

# OWLS



## Introduction

The Wildwood Animal Workbooks for Key Stage 2 include Badgers, Beavers, Frogs, Otters, Owls, Red Foxes and Wolves. Each workbook follows a standardised pattern so that children can select different animals to study but still cover the same themes.

The activity sheets are appropriate for use either as an introduction before a visit or as follow up work. Each activity sheet is designed to link in with and support National Curriculum Programmes of Study for different subjects, including Science, Literacy, Numeracy and Art. There are also Key Stage 1 workbooks covering the same animals to aid differentiation.

## Activity Sheets

The following list gives details of the activity sheets contained in the workbook, including the relevant National Curriculum P.O.S and the learning objectives which each sheet covers.

### Identification



SUBJECT:

**Science**

P.O.S:

Sc2 - Living things in their environment

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

To find out about the different animals that are found in the local environment.

### Adaptation



SUBJECT:

**Science**

P.O.S:

Sc2 - Living things in their environment

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

To understand that different animals are found in different habitats.

To understand that animals are suited to the environment in which they are found.



**Food Chains**



SUBJECT:

**Science**

P.O.S:

Sc2 - Living things in their environment

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

To understand that most food chains start with a green plant.

To identify the structure of a food chain of a specific animal.

To identify important features of an animal's mouth in relation to its diet.

**Food Chains and Diet**



SUBJECTS:

**Science & Numeracy**

P.O.S:

Sc2 - Humans and Other Animals

Ma4 - Processing, representing and interpreting data.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

To understand that different animals have different diets.

To present evidence about foods eaten by an animal in a suitable bar chart.

**Habitats and Homes**



SUBJECT:

**Science**

P.O.S:

Sc2 - Living things in their environment

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

To identify different types of habitats.

**Tracks and Signs**



SUBJECT:

**Science**

P.O.S:

Sc2 - Living things in their environment

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

To identify owls according to observable features.



## Human Impact and Conservation



SUBJECT:	<b>Science</b>
P.O.S:	Sc2 - Living things in their environment
LEARNING OBJECTIVES:	To recognise ways in which living things and the environment need protection.

## Myths and Legends



SUBJECT:	<b>Literacy</b>
P.O.S:	En2 - Myths, Legends & Traditional Stories
LEARNING OBJECTIVES:	To understand the difference between myths and legends and fact.

## Quiz



SUBJECTS:	<b>Literacy &amp; Science</b>
P.O.S:	En2 - Reading for information Sc2 - Living things in their environment
LEARNING OBJECTIVES:	To scan texts to find information.

## The Wildwood Owls



SUBJECTS:	<b>Art</b>
P.O.S:	Exploring and developing ideas
LEARNING OBJECTIVES:	To record from first hand observation.

## Life Cycle



SUBJECT:	<b>Science</b>
P.O.S:	Sc2 - Living things in their environment
LEARNING OBJECTIVES:	To understand that adults have young and that these grow into adults which in turn produce young.



**Activity**



SUBJECT:

**Literacy**

P.O.S:

En2 - Reading strategies

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

To recognise words and show understanding of their meanings.

**Literacy**



SUBJECTS:

**English**

P.O.S:  
Stories

En2 - Myths, Legends and Traditional

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

To understand the difference between myths and legends and fact.

**Art**



SUBJECTS:

**Art & English**

P.O.S:

Investigating and making art, craft and design

En2 - Nonfiction and nonliterary texts.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

To develop control of tools and techniques in art and design.

To understand the structural and organisational features of instructions.

**Glossary**



SUBJECTS:

**Science & English**

P.O.S:

Sc2 - Life processes and living things

En3 - Spelling

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

To develop understanding of scientific vocabulary.

To have a secure understanding of the purpose and organisation of a glossary.

Please note that throughout the pack, underlined words can be found in the glossary.



# Who's Hooo

**Tawny Owls** are the most common owls in Britain. They have brown mottled and patterned feathers and dark eyes. Tawny Owls live in woodlands and hunt their prey at night by perching until they spot it and then swooping down and grabbing it. They are the only owl whose call really sounds like Twhit-twhoo!



**Little Owls** are the smallest owls you will find in this country. They are brown with white patches and their eyes are yellow. They hunt during the day. They like to live near farmland or parkland and they eat mainly worms and insects.

**Barn Owls** are medium-sized owls with heart-shaped faces. Their plumage is white with pale golden markings and their eyes are dark. You are most likely to see them hunting at dusk, flying around and searching the ground below them for prey. They like to live in open country and will nest in buildings, hence their name.



**Long-eared Owls** don't really have long ears at all! Their ears are tucked away under their feathers but they have long feathery ear tufts on top of their heads. They also have bright orange eyes. They live in woodland and they hunt at dawn and dusk.

**Short-eared Owls** live in mountain and moorland areas. They are light brown with dark brown patches and their eyes are yellow. They hunt during the day and they build nests on the ground.



**Eagle Owls** are the largest owls found in Britain, with a wing span of nearly two metres! They are very rare here. Their feathers are mottled brown and their eyes are orange. They are big enough to carry off herons or small deer! They hunt at dawn and dusk, like the Long-eared Owls.

**Snowy Owls** are the rarest owl in Britain. They are occasionally seen in the Shetlands, off the north coast of Scotland. They have white feathers to help camouflage them in snow and their eyes are yellow. They hunt during the day.



