



Little Owl. Spring. Adult (04-IV).

**LITTLE OWL** (*Athene noctua*)

**IDENTIFICATION**

21-27 cm. Brownish upperparts, with white spots; breast white and brown streaked; brown flight feathers tinged white and buff; tail barred pale buff; head lacking tufts; green yellowish bill; yellow eyes.



Little Owl. Pattern of head, bill and wing.



**SIMILAR SPECIES**

**Scops Owl** has similar size (a bit smaller) and yellow eyes, but has tufts on head and breast and underparts are streaked



Scops Owl

**SEXING**

Both sexes alike in plumage. Usually, **male** smaller than **female** but size is not useful for sexing due to overlap.

**AGEING**

4 age groups can be recognized:

**Juvenile** with brown crown without pale marks; upperparts with abundant pale marks; body feathers loose and downy; flight and tail feathers very fresh; tip of 10th primary pointed; secondaries with pointed tips.

**1st year autumn/2nd year spring** similar to **adult** but with all flight and tail feathers **juvenile**; crown feathers with thin brown edge and broad white centre; with moult limit between moulted outermost greater coverts (dark grey and with large white patch) and **juvenile** inner unmoulted (brown and with a small buff patch); flight and tail feathers worn; secondaries with pointed tip; 10th primary with pointed tip.

**2nd year autumn/3rd year spring** only in a little number of birds with some retained **juvenile** secondary.

**Adult** with crown feathers with broad brown edge and thin white centre; upperparts with scarce pale marks; flight and tail feathers fresh; 10th primary with rounded tip; secondaries with rounded tips; if there are two ages of secondaries, both are with **adult** pattern.

**07570 Little Owl (*Athene noctua*)**



Little Owl. Adult. Ageing. Head pattern: top adult; bottom juvenile.



Little Owl. Adult. Ageing. Crown pattern: left adult; right juvenile.



Little Owl. Adult. Ageing. Pattern of tips of secondaries: left adult; right juvenile.



Little Owl. Ageing. Pattern of tip of 10th primary: top adult; bottom juvenile.

**MOULT**

Complete **postbreeding** moult, but sometimes some secondary is retained; usually finished in November. Partial **postjuvenile** moult involving body feathers, lesser and median coverts and some outermost greater coverts; generally finished in October. In **2nd year** have a complete **postbreeding** moult, but sometimes some **juvenile** secondary still retained for another year.

**PHENOLOGY**

I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII

- Summer visitor
- Resident
- Wintering
- On passage



Little Owl. Spring. 2nd year (10-IV).

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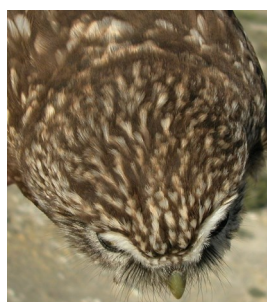
Little Owl. Spring. Juvenile (02-VII).



Little Owl. Spring. Breast pattern: top left adult (04-IV); top right 2nd year (10-IV); left juvenile (02-VII).



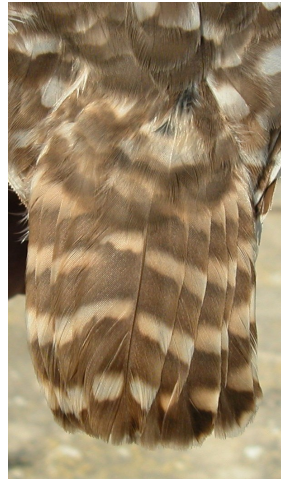
Little Owl. Spring. Head pattern: top left adult (04-IV); top right 2nd year (10-IV); left juvenile (02-VII).



Little Owl. Spring. Crown pattern: top left adult (04-IV); top right 2nd year (10-IV); left juvenile (02-VII).



Little Owl. Spring. Upperparts pattern: top left adult (04-IV); top right 2nd year (10-IV); left juvenile (02-VII).



Little Owl. Spring. Tail pattern: top left adult (04-IV); top right 2nd year (10-IV); left juvenile (02-VII).



Little Owl. Spring. Adult: pattern of primary coverts (04-IV).



Little Owl. Spring. 2nd year: pattern of primary coverts (10-IV).



Little Owl. Spring. Juvenile: pattern of primary coverts (02-VII).



Little Owl. Spring. Adult: pattern of primaries (04-IV).

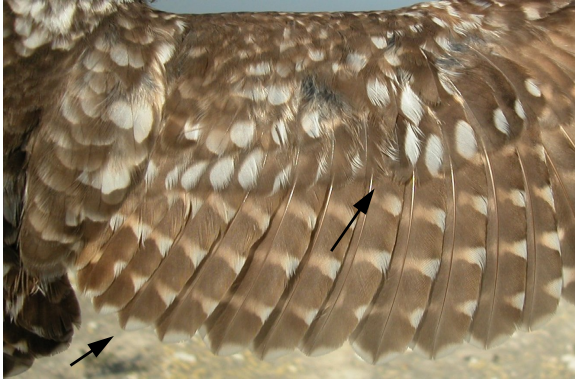


Little Owl. Spring. Juvenile: pattern of primaries (02-VII).



Little Owl. Spring. 2nd year: pattern of primaries (10-IV).

Little Owl. Spring. Adult: pattern of secondaries (04-IV).



