

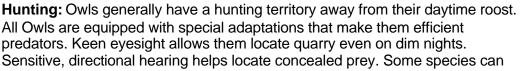
## Feeding & Hunting

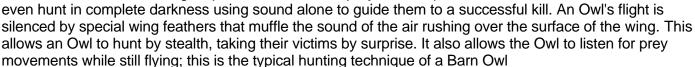
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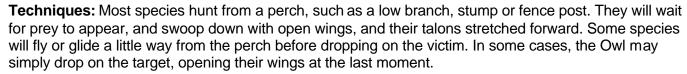
Worksheet 5

**Food:** Owls are Birds of Prey, which means that they must kill other animals to survive. Their diet includes invertebrates (such as insects, spiders, earthworms, snails and crabs), fish, reptiles, amphibians, birds and small mammals.

The main food largely depends on the species of Owl. For example, Scops and Screech Owls feed on insects mostly, while Barn Owls eat mainly voles, shrews and mice. Larger Owls such as the Eagle Owl will prey upon hares, young foxes and birds up to the size of ducks and game birds. Some species have specialised in fishing, such as the Asian Fish Owls (*Ketupa*) and African Fishing Owls (*Scotopelia*). Although certain species have these preferences for food type, most owls are opportunistic, and will take whatever prey is available in the area.







Other species prefer to soar, or make quartering flights, scanning the ground below for a suitable meal. When a target is located, the Owl will fly towards it, keeping its head in line with it until the last moment. This is when the Owl pulls its head back, and thrusts its feet forward with the talons spread wide - two pointing backwards and two forwards.

The force of the impact is usually enough to stun the prey, which is then dispatched with a snap of the beak.



Owls can adapt their hunting techniques depending on the type of prey. Insects and small birds may be snatched in mid air, sometimes after being flushed from the cover of trees or bushes by the Owl. Once caught, the prey is carried off in the beak or the talons. In times of plenty, Owls may store any surplus of food,

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