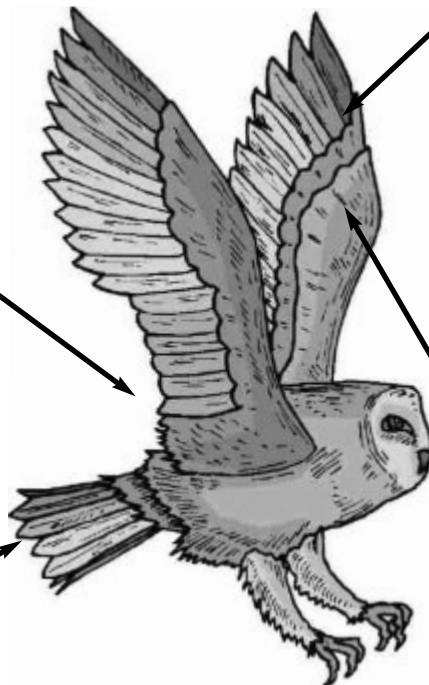
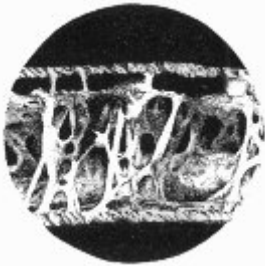
## Life in the Air

Owls are birds and so they have feathers, wings and lay eggs. They generally perch and build their nests in trees or other high places and then fly about to catch their food, find shelter or explore new places. Some owls are active at night. We say they are nocturnal. Other owls hunt during the day.

Owls have many features which help them to fly. There's more to flying than just having wings!

Soft feathers so that the owl makes no noise when it flies. Owls spend lots of time preening their feathers to keep them tidy.

Hollow bones make the owl light enough to fly.



Wings are very important for flying!

Tail helps the owl to steer when it's flying and also acts as a brake when the owl lands.

Question: Why do you think it is important that owls don't make a noise when they fly?

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## Life in the Air

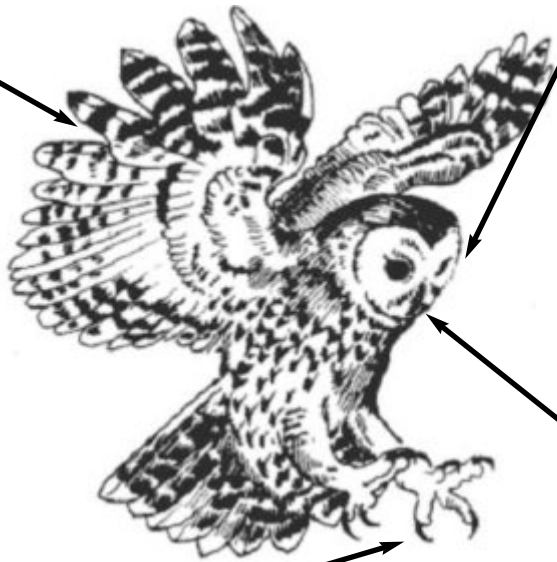
Owls are predators. They hunt and eat other animals. Different kinds of owls hunt for food in different ways. Tawny Owls perch in a tree until they spot their prey and then swoop down on it. Other owls, such as Barn Owls, fly at a low height over the ground, searching for prey. However, all owls catch their prey in their talons to stop it running away. Then they use their beaks to crush its skull, before swallowing their food whole.

Owls have many features which help them to catch and eat their food.



Patterned feathers are for camouflage - they help the owl to hide so other animals don't spot it.

Big eyes - good eyesight is important for catching prey.



Flat face to help pick up sound waves so the owl can hear better. Their ears are hidden under their feathers.



Sharp talons for grabbing their prey.



Question: Snowy Owls have white feathers so that they can hide in the snow. Tawny Owls have speckly brown feathers. Where do you think they might hide?

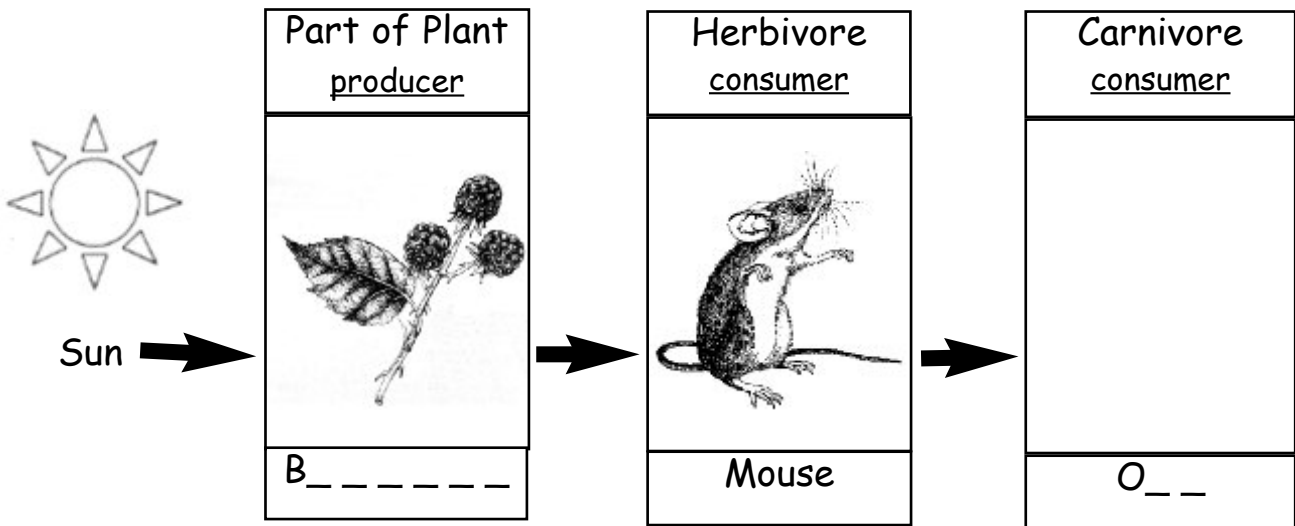
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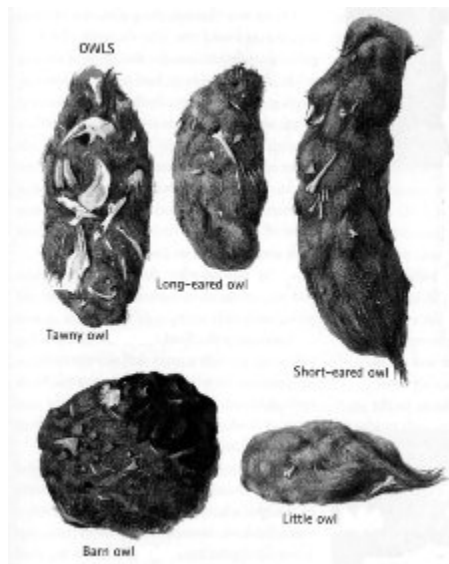


