



Tawny Owl. Adult (13-II)

TAWNY OWL (*Strix aluco*)

IDENTIFICATION

37-40 cm. Grey or reddish upperparts, with dark streaks; pale underparts streaked dark; brown-reddish and vermiculated flight feathers; plain facial dishes and without tufts; yellow-greenish bill; black eyes.



Tawny Owl. Pattern of head, bill and wing.



SIMILAR SPECIES

This species is unmistakable since it is the only grey or reddish owl with dark eyes.

SEXING

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

AGEING

5 age groups can be recognized:

Juvenile with only one age of flight and tail feathers; primary coverts with two or three dark and narrow bands; primaries narrow and pointed; primaries and secondaries with dark narrow and usually broken subterminal band; tail feathers slightly pointed, with tips whitish or dirty grey without or with only some dark spots.

2nd year autumn/3rd year spring with two generations of feathers on wing, so some fresh inner primaries and usually outer secondaries have **adult** pattern and the rest have **juvenile** pattern; all tail feathers with **adult** pattern.

3rd year autumn/4th year spring with some **juvenile** secondaries unmoulted; with two generations of primaries with **adult** pattern.

4th year autumn/5th year spring only in birds with retained **juvenile** secondaries and until they are moulted.

Adult with two or more generations of flight feathers but all with **adult** pattern; primary coverts with no more than two broad dark bands; primaries with broad tip; primaries and secondaries with dark subterminal band with similar width than the other ones and usually unbroken; tail feathers rounded, with dirty grey tips with dark spots.

CAUTION: wear and individual variation can make it difficult to appreciate the pattern of tips on tail feathers.



Tawny Owl. Ageing. Pattern of primary coverts: left adult; right juvenile.



Tawny Owl. Ageing. Pattern of primaries: top adult; bottom juvenile.



Tawny Owl. Ageing. Pattern of secondaries: left adult; right juvenile.



Tawny Owl. Ageing. Pattern of central tail feather: left adult; right juvenile.



Tawny Owl. Ageing. Pattern of the outermost tail feather: left adult; right juvenile.

MOULT

Nearly complete **postbreeding** moult, usually finished in November but not all flight feathers changed each year. Partial **postjuvenile** moult involving body feathers and lesser and median coverts but no greater coverts or flight and tail feathers; in **2nd year** all tail feathers, some inner primaries (usually two or a few more) and generally the two innermost tertials are moulting retaining the rest of **juvenile** flight feathers; in **3rd year** all retained **juvenile** primaries and most of the secondaries are moulted, usually retaining some **juvenile** secondaries for another year.

PHENOLOGY

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

- Summer visitor
- Wintering
- Resident
- On passage



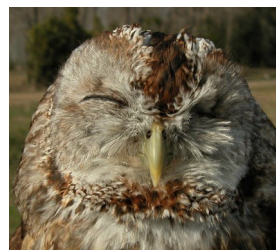
Tawny Owl. 3rd year autumn (10-IX)



Tawny Owl. 2nd year autumn (10-IX)



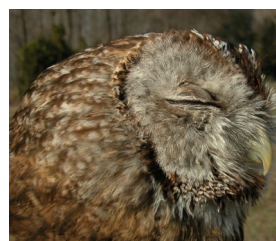
Tawny Owl. Juvenile (13-II)



Tawny Owl. Face pattern: left adult (13-II); right 3rd year autumn (10-IX)



Tawny Owl. Face pattern: left 2nd year autumn (10-IX); right juvenile (13-II)



Tawny Owl. Head pattern: left adult (13-II); right 3rd year autumn (10-IX)

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Tawny Owl. Head pattern: left 2nd year autumn (10-IX); right juvenile (13-II)



Tawny Owl. Upperpart pattern: left 2nd year autumn (10-IX); right juvenile (13-II)



