

British Birds of Prey

BARN OWL

#5

Barn owls are the most recognisable and widespread species of owl, found on every continent except Antarctica.

They are part of the Tytonidae family of owls, being genetically separated from nearly every other owl species (the 'true' owls, or Strigidae). They are differentiated by a heart-shaped facial disk, rather than a rounder shape, as well as smaller eyes and a longer beak.

Sadly, in the UK, they are much less common than you may think. Due to the destruction of their habitats, 75% of the British population rely on man-made nest boxes, with only a few thousand pairs estimated in the wild.



▲ Hamlet, one of Huxley's barn owls. You can meet him during our Meet an Owl sessions!

SCIENTIFIC NAME

Tyto alba

DISTRIBUTION

Worldwide, except Antarctica

WILD POPULATION

3,000 - 5,000 UK pairs est., 150,000 in Europe

WINGSPAN

Approx. 85 to 100cm

SIZE & WEIGHT

Approx. 32 to 40cm long, 450g to 600g

LIFESPAN

Usually 2 or 3 years in the wild, 25 to 30 in captivity

MAIN DIET

Shrews, mice, rats

FACT FILE

Barn Owl



▲ Bramble, who can be seen in action as part of our daily British Birds of Prey displays.

FILL THE BLANKS

Use the words below to complete these facts about the barn owl!
Each word is used only once.

ATTRACTIVE

PREY

EYESIGHT

EGGS

NESTING SITES

SPOTS

BUILDINGS

HUMANS

PESTICIDE

MATES

MONOGAMOUS

Females have small black _____ on their bellies and beneath their wings.

Those with the most are seen as more _____ by potential _____!

Their _____ is about 35 times better than _____.

Like most owls, barn owls are _____, meaning they mate for life.

Clutches average about four _____, laid inside tree hollows or old _____.

British barn owls are at risk from _____ use, and human developments that limit both their _____ and the abundance of their _____.

Barn Owl

Barn owls are found in open habitats, including grasslands and fields. They hunt at very low levels, flying only a few metres off the ground. Small mammals such as voles, mice, and even small rabbits are preyed on.

They have almost no oils in their feathers, and so can fly near-silently, even more so than other owls. However, this also means that they aren't at all waterproof, and so are unable to hunt during periods of heavy rain. The best chance to spot a barn owl in the wild is after these periods of extended rainfall, when hunger forces them to hunt in the day, against their nocturnal nature.



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

WORD SEARCH

BARN OWL

TYTONIDAE

BRAMBLE

HAMLET

RAPTOR

FEATHER

HEART-SHAPED

NOCTURNAL

CONSERVATION

Barn Owl

CRACK THE CODE

Use the code below to decipher some more facts about barn owls! The first one has been started for you.

A = ○	E = ∪	I = ◻	M = ⊙	Q = ●	U = ▼	Y = ⊖
B = ◻	F = ▼	J = ▽	N = ◻	R = ◻	V = ◻	Z = ◻
C = ▲	G = ◻	K = ✕	O = ★	S = ◻	W = ◻	
D = ⊕	H = ◻	L = ∪	P = △	T = ◻	X = ▼	

◆ ◆ ∪ ★ ∪ ⊕ ◻ ◆ ◻ ∪ ▲ ★ ◻ ⊕ ∪ ⊕ ◻ ○ ◻ ◻ ★ ◻ ∪
 T H E O L D E S T R E C O R D E D B A R N O W L

◻ ○ ◻ ◆ ◆ ◻ ◻ ◆ ⊖ ▼ ★ ▼ ◻ ⊖ ∪ ○ ◻ ◻ ★ ∪ ⊕

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Barn owls are ----- , -----

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