

British Birds of Prey

LITTLE OWL

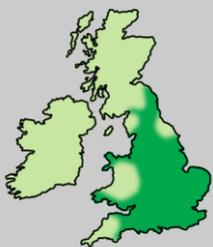
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The smallest owl found in the UK, the little owl was deliberately introduced here in the 19th century. They are crepuscular, meaning they are most active at dawn or dusk, though may occasionally be seen perching boldly in daylight.

A sedentary (inactive) species, they remain close to their hatching site throughout their lives. Preferring open countryside and agricultural land, they may also be found in semidesert or mountainous areas, throughout central Europe, central Asia and northern Africa.



British Population



Between 5,000 and 6,000 breeding pairs estimated

Numbers are declining

Found here

Size & Weight



Head to tail - 20 to 24 cm

Wingspan - 55 cm

Weight -
140 to 220 g

Lifespan



3 years

Wild average



20 years

In captivity

Main Diet



Insects



Earthworms



Small mammals



Small birds

Huxley's Birds of Prey Centre, Horsham

Colouring Page

Use the photo on the right as a guide to colour in your own little owl!

When a little owl sleeps, they position themselves in a way that the lighter patches on their feathers are hidden. This means they can blend into trees and dark cavities very efficiently.



Match the Facts

Little owls have lots of adaptations and certain behaviours that help them to survive. Can you match them with their benefit?

Behaviour

Little owls bask in the sun during the day

They are able to recognise the calls of neighbouring little owls

They take regular dust baths or bathe in the smoke from chimneys

Markings on the back of their head resemble false eyes and a face

Benefit

The dust and dirt absorbs excess oil on their feathers preventing them from becoming greasy

Avoids predation or attacks from behind

The heat drives out parasites in the feathers

They don't have to use up energy by unnecessarily chasing away others



◀ Do-wot & Humphrey, Huxley's resident pair of little owls.

You can find them in the British Owl area.

Fill in the Blanks

Use the words on the right
to complete the little owl facts!
Each word is used only once.

CALLS	PREY
WISDOM	COINS
CAVITY	VOCAL
HUNTING	ART
LOW	BUILDINGS
BURROWS	INSECTS

Crickets, grasshoppers, beetles and earthworms are their primary _____ .

They fly _____ to the ground whilst _____ , and may pursue
_____ on foot.

They are _____ nesters, and may nest in tree holes, _____
and even rabbit _____ .

They are very _____ , having as many as forty unique _____ .

Little owls can be found on _____ , in _____ and in literature dating
back ten thousand years.

Little owls are closely associated with Greek mythology, where they are
seen as symbols of _____ .