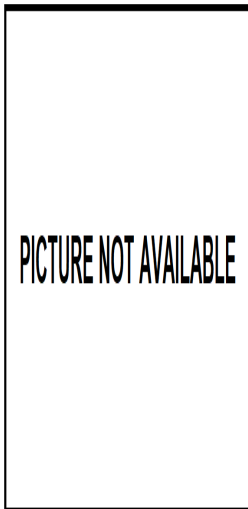
Tawny Owl. Breast pattern: left adult (13-II); right 3rd year autumn (10-IX)



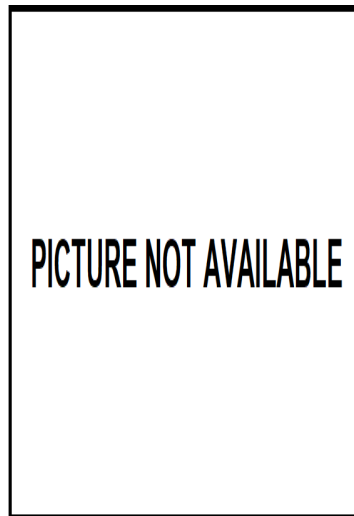
Tawny Owl. Breast pattern: left 2nd year autumn (10-IX); right juvenile (13-II)



Tawny Owl. Adult: tail pattern (13-II).



Tawny Owl. Upperpart pattern: left adult (); right 3rd year autumn (10-IX)



Tawny Owl. 4th year autumn: tail pattern ().

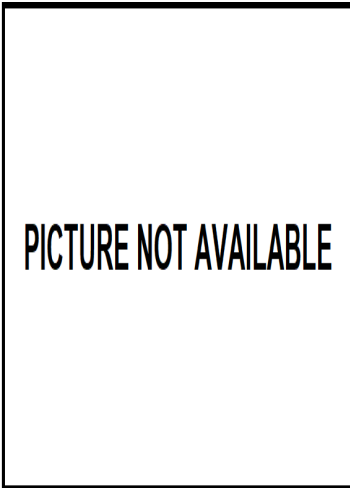
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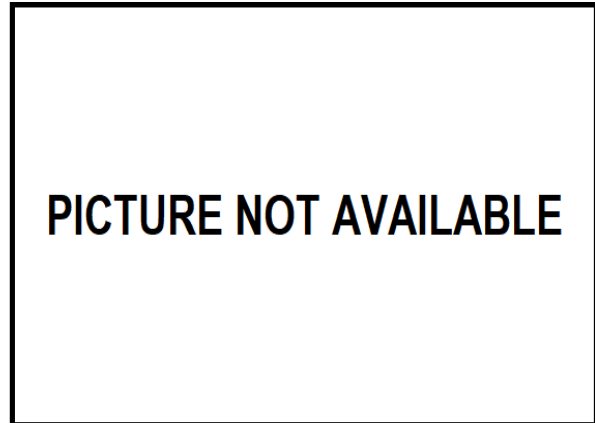
Tawny Owl. 3rd year autumn: tail pattern (10-IX).



Tawny Owl. Adult: pattern of primary coverts (13-II).



Tawny Owl. 2nd year autumn: tail pattern ().



Tawny Owl. 4th year autumn: pattern of primary coverts ().

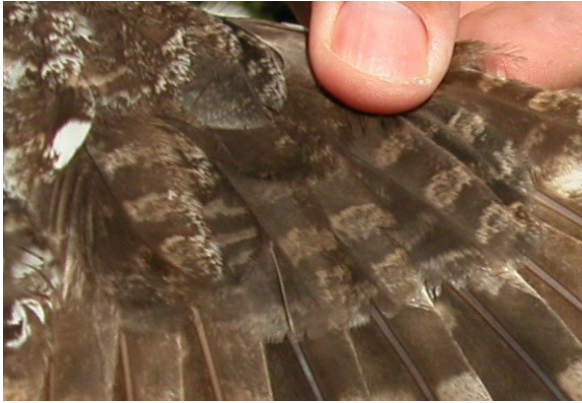


Tawny Owl. Juvenile autumn: tail pattern (20-VII).

