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.

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; primarises 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.

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

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


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

MOULT
Nearly complete postbreeding moult, usually finished in November but no 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

STATUS IN ARAGON
Resident, widely distributed throughout the mountainous forests of the Region.

Tawny Owl. Juvenile (13-II)
Tawny Owl. Face pattern: left adult (13-II); right 3rd year autumn (10-IX)
Tawny Owl. 3rd year autumn (10-IX)
Tawny Owl. Face pattern: left 2nd year autumn (10-IX); right juvenile (13-II)
Tawny Owl. 2nd year autumn (10-IX)
Tawny Owl. Head pattern: left adult (13-II); right 3rd year autumn (10-IX)
Tawny Owl. Head 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. Upperpart pattern: left 2nd year autumn (10-IX); right juvenile (13-II)

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

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

http://blascozumeta.com
Tawny Owl. Adult: pattern of primary coverts (13-II).

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

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

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


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

http://blascozumeta.com
270  Tawny Owl

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


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

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. Adult: Wing pattern (13-II).

Tawny Owl. 4th year autumn: Wing pattern (1: juvenile feathers; 2: 2nd year feathers; 3: 3rd year feathers) (10-IX).

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

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