# Food and Eating

Can you draw and fill in the gaps of this owl food chain?



Owls don't chew their food because they have no teeth. They swallow their prey whole. They digest the meat and then all the indigestible parts, such as bones and fur, are squashed together to form a pellet which the owl spits out.



You can tell which owl pellet has come from each kind of owl because different kinds of owls eat different things. Tawny Owl pellets are usually grey, feel like felt and have lots of bones in them from small animals. Little Owls eat a lot of insects and so their pellets are often full of wings and legs from beetles.



If you take an owl pellet apart, you can identify all the bones and work out what animals the owl ate!





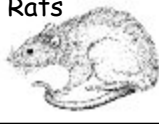



## Feeding Time

Some owls may hunt in the daytime, some at dusk and some in the night when it is very dark. Tawny Owls perch until they spot their prey and then swoop down on it. Barn Owls will fly around looking for prey on the ground below them. All owls are carnivores which means they only eat meat.

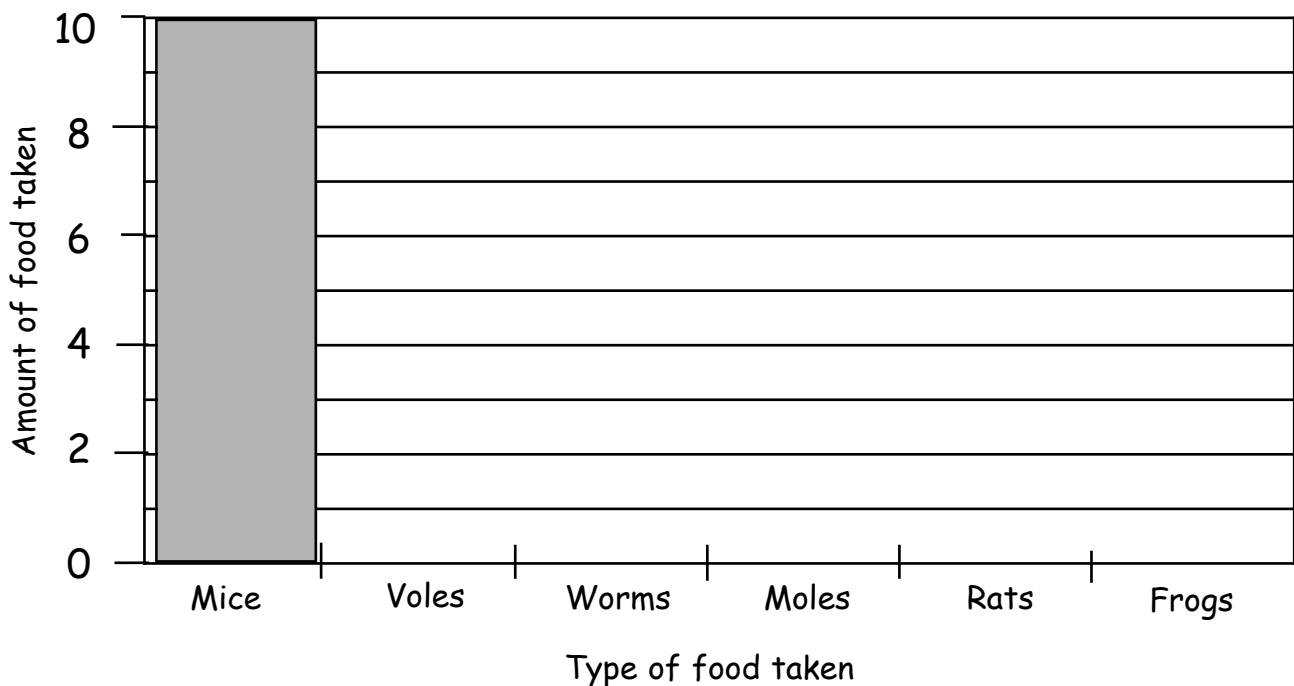
Different kinds of owls eat different things. Big owls such as Eagle Owls hunt rabbits and small deer, Little Owls like beetles and other insects and Tawny Owls prefer mice, voles and worms.

Amounts of different types of food taken (by one tawny owl over five nights).

	Mice 	Voles 	Worms 	Moles 	Rats 	Frogs 
Numbers taken	10	8	5	1	1	2

Can you complete the bar chart below using the information from the table?  
(To help you, the mice have been done for you).