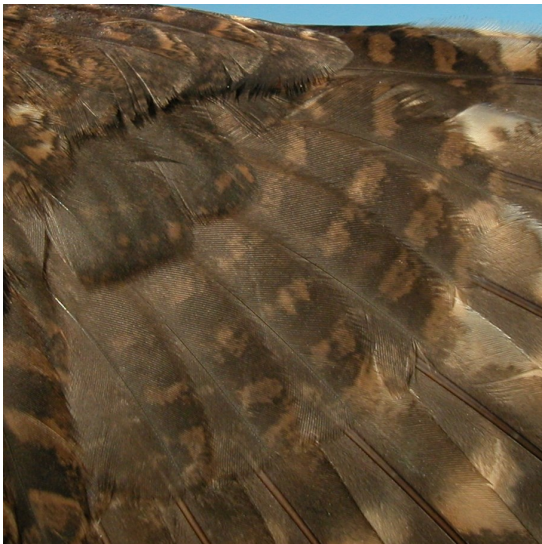


Tawny Owl. 3rd year autumn: pattern of primary coverts (10-IX).

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Tawny Owl. 2nd year autumn: pattern of primary covers (10-IX).



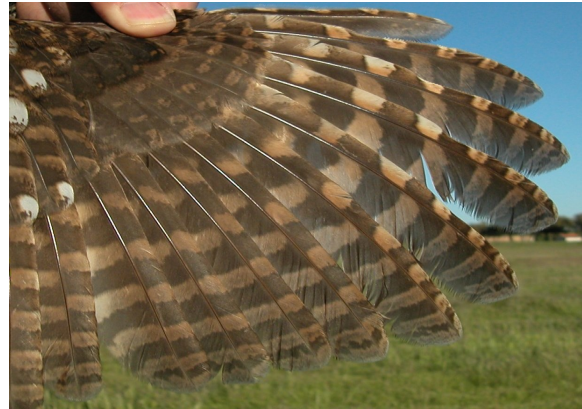
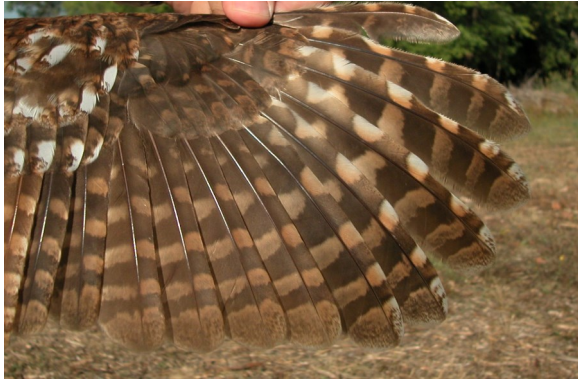
Tawny Owl. Juvenile: pattern of primary covers (20-VII).



Tawny Owl. Adult: pattern of primaries (13-II).

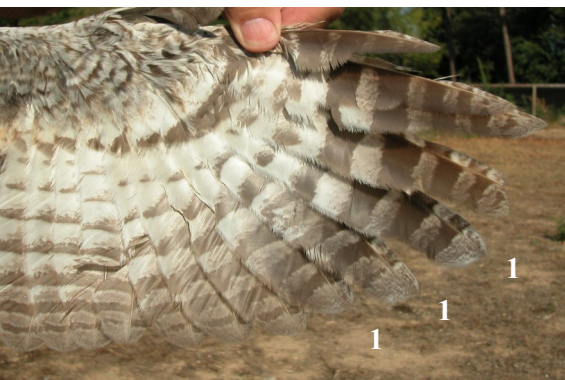
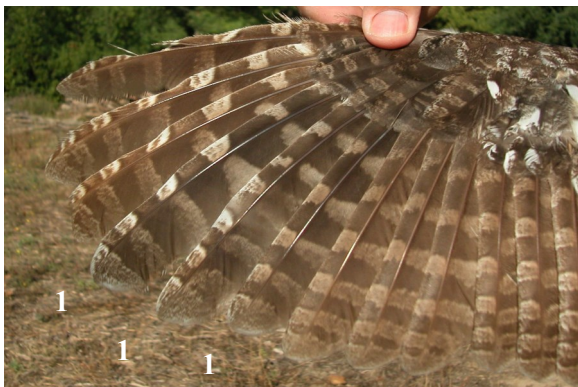


Tawny Owl. 4th year autumn: pattern of primaries ().



