



European Barn Owl

(Tyto alba alba)

The *tyto alba alba* is the nominate race, that is the first barn owl to be described. It is very similar in appearance to our North American barn owl except that this European species is much lighter in color and smaller in size. It can range from white to golden buff above, and has pure white under parts. Its dark eyes are set in a heart-shaped facial disc.

Habitat & Diet

Living in the open countryside the nocturnal European barn owl is very beneficial to man, as it feeds mainly on small rodents and other pest species. In a recent study, it was estimated that, in one year, a single barn owl can consume 1,407 mice, 143 rats, and 375 sparrows, as well as a variety of other small creatures.

Fascinating Facts

Barn owls have the best hearing abilities of any owl in the world. They can hunt in total darkness, by sound alone. Throughout time, this owl has been known by many different names, including the ghost owl, white owl, valentine owl, monkey faced owl, hissing owl, screaming owl, and hobby owl. The barn owl has been the subject of superstition for centuries. The early Romans believed that if a barn owl landed on the roof of a house, it meant that one of the

Status

One of the most widespread birds in the world, the European barn owl's populations are declining severely in much of their range. As many old barns and deserted buildings are being removed to make room for modern houses, this owl is losing a great deal of its previous nesting habitat. Currently, there are only about 2000 pairs remaining in the wild in Britain.



Height: 16 inches
Weight: 9-13 ounces
Wingspan: 2½ feet
Habitat: Farmland and open countryside
Range: British Isles, western France, Spain, Portugal, Italy, and countries bordering the Mediterranean.
Life Expectancy: Up to 11 years
Baby: Owlet

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