**Food taken by a tawny owl over five nights**



# Habitats and Homes



Different kinds of owls like to live in different places. We say they prefer different habitats. Tawny Owls and Long-eared Owls live in woodlands. They spend the day perching high up in trees, before hunting at night. Barn Owls and Little Owls prefer to live where there are more fields and fewer trees. They might roost in a tree or perhaps inside an old building, such as a barn. Short-eared Owls live in the mountains or on moorland.

Owls only build nests when it is time to lay eggs. Tawny Owls build their nests in trees, usually in an old woodpecker hole. Barn Owls like to nest inside buildings. Long-eared Owls usually take over an old crows' nest. Little Owls aren't fussy. They will nest in a hole in a tree, in a building or even on the ground. Short-eared Owls build their nests on the ground.

Match each of the owls to the place it would like to build a nest.



Tawny owl



Barn owl



Short-eared owl



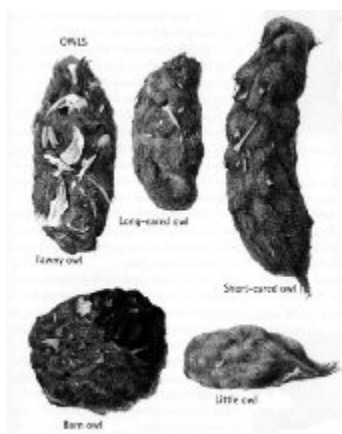
## Tracks and Signs

Owls are shy birds and most are not often seen during the day. They can be difficult to watch. If you want to discover where owls live, you need to become an owl detective and look for the signs they leave behind.



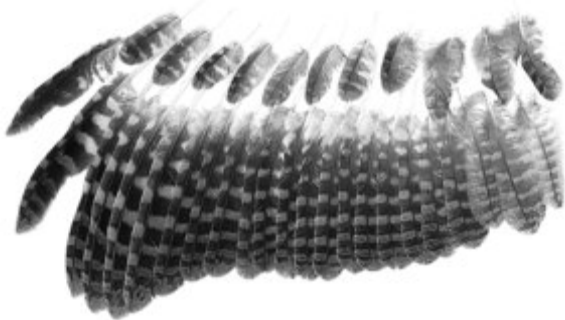
### Owl poo

Many owls spend the daytime perched in trees or other high places. Each owl will have its own favourite perch and there will often be a pile of white owl droppings underneath.



### Owl pellets

Owls don't chew their food because they have no teeth. They have to swallow their prey whole. The indigestible parts, such as the fur and bones, are squashed into a pellet inside the owl's digestive system and then regurgitated.



### Feathers

Owls moult their feathers in spring and grow new ones. You might find old feathers that have fallen out lying on the ground under the owl's perch.

Have a look in our owl enclosures. Write down or draw any clues that the owls may have left behind.



# Owls and Humans

In the past owls have been killed because people believed they brought bad luck. They have also been killed and nailed up over doors to keep evil spirits away!

Gamekeepers have killed owls to stop them eating baby birds such as pheasants. Some gamekeepers still do this today but it is against the law.

Owls have also been affected by people using pesticides. These are not poisonous in small doses but if owls eat lots of small animals, all containing a tiny dose of poison, it can add up to a large enough dose to harm the owl.

Many owls prefer to live in woodland and people often cut down woods to build houses and roads. People also keep woods tidy and take away old tree stumps and dead trees which owls use as places to build their nests.



## How can we help owls?

All owls are protected by law. This means that you are not allowed to catch owls and sell them, take their eggs away, harm owls in any way or disturb them (including taking photos of owls sitting on eggs).

We can help owls by putting up nest boxes. Nowadays there are fewer old trees with holes in for owls to use for building their nests and so nest boxes are very popular! It is very important to help owls by protecting their habitat. By creating more suitable places for owls to live, we can help numbers of owls increase in the wild.

### Multiple Choice

(Circle the right answer)

#### 1. Why did people nail owls over doorways?

because they looked nice                      to make doorknockers                      to keep evil spirits away

#### 2. Which one of these are you not allowed to do to owls?

steal their eggs                      put up nest boxes for them                      watch them flying

#### 3. How can we best look after owls?

keep them as pets                      look after their habitat

put food out for them



## Owl Myths and Legends

One of the earliest cave paintings made by people living in France in prehistoric times shows Snowy Owls.

The ancient Greeks believed that owls were wise and kind. The Greek goddess of wisdom, Athena, is often shown holding an owl. The picture shows a coin from ancient Athens with an owl on it.



The hoot of an owl has often been considered to be bad luck or a bad omen. This came about because when Vikings had surrounded a Saxon village, they would call like owls to each other as a signal to attack!



People used to believe that owls could turn their heads all the way round in a circle. They thought that if you walked round and round a tree that an owl was perching in, the owl would keep turning its head to watch you until it strangled itself!

A dead owl nailed over the door of a house or barn was believed to act as a lightning rod. People thought that the lightning would strike the owl and not the building! Even now, some important buildings still have statues of owls on their roofs.

Owls can also be seen on heraldic crests, like the ones knights used to bear on their shields. Leeds City Council still has owls as part of its crest. In heraldry, an owl is often a symbol of wisdom.



### Owl Superstitions

- ⌘ Eating the powdered burnt feet of an owl will cure snakebite.
- ⌘ The heart and right foot of an owl placed on a sleeping person will act as a truth drug.
- ⌘ The hoot of an owl will bring bad luck.



## Owl Quiz

1. Name one thing that helps an owl to fly.

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2. How many kinds of owls live in Britain?

