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**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.

**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.

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

STATUS IN ARAGON
Resident, widely distributed throughout the Region, absent only from Northern areas.

http://blascozumeta.com

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. Breast 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. Adult: pattern of primary coverts (04-IV).

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

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


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


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


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

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


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

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


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


Little Owl. Autumn. 2nd year: pattern of wing (02-X).
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Little Owl. Autumn. 1st year: pattern of wing (05-XI).