

Barn Owl

Habitat Hero

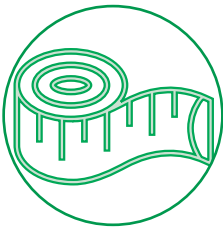


Common Name: Barn Owl
Irish Name: Scréachóg reilige
Scientific Name: Tyto alba

Seen in Ireland:

Year-round - most active at dusk.

Population: ~400–500 pairs



It has a very distinctive appearance; a white heart-shaped face, light brown back and wings, and pure white under-parts. It is 37–39 cm long, and has a wingspan of 84–93 cm



It hunts in rough grasslands, grassy margins (e.g. at field edges or roadsides), at edges to woods and around rivers and wetlands. Nests are usually found in derelict buildings, and sometimes in holes of large old trees.



Barn Owls mainly eat small mammals such as mice, voles, shrews and rats. They also eat birds and frogs occasionally



4 years old average age, 15 years oldest recorded in the wild , however, most Barn Owls die young.

Barn Owl Life Cycle

In **Winter** the young birds will leave the nest and find their own territories. The parents may remain at the nest site to **roost** over the winter.

In **Spring** Barn Owls find a suitable partner and nest site. The male will bring food to the female at the nest, as she prepares to lay eggs. She will eventually stop all hunting.

By early **Autumn** the chicks' flight feathers are fully developed and the young birds are ready to fly.

By early **Summer** 4-6 round white eggs are laid. The female **incubates** them for ~31 days. The male continues to deliver food to the nest.

For another month both parents hunt for food for the whole family. By **late Summer** the chicks are getting very big and noisy

The female stays with the chicks for about 3 weeks, to keep them warm, and to tear up the meat that the male brings home.



Barn Owl



Some more Facts:

- To incubate means to keep something safe and warm so that it can grow. For the owl it means to sit on their eggs until they hatch using the warmth of the owl's body to warm the eggs.
- For about two days before hatching, the young will start to 'twitter' from inside the egg!
- A roost is a place where birds can sleep or rest safely, their nest or home.
- In Ireland, the numbers of owls has decreased by over 50% in the past 25 years.
- Barn Owls often die young from man-made hazards, like road traffic, overhead wires and poisons meant for rats.
- Habitat loss, the use of poisons, and an increase in major road networks are believed to be responsible for decrease.
- To help you could find out your school's policy on laying poisons. If it is in use, could you investigate alternative options?