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3. What do we call animals that only eat meat?

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4. What is an owl pellet made of?

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5. Why don't owls chew their food?

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## Owls at Wildwood

### Tawny Owls

We have four tawny owls at Wildwood. A male and a female pair live beside the badger building. They are birds who used to live in the wild but have been injured. They can't survive in the wild any more because their eyesight is damaged and they can't hunt properly. They can be tricky to spot because their feathers look like part of a tree's bark.

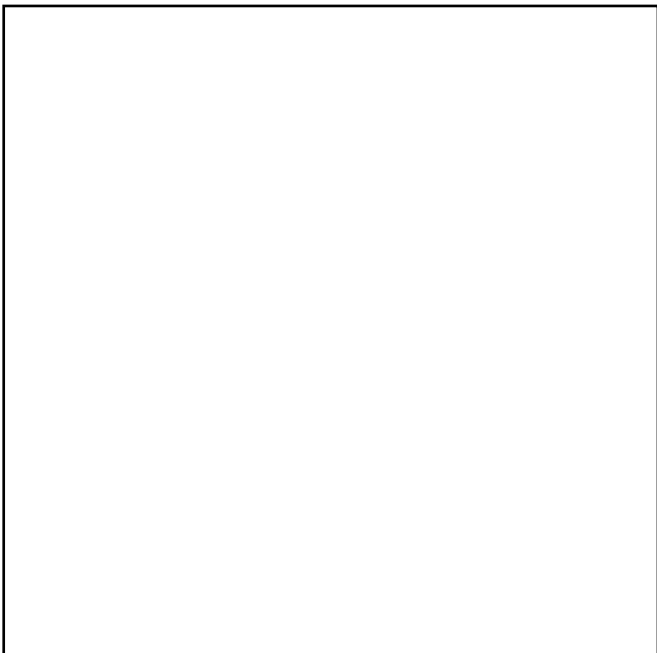
Two females called Oakley and Pal live beside the Rat Barn. They are the daughters of the two owls who live beside the badgers. Pal likes to sit under cover. Oakley has leather straps called jesses attached to her legs. We hold onto these when we carry her so that she doesn't fly away!

### Eagle Owls

Three eagle owls live at Wildwood. A male and female pair live near the beavers. They are very hard to tell apart but the female is a little bit bigger. You can usually see them perched on branches, except in the spring when she sits on eggs in a nest on the ground. Their daughter, Twig, lives near the Rat Barn.

### Barn Owls

We have three barn owls living at Wildwood. They also live near the Rat Barn. They have an outdoor area for flying about and an indoor area where they often sleep.



Have you seen any of our owls

Flying?

Preening?

Sleeping?

Eating?

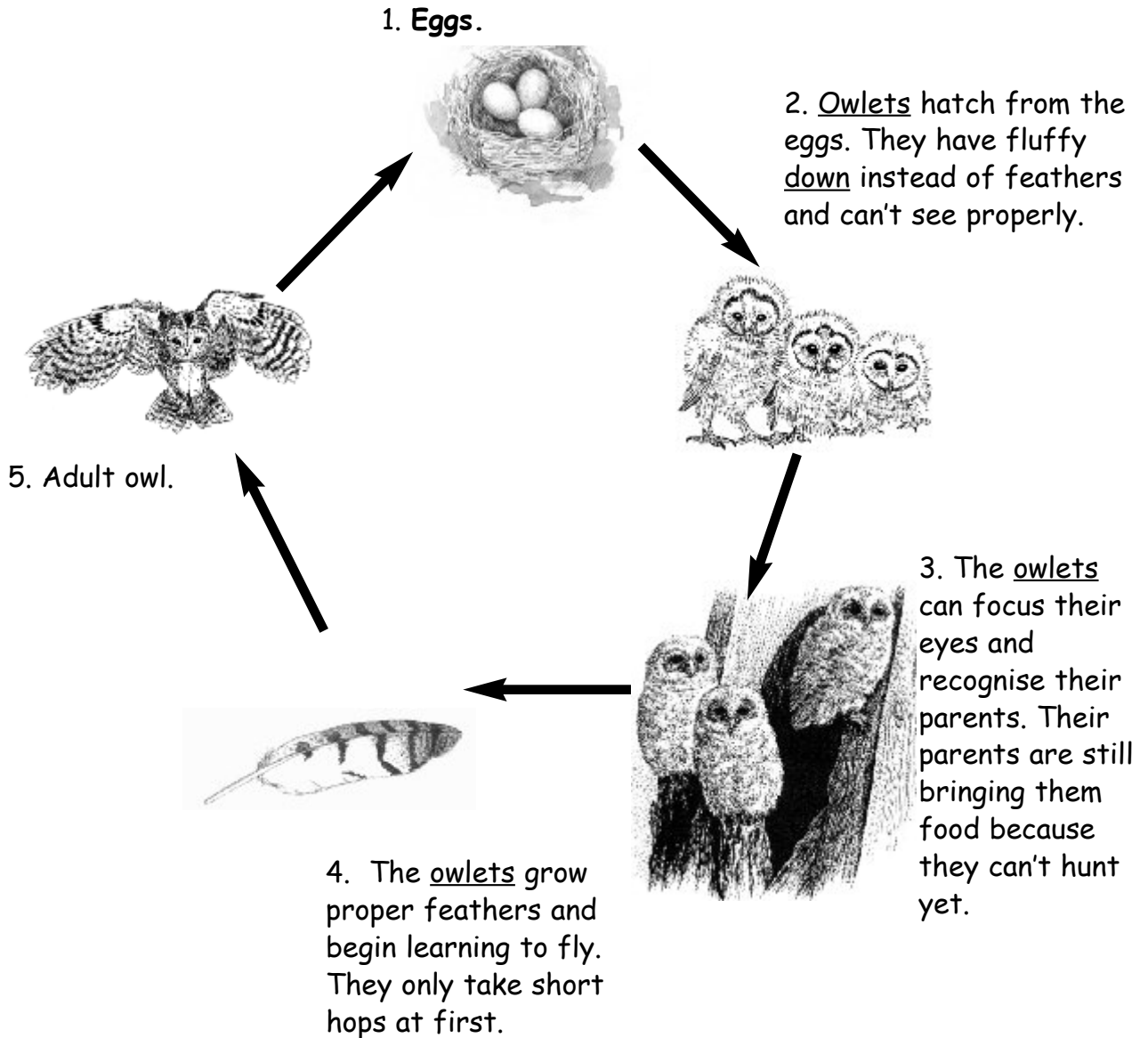
Choose your favourite Wildwood owl and use the box to draw a picture of it.