Tawny Owl. 3rd year autumn: pattern of primaries (two ages of feathers with adult pattern) (10-IX).

Tawny Owl. Juvenile: pattern of primaries (20-VII).



Tawny Owl. 2nd year autumn: pattern of primaries (1: feathers with adult pattern) (10-IX).

Tawny Owl. Adult: pattern of secondaries (13-II).



Tawny Owl. 4th year autumn: pattern of secondaries ().

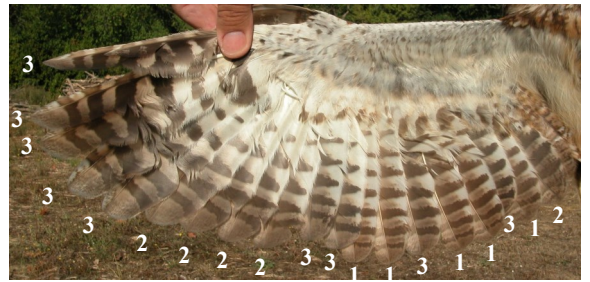
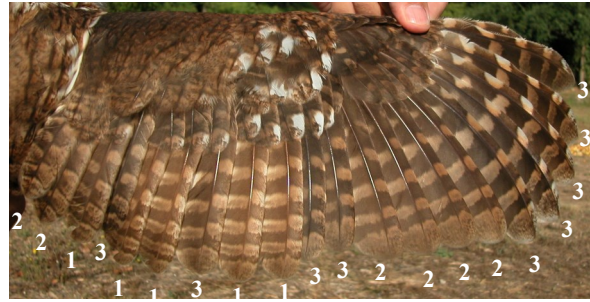
Tawny Owl. 2nd year autumn: pattern of secondaries (all feathers with juvenile pattern) (10-IX).



Tawny Owl. 3rd year autumn: pattern of secondaries (1: juvenile feathers) (10-IX).

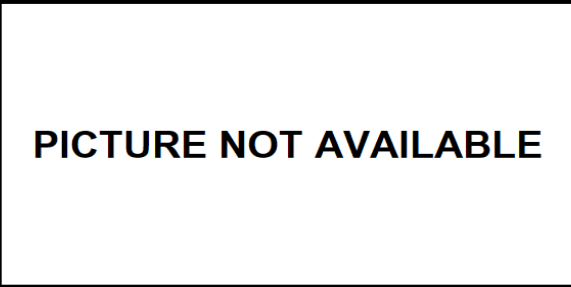
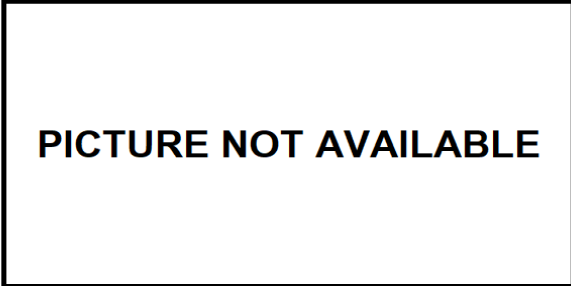
Tawny Owl. Juvenile: pattern of secondaries (21-IX).

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Tawny Owl. Adult: Wing pattern (13-II).

Tawny Owl. 3rd year autumn: Wing pattern (1: juvenile feathers; 2: 2nd year feathers; 3: 3rd year feathers) (10-IX).



Tawny Owl. 4th year autumn: Wing pattern ().

Tawny Owl. 2nd year autumn: Wing pattern (1: 2nd year feathers) (10-IX).



Tawny Owl. Juvenile: Wing pattern (20-XI).