are very cheap to purchase.

6. Never litter! All species of birds can become easily entangled in man-made products such as plastic, fishing line, cans, and bottles. Struggling to be free of such entrapments often results in serious injury or death. Help by disposing of litter properly, and recycle whatever you can.

7. During the bonfire season and during the autumn garden-clearing season, please check fires prior to lighting them because Hedgehogs amongst other creatures find these to be ideal homes.

8. If you take an animal to a wildlife rehabilitator, you can help by taking a donation of food, money, or volunteer your time and talents. Keep in mind that most organizations rely solely on donations from caring people like you. Your thoughtfulness will be greatly appreciated.

Don't hesitate to contact us for any information regarding any creature you may have concerns for.

Remember

'Prevention is better than cure'.

Tips For Preventing Wildlife Orphans

1. **Keep your cat indoors (especially during May and June).**
2. **Fit collar bells.**
3. **Keep your dog well attended.**
4. **Check tree branches for nests before pruning.**
5. **Check the grass for nests before mowing.**
6. **Educate children to respect young wild animals and to leave them alone.**
7. **Install chimney caps to prevent animals from nesting in them or becoming trapped.**
8. **Leave healthy young wild animals where you find them and call Wildlife Rescue for advice on what to do.**

12 SIMPLE STEPS YOU CAN DO TO AVOID HARMING WILDLIFE

Most of the wild animals brought to the attention of Wildlife Rescue are from injuries or problems caused by humans. Since most people try to avoid causing harm to other living things we decided to put together a list of things to do- or not do- to help wildlife. The list is in no particular order of importance, but if everyone followed these suggestions, our caseload would be dramatically reduced.

Step: 1.

Prevent your pet cats and dogs from attacking and/or "playing with" wildlife. Don't allow them to run without supervision and raise your cats as indoor pets. Many injured animals are brought to our attention each year with terrible wounds from dog and cat attacks. If possible place a small bell on your cat or dogs collar as a warning.

Step: 2.

Alert birds to large expanses of glass in your home, such as patio doors or picture windows, by hanging streamers, putting bird silhouettes on the glass surface, or allow the glass to be a little bit dirty. Reducing the reflection should cut down on the number of birds who collide, often fatally, with windows and doors.

Step: 3.

Educate children to respect and care for all wild creatures and their habitats. Children need to learn that wild animals are not playthings and should be allowed to go about their lives unmolested. Children should also be told not to destroy nests, burrows and other wildlife homes.

Step: 4.

Pick up litter and refuse that could harm wildlife, including plastic bottle or tin connectors (after cutting each circle to reduce the risk of entanglement), monofilament fishing line, and watch batteries (if consumed by waterfowl they can cause mercury poisoning).

Step: 5.

Be alert when driving, especially near wildlife refuges and in rural areas, to avoid hitting or running over wild creatures. Animals do not recognize the danger from an oncoming vehicle.

Step: 6.

As a general rule, leave infant wildlife alone, since they are not always truly orphaned. A parent may be nearby or will return soon. Be sure they are in need of help before you remove them from the nest area. If you find young birds on the ground, attempt to return them to the nest.

Step: 7.

Place caps over all chimneys and vents on your roof to prevent birds from taking up residence and becoming a nuisance or getting trapped.

Step: 8.

Do not leave fishing line or fish hooks unattended or lying about outdoors. Try to retrieve any kite string left on the ground or entangled in trees.

Step: 9.

Before mowing your lawn walk through the area first to make sure no rabbits or ground-nesting birds are in harms way. Remember, it only takes a couple weeks for these babies to grow and leave the nest. Be tolerant and give them the time they need.

Step: 10.

Check trees to make sure there are no active nests or residents of cavities before cutting them down. Even better, avoid cutting down dead trees if they pose no safety hazard, since they provide homes for a wide variety of wildlife.

Step: 11.

Use non-toxic products on your lawn and garden.

Step: 12.

Do not attempt to raise or keep wildlife yourself. Not only is it illegal, but also wild creatures do not make good pets and captivity poses a constant stress to them. Young wild animals raised without contact with their own species fail to develop survival skills and fear of humans, virtually eliminating their chances of survival in the wild.

Helping Us

Donations are gratefully received. We rely on your generosity and goodwill to provide this service.

Volunteers are needed to help with transport, auxiliary care and fundraising.

Volunteers must be at least 16 years of age.

You can print out this page, complete and return it to the address below:

Please accept my donation of £.....All donations will be acknowledged

Please add my name to your volunteer register

Your details will not be released to any other organization

(Please print)

Name.....

Address.....

Post code.....Telephone.....

E-mail.....

Please return to:

World of Owls/Wildlife Rescue NI

World of Owls Centre

Randalstown Forest

Co. Antrim

BT41 3LE

Tel : 028 94 472 307

Email: admin@wildliferescue-ni.com



Educate and Conserve



Helpline: 07759 879 878

Dear Sir or Madam:

Thank you, for inviting us along to visit with you. I hope you and all present have enjoyed themselves and has learned even a little of the message we are trying to get across.

Word of mouth is one of our best assets for getting more visits, and the more visits we get the more animals we can save and aid.

We would like to thank you for your donation and we would like to ask you if you would be so kind to write us a letter of support to help aid us with a funding application.

We would also use this letter to assess the level of; entertainment, education and method of instruction used by ourselves to your group.

This letter should be returned to our main office at the address on the lower of this letter.

I look forward to working with you again in the future.

Many thanks

Mike Gibb
Executive Director

World of Owls/Wildlife Rescue NI, World of Owls Centre, Randalstown Forest, Co. Antrim, BT41 3LE

Tel: 028 94 472 307, email: admin@worldofowls.com