# Owl Life Cycle

Owls lay their eggs in early spring. They usually lay one egg every few days. Different kinds of owls sit on their eggs for different lengths of time but it is usually about four weeks. When the owlets hatch from the eggs, they are covered in fluffy down, they can't focus their eyes and they don't know how to fly. They gradually practice flapping their wings until they are strong enough to try short hops. Baby owls stay near their nest until they are old enough to fly properly.



Question: Why can't owlets fly as soon as they are hatched?

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# Owl Word Search

Can you find all the words to do with owls in the grid below?

There are 20, running forwards, backwards, up, down, across and diagonally. Some of the letters are used in more than one word.

To help you, here are some clues for the words you are looking for: O\_\_\_\_\_ - a baby owl, T\_\_\_\_\_, S\_\_\_\_\_, E\_\_\_\_\_ and B\_\_\_\_ - kinds of owls, C\_\_\_\_\_ - an animal that only eats meat, a M\_\_\_\_\_, a V\_\_\_\_\_ and a R\_\_\_\_ - are all things owls would eat, W\_\_\_\_\_- these help an owl to fly, F\_\_\_\_\_ - all birds have these, T\_\_\_\_\_ - an owl grips its prey with these, N\_\_\_\_ - an owl lays its eggs in this, P\_\_\_\_\_ - the place where an owl sits, F\_\_\_\_ - the way a bird travels, S\_\_\_\_\_ - when an owl suddenly flies down to catch its prey, P\_\_\_\_\_ - an owl coughs this up after a meal, B\_\_\_\_ - the sharp, pointed part of an owl's face, B\_\_\_\_\_ - the kind of animal an owl is, E\_\_\_\_ - what an owl uses for seeing.

E	F	E	A	T	H	E	R	S	P
R	S	T	A	L	O	N	S	E	E
O	E	U	T	W	B	W	R	F	L
V	Y	S	O	A	F	C	L	A	L
I	E	G	R	M	H	Y	S	E	E
N	S	N	O	W	Y	N	W	A	T
R	P	I	E	L	O	V	O	G	T
A	K	W	B	I	R	D	O	L	A
C	M	G	B	E	A	K	P	E	R



## How the Owl came to have such large eyes (Iroquois Legend)

To the Iroquois, a tribe of Native Americans, the Great Spirit and maker of all things was called Raweno. He was the ultimate source of life, and each and every creature he made was shaped according to its own character. One day Raweno was working hard, making lots of animals. At that moment he was making Rabbit.

"What do you want, Rabbit?" asked Raweno.

"I would like sharp fangs and claws like Leopard, and large ears and long legs like Antelope," said Rabbit.

"You may have whatever you wish," replied Raweno, stretching the legs as Rabbit had asked.

Just then Owl, who was next to be made, was perched on a branch waiting his turn. "I am going to have a very long beak, just like Egret," he hooted, "and a really long neck the same as Swan. I am going to have bright red feathers like the Cardinal bird. I shall be faster than anyone, more beautiful than anyone, in fact the most beautiful bird in the world."

The Great Spirit, Raweno, was getting annoyed with Owl. He didn't allow other creatures to watch him working, and he liked to do his job in peace and quiet. "Don't you know you are not allowed to watch!" he shouted. "Turn away or close your eyes, and wait your turn quietly!" He turned back and continued making the long ears Rabbit had asked for.

But Owl was not quiet, and he did not close his eyes. "You can't make me be quiet," Owl hooted again, "and you can't make me close my eyes. I shall watch if I choose."

That made Raweno very angry. "I shall only tell you once more," he shouted. "Close your eyes and wait quietly!"

"I will watch. I will watch, and you can't stop me!" Owl answered angrily.

That was more than Raweno could take. Suddenly he pulled Owl from the tree where he was perched. Leaving Rabbit aside, he pushed Owl's head far into his body. Angrily, he shook him and shook him. Owl was so scared that his eyes grew larger and larger. Finally Raweno pulled at Owl's ears until they were sticking up from his head, before placing him roughly back onto his branch.

"Perhaps now you will learn your lesson," he said, still angry from Owl's rudeness. "Now you will not be able to bend your neck to look at things you have been told not to. Now, with your big ears, you will hear when you are told not to do something. Now your eyes are large, but you will not be able to watch me working, because I will only let you be awake when it is dark, and I do not work at night."



Owl was still shaking with fear.