Little Owl. Spring. Adult: pattern of wing (04-IV).



Little Owl. Spring. 2nd year: pattern of secondaries (10-IV).



Little Owl. Spring. 2nd year: pattern of wing (10-IV).



Little Owl. Spring. Juvenile: pattern of secondaries (02-VII).

Little Owl. Spring. Juvenile: pattern of wing (02-VII).



Little Owl. Autumn. Adult. (05-XI).



Little Owl. Autumn. 1st year (05-XI).



Little Owl. Autumn. Head pattern: top adult (05-XI); bottom 1st year (05-XI).



Little Owl. Autumn. Head pattern: left adult (05-XI); right 1st year (05-XI).



Little Owl. Autumn. Breast pattern: left adult (05-XI); right 1st year (05-XI).



Little Owl. Autumn. Upperparts pattern: left adult (05-XI); right 1st year (05-XI).



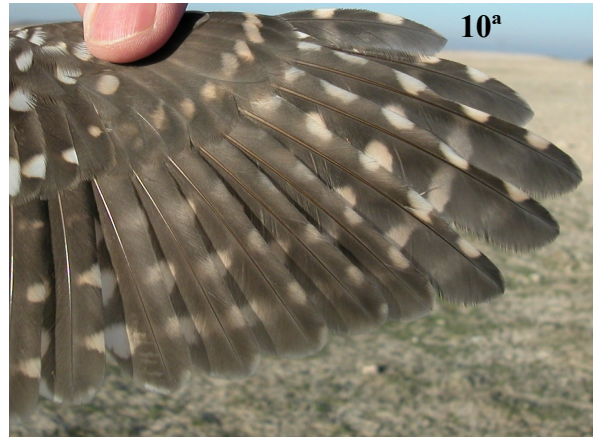
Little Owl. Autumn. Tail pattern: left adult (05-XI); right 1st year (05-XI).



Little Owl. Autumn. Pattern of tips on secondaries: left adult (05-XI); right 1st year (05-XI).



Little Owl. Autumn. Adult: pattern of primary coverts (05-XI).



Little Owl. Autumn. 1st year: pattern of primary coverts (05-XI).



Little Owl. Autumn. Adult: pattern of primaries (05-XI).





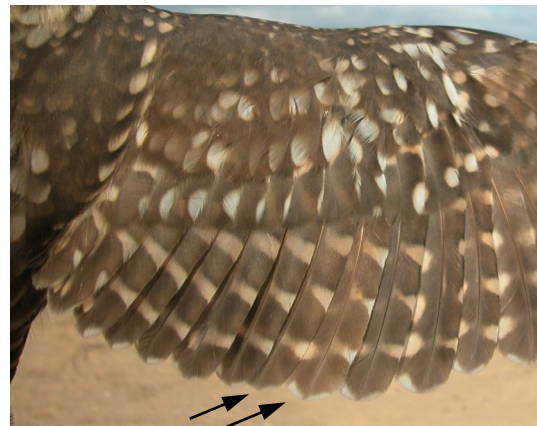
Little Owl. Autumn. 2nd year: pattern of primaries (02-X).



Little Owl. Autumn. Adult with completed moult: pattern of secondaries (05-XI).



Little Owl. Autumn. 1st year: pattern of primaries (05-XI).



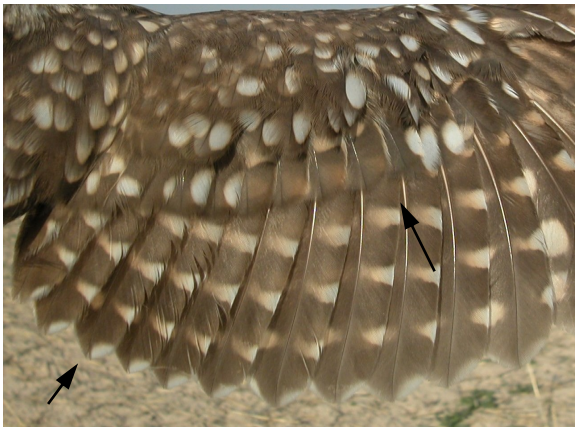
Little Owl. Autumn. Adult with suspended moult: pattern of secondaries (07-XI).

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Little Owl. Autumn. Adult with completed moult: pattern of wing (05-XI).

Little Owl. Autumn. 2nd year: pattern of secondaries (02-X).



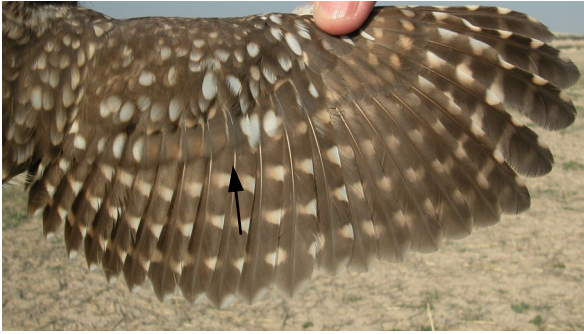
Little Owl. Autumn. Adult with suspended moult: pattern of wing (07-XI).



Little Owl. Autumn. 1st year: pattern of secondaries (05-XI).



Little Owl. Autumn. 2nd year: pattern of wing (02-X).



Little Owl. Autumn. 1st year: pattern of wing (05-XI).