

# Barn Owl

Some barn owls are nocturnal but also they can be seen at sunset or early mornings. They have a white, heart-shaped face and a white chest with small brown spots, while their back is tawny and marked with black and white spots. Barn owls have a long wingspan and are silent when flying. They are a similar size to a small cat.

## Fascinating Facts

Barn owls make a screeching noise, not a hoot like the tawny owl.

Baby owls are called owlets.

Barn owls have very good hearing. The heart shaped feathers on the edge of the their face create a disc, which works to trap and focus sound, the same way as a human ear.

## Where Do They Live?

Barn owls live in a range of habitats including farm buildings, dovecotes, church towers, hollow trees and cliff sites. The nesting season is between April and October. Owls do not generally make nests and look for sheltered nesting sites, abandoned nests in trees, underground burrows, or in buildings, barns and caves instead. Some owls prefer to live in the open grasslands, farmlands, and woodlands that are no more than 2,000 metres high.



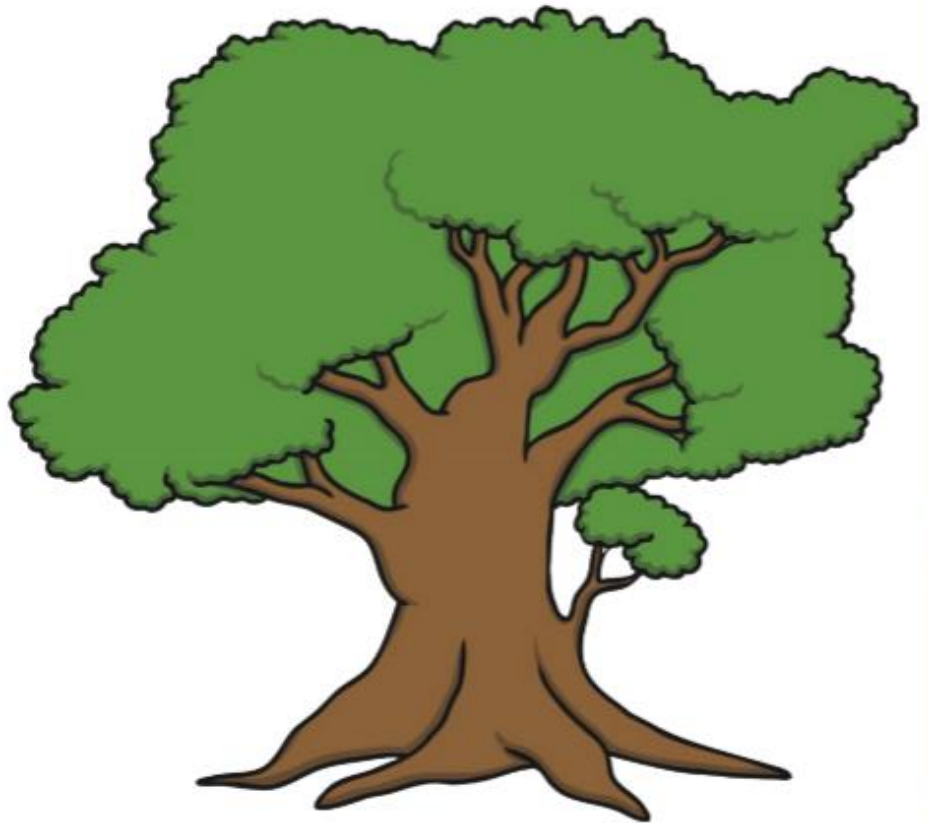
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## What do they eat?

Barn owls eat mainly small mammals like voles, shrews, rats and mice. Sometimes they eat birds, insects and even frogs. Nesting barn owls sometimes store lots of food they have caught at the nest site while they are waiting for their eggs to hatch so that they have food to feed their young. They wait, listen and watch for prey before swooping down to catch it. On average a wild barn owl eats about 4 small mammals per night, that's 1,460 per year.

## Staying Safe

Barn owls do not have many predators. Baby owls can sometimes be taken by stoats from their nest. They can also be killed by other larger owls. If they feel threatened they will squint their eyes, spread their wings and sway their head back and forth while hissing. If this does not stop their attacker, the barn owl will lie on its back and protect itself with its sharp talons.



# Questions

Answer the questions below in full sentences.

1. Which words describe what a barn owl looks like?\_\_\_\_\_

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2. Do barn owls make their own nests? Explain your answer.\_\_\_\_\_

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3. Where do barn owls live?\_\_\_\_\_

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4. What do they do if they feel threatened?\_\_\_\_\_

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5. What do barn owls eat?\_\_\_\_\_

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6. How do barn owls catch their prey?\_\_\_\_\_

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7. How many animals does a barn owl eat each night?\_\_\_\_\_

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8. How do barn owls hear?\_\_\_\_\_

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