"And as for your feathers," Raweno continued. "You will not be the red you wanted, but brown as the earth." Raweno rubbed the earth all over Owl's feathers until he was completely brown. "That is for not doing as you were told."

Owl hooted loudly, before flying off unhappily.

Slowly Raweno turned to continue his work on Rabbit, but Rabbit was nowhere to be seen. He had been so scared when he saw the Great Spirit so annoyed that he ran off without waiting to be finished. That is why Rabbit's back legs are long and his front legs are not, making him hop instead of run. Because Rabbit was so scared when Raweno was angry, he will always be afraid of everything. He never waited long enough for Raweno to give him the fangs and claws of Leopard. Just imagine, if Rabbit had not run away just then - he would have looked completely different!

Use the boxes below to draw pictures of Owl and Rabbit the way they wanted to look.

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## Make an Owl Mask!

To make your mask, you will need:

- ◆ crayons, coloured pencils or paint
- ◆ a pair of scissors
- ◆ sellotape or glue
- ◆ some thin elastic

1. Cut out the owl head on the next page. Make sure you cut out the beak as well.

2. Colour in the head and the beak. Ask a grown-up to help you cut out the eye holes.

3. Fold the beak along the dotted line and glue it into place. Glue the tabs behind the face to make the head.

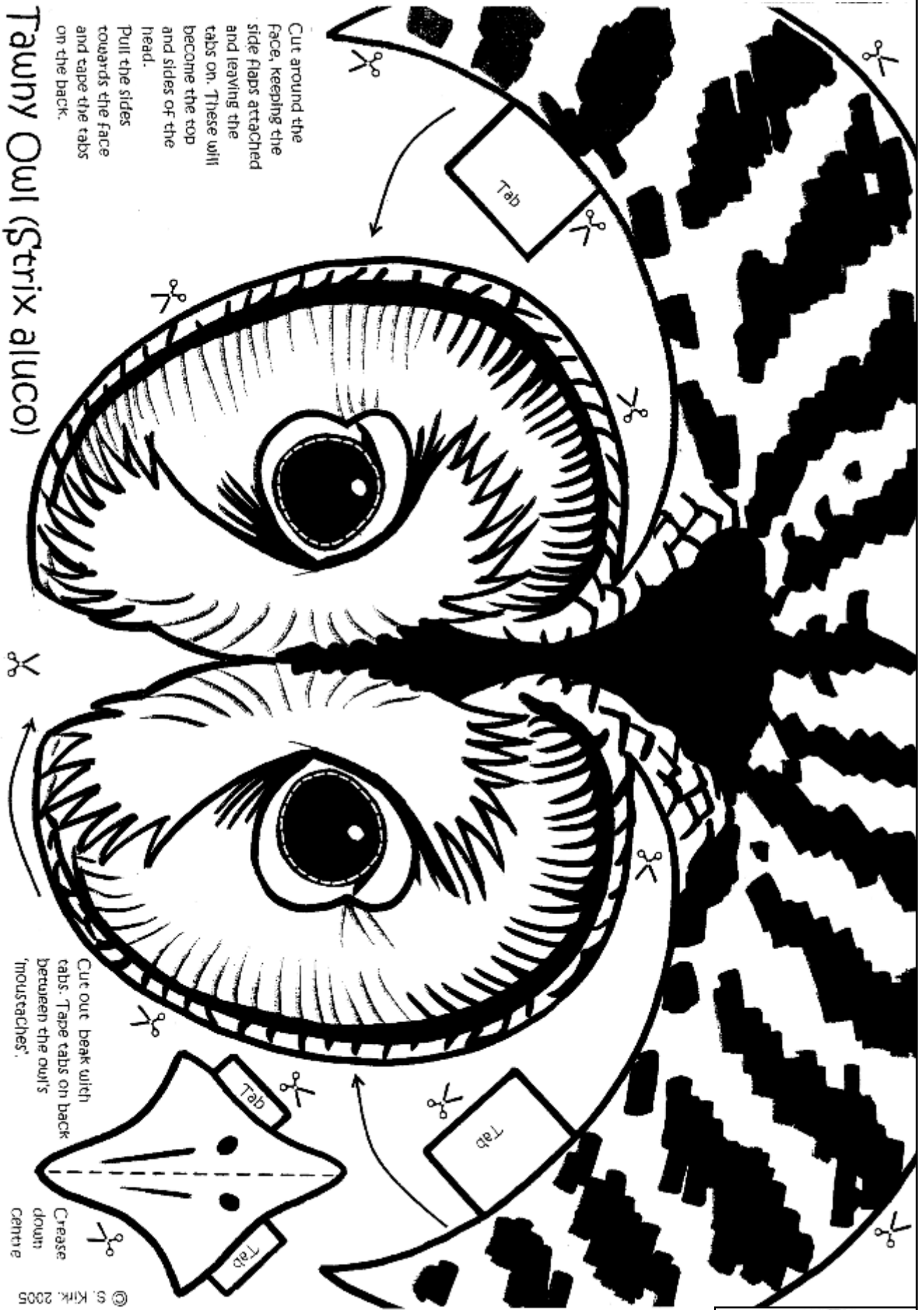
4. Measure the correct length of elastic to fit around your head.

5. Make two small holes on either side of the mask. Thread the elastic through and tie a knot.

6. Your mask is now ready to wear!



# Tawny Owl (Strix aluco)



Cut around the face, keeping the side flaps attached and leaving the tabs on. These will become the top and sides of the head.

Pull the sides towards the face and tape the tabs on the back.

Cut out beak with tabs. Tape tabs on back between the owl's 'moustaches'.

