



OWLS

KEY INFORMATION

Owls are mammals that live on all continents apart from Antarctica, their habitat includes deserts, mountains and grasslands. They nest in trees, holes in the ground, in barns and caves.

There are around 200 types of owls in the world. A group of owls are called a parliament.

In the wild, owls live to around 15 years, however in captivity can live up to 20 years. Depending on the species, they can weigh up to 4 pounds and can have a wingspan of around 2 metres.



APPEARANCE

Owls are very farsighted, which means they can't see things that are too close. However, they have terrific binocular vision compared to other birds, allowing them to see an object with both eyes at the same time. They have sensitive whisker-like bristles around their beaks that help owls detect objects that are in a close range. They also have brilliant night vision,

Owls have round heads and flatter dished faces, with short, curved, downward-facing beaks that is hooked at the end. This is specifically designed for gripping and tearing their prey. When hunting, owls use their ears more than their eyes. Their ears are different sizes so they can receive sounds at different times, allowing them to pinpoint the location of the sound.

Owls are known as silent fliers, they have broad wings that allow them to glide, minimising the flapping that creates most of the noise from flying.

DIET

Many owls are carnivores. Depending on the species, an owl's prey includes invertebrates, such as insects, spiders, worms, snails and crabs. They also eat reptiles, amphibians, fish and smaller mammals, such as mice and moles. Larger owls can even eat small foxes, rabbits and birds.

FUN FACTS

It is a misconception that owls can turn their heads 360 degrees, they can only turn their heads 270 degrees without breaking blood vessels. Owls are nocturnal which means they sleep during the day and are awake at night.

Owls have three eyelids in each: one for blinking, one for sleeping and one for keeping their eyes clean. Not all owls hoot and they can make a wide range of other sounds such as screeches, barks, hisses and whistles.

Barn owls can swallow their prey whole, including the skin and bones. They can also eat up to 1000 mice each year.



Find Out More...

<https://auduboninternational.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/WHM-Owls.pdf>

<https://www.treehugger.com/owl-facts-that-will-amaze-you-4863920>

<https://www.sciencekids.co.nz/sciencefacts/animals/owl.html>

<https://www.vanderbiltmuseum.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/owl-fact-sheet.pdf>

EXAMPLE QUESTIONS:

1. Which continent do owls not live on?
2. What are a group of owls called?
3. True or false. Owls can see things up close?
4. How many degrees can an owl turn its head?
5. How many eyelids does an owl have?