

The STONHAM SCREECHER

Winter 2023-24

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Hello! My name is Cassius and I am a hobby. I live at the Suffolk Owl Sanctuary with lots of owls and other birds of prey. Here are some interesting hobby facts!



We are roughly the same size as a kestrel and the second smallest falcon in Britain after the merlin.

We are very graceful and agile birds in flight. When hunting we swoop and glide and can change our height and direction extremely quickly.

We are migratory birds which means that during winter we live in north-west Africa, but during the summer months we travel to Britain to breed.

In medieval times, we were used by yeomen (landowners) probably for teaching young noblemen the art of falconry, rather than for hunting.

We don't build nests, but lay our eggs in those abandoned by other birds like crows and magpies.

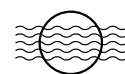
We can travel huge distances when migrating. One hobby tracked by satellite travelled 1,250 kilometres in 2 days!

We like to eat large flying insects and small birds. We can catch prey on the wing and eat it whilst flying!

Got a question?? ASK AN OWL!

Do you have any questions about Owls or other Birds of Prey? Cobweb the Barn Owl is happy to answer and will personally respond to your letter or email, so please include your name and your parent's contact details.

Your next copy of The Stonham Screecher can be collected from the Sanctuary or you can download a digital copy when you register on line for FREE at www.owl-help.org.uk/cobweb-online



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MEET THE COMMITTEE!



There are many names for a group of vultures. If it is feeding around a carcass, it is called a 'wake', if the group is flying together it is called a 'kettle' and if it is perched in a tree it is called a 'committee'!

The Suffolk Owl Sanctuary is home to over 80 owls and other birds of prey. Vultures are part of the SOS community too!

Vultures are really interesting birds - there are 23 different species in the world, and over half are classified as threatened, endangered or critically endangered, due to hunting, poisoning and habitat loss.

Vultures do not hunt for food, but scavenge the remains of animals killed by other predators. They have little or no plumage on their heads to enable them to feed inside carcasses easily.

The strong acids in their digestive system render them immune to botulism, rabies, anthrax and cholera. They also disinfect their legs with urine after stamping around the feeding ground - this is called urohydrolysis!



Vultures really 'clean up' the environment by consuming rotting flesh which poses an infection risk to other animals and humans.



Turkey vultures have an incredible sense of smell. They have been known to smell carrion from 1 mile away!! They have the largest olfactory (smelling) system of all birds.

Feather Figures!



During the winter months, Mishka and her fellow owls moult out damaged feathers.

This allows them to grow new plumage which ensures that they can fly efficiently and stay in tip-top condition.

In one week, Mishka and her friends drop different numbers of feathers in their aviaries.

- Snowy owl 8
- Great grey owl 7
- Barn owl 4
- Little owl 3
- Malaysian wood owl 6
- Spectacled owl 5

- Which owl has lost more feathers - the snowy or the tawny?
- Find the sum of the feathers lost by the barn owl and wood owl.
- Add together the feathers lost by the spectacled, little and snowy owl.
- Subtract the number of feathers lost by the barn owl from that of the great grey.
- Find the average number of feathers lost in one week.
- Which owls have lost 20 feathers combined?

Tell Taiga

Taiga is a great grey owl who shares an aviary with her best friend, Taz.

They love their owl home and Taiga uses lots of **ADJECTIVES** (describing words) when talking about it.....

Taiga says the aviary is

- warm spacious light comfortable dry cosy

Can you think of 10 adjectives that describe your home?

- 1..... 2..... 3..... 4..... 5..... 6..... 7..... 8..... 9..... 10.....