Crease down centre

© S. Kirk, 2005



## Make a Food Chain Mobile!

To make your mobile, you will need:

- ◆ crayons, coloured pencils or paint
- ◆ a pair of scissors
- ◆ thread

1. Cut out the owl, mouse and acorn shapes from the next page.

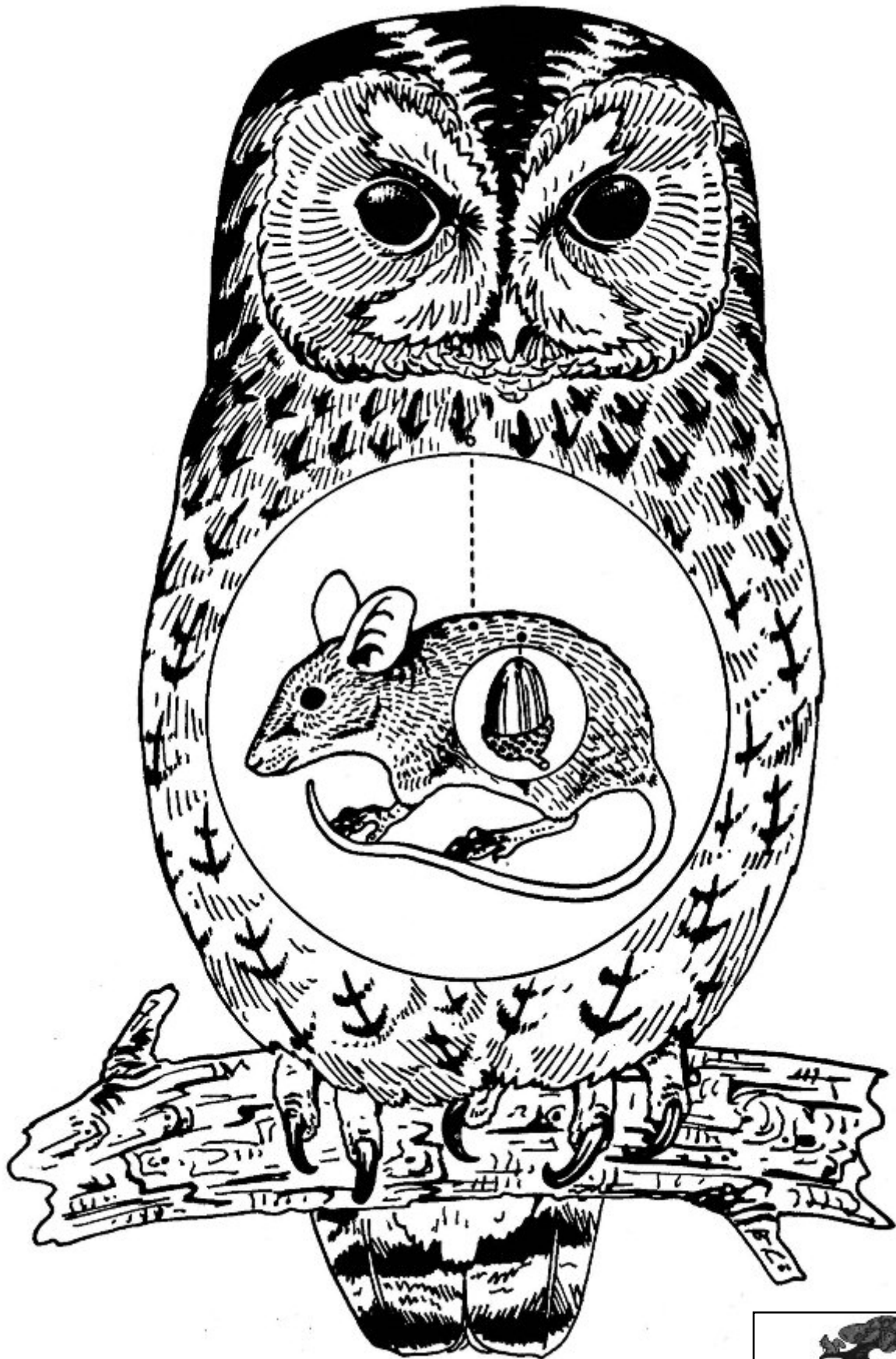
2. Colour in the shapes.

3. Make a hole in each shape as shown.

4. Tie thread from each hole so that the acorn hangs inside the mouse and the mouse hangs inside the owl.

5. Why not try designing your own mobile to show other owl food chains?







## Word List

- **camouflage** - a colour or pattern which makes the animal blend in with its surroundings.
- **carnivore** - an animal which only eats meat.
- **consumer** - an animal which eats plants or other animals. Consumers are sometimes called herbivores, carnivores or omnivores.
- **down** - the soft, fluffy feathers that baby birds have.
- **habitat** - the place where an animal lives.
- **herbivore** - an animal which only eats plants.
- **indigestible** - something which an animal eats but which cannot be digested in the animal's stomach.
- **mottled** - speckled or patterned.
- **nocturnal** - animals which are active at night and sleep during the day.
- **owlet** - a baby owl.
- **pesticide** - a chemical usually sprayed on plants to kill pests such as insects.
- **plumage** - a bird's feathers.
- **predator** - an animal which eats other animals.
- **preening** - grooming feathers using the beak.
- **prey** - an animal which gets eaten by other animals.
- **producer** - a green plant which can take energy from the sun and make its own food using the process of photosynthesis.
- **regurgitated** - brought up from the stomach and spat out.
- **roosting** - perching.
- **talons** - a bird's claws.

