

LONG-EARED OWL (Northern Long-eared Owl) *Asio otus*

(LOEOW)
Incubation: F

Ring: 11.0 Incoloy (8.5)
Parental care: F, M

WP = 2 (3); 10 P; 14 - 16 (12) S; 12 TF
Return to breeding grounds: 2Y

1st breeding: 2Y

IDENTIFICATION

Long-eared Owl <i>A. otus</i>	Short-eared Owl <i>A. flammeus</i>
- iris typically orange-yellow or orange-red	- iris typically yellow; eye entirely surrounded black
- ear-tufts > 45 mm	- ear-tufts < 25 mm
- 4 or 5 narrow bars on outer P	- 2 or 3 broader bars on outer P
- no white posterior edge of wings	- posterior edge of wings whitish or light-buff

Hybridisation perhaps possible with Short-eared Owl.

MEASUREMENTS *Ssp otus*.

	Ad M	Ad F
Wing	282 - 313	287 - 318
Tail	130 - 161	132 - 162
Bill to cere	(13.8) 14.5 - 18.0 (19.1)	14.5 - 19.3
Tarsus	(34.5) 36.9 - 40.0 (41.6)	37.0 - 42.3 (43.0)
Weight	(151) 220 - 330 (360)	(181) 240 - 370 (435)
	Juv M	Juv F
Wing	274 - 310	(279) 282 - 320
Tail	130 - 151	136 - 154
Weight	220 - 295	250 - 340

Wing min = 265. Bill to cere and tarsus of juv as ad of same sex.

VARIATION Only *otus* in Eurasia, Azores and NW Africa. Slight variation in Palearctic; 3 other spp in America and Canaries.

MOULT (Fig 1)

Juv [3] *Partial postjuv* with continuous body moult during 1st year, also including head and some C, but no flight feathers or PC.

2Y [5] Similar to ad, but moult of S and TF starts 2 to 3 weeks after P moult. Interruption or suspension degree is similar to ad.

Ad [6] *Complete postbreeding* except often some S, starting with P10 in 06 - 07 in M and non-breeding F, slightly later in breeding F (often in late 07 - mid-08). Fast P moult (until 5 inner P may grow simultaneously) finishing in (early) mid-09 - early 11. S moult from 3 centres (S11 or S12 divergently, S1 and S5 ascendantly) often arrested (1 to 6 S retained). TF moult ± simultaneously. Body moult generally from (05) 07 to 09 (11). Occasionally, P1 and P2 may be retained, especially if low prey density.

SEX

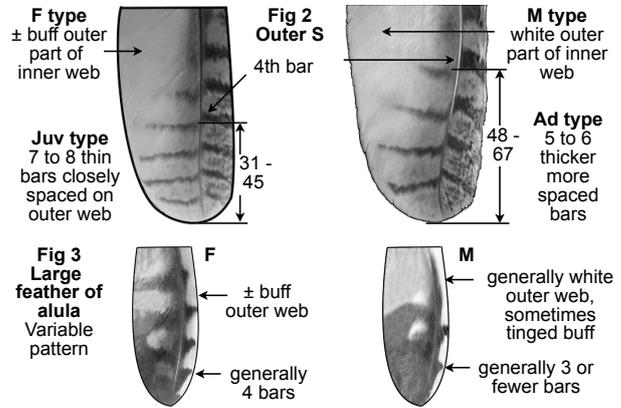
Colour of face (whiter in M, greyer in F) and colour of tip of feathers of lower mantle and scapulars (light grey and slightly vermiculated blackish in M, warm buff in F) seem to be unreliable.

M Generally paler and less vermiculate than F. *Underwing C very pale, sometimes all white. Inner web of S white*, especially on outer part (Fig 2). Edge of outer web of large feather of alula sometimes all white (apparently never in F), sometimes more buff, with max 3 bars but huge overlap (Fig 3). Underparts streaked dark brown but background colour white with slight buff tinge.

F Background colour generally *darker golden-buff*, especially underparts and *underwing C. Inner web of S ± buff* (Fig 2). Edge of outer web of large feather of alula buff generally with 4 bars, but huge overlap (Fig 3). Underparts streaked as M, but background colour buff, especially breast and upper belly, with white near thighs.

AGE

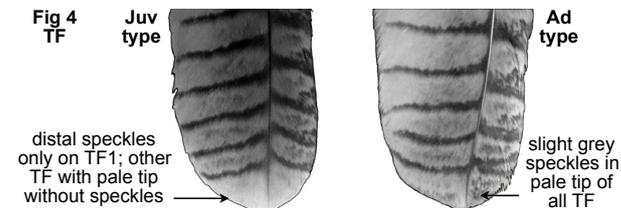
Juv [3] Generally, feathers very loose and downy, often with white 1st down on tip. Underparts, head and rump with ± of 1st down, down generally retained on head as late as in 11; sometimes it is necessary to part ad feathers to find hidden down.



1Y - 2Y spring [3/5 spring] *On outer S, bars thinner and closer*, generally with 7 to 8 bars on outer web (Fig 2); *on S1, distance tip - 4th bar = 31 - 45 mm* (distal bar may be hard to detect or absent on S1, but visible on innermost S; should be considered!). TF1 strongly barred with slight grey speckles within pale distal area; *distal edge of other TF plain without speckles* or only very light and sparse (Fig 4). Generally, 3 or 4 narrow black bars on dark PC (do not use this criterion if indistinct bars). In spring, heavier wear of flight feathers, particularly outer P.

2Y autumn - 3Y spring [5 autumn/7 spring] 2 or 3 juv S sometimes retained, generally less grey, more buff, with thinner and closer bars, contrasting with S of ad type (Fig 2). Beware of birds moulting from 06 because old juv S are generally moulted first.

Ad (+1Y autumn - +2Y spring) [4 autumn/6 spring] *On outer S, broad and spaced bars*, generally with 5 to 6 bars only on outer web (Fig 2); *of S1, distance tip - 4th bar = 48 - 67 mm*. TF1 less strongly barred and more vermiculate; *all TF with slight grey speckles within distal pale area* (Fig 4). Generally, only 2 (or 3) broad black bars on dark PC (do not use this criterion if indistinct bars). Often a slight pink tinge on underwing C (apparently not in 1Y; hard to judge, experience needed; do not confuse with F buff tinge). If 2 P and S generations occur simultaneously and feathers have similar appearance, ageing is possible as +2Y autumn - +3Y spring.



REFERENCES [Blasco Zumeta and Heinze 2013; Clark 2007; Davis and Prytherch 1976; Harvey and Riddiford 1990; Jannes 1983; König et al. 2008; Marks et al. 1994; Martinez et al. 2002; Mikkola and Lamminmäki 2014; Mikkola and Willis 2010; Ottenby Bird Observatory 2015a; Robertson 1982]

Fig 1 - Progression of moult

