**OWL FACTS**

**Lifespan:** Many owls live an average of 13 years in the wild or 38 years in captivity. Lifespan varies from species to species.

**How many types of owls?** There are around 200 different owl species.

**When are owls active?** Owls are nocturnal which means they are active during the night.

**What do owls eat? Most owls hunt insects, fish and small mammals.**

**Habitat:** Many owls, including the great gray and great horned species, live in old hawk or squirrel nests, while some, such as the snowy owl of the cold tundra and the short-eared owl, nest on the ground. Burrowing owls live in old mammal burrows, and others prefer to nest in tree cavities.

**Gestation Period:** Around30 days

A group of owls is called a parliament. The male and the female adults are called owls and their

young are called owlets. Brother and sister owlets are referred to as a brood.

The female starts incubating the eggs as soon as the first egg is laid, and lays an egg every **2-3 days**.

The eggs hatch after **31-32 days** incubation, and will hatch in the order they were laid (ie 2-3 day intervals).

* Barn owls usually lay 5 to 6 eggs.
* Nineteen species of owl are found in North America, including the following: Barn owl, burrowing owl, eastern screech owl, great grey owl, spotted owl, and the great horned owl among many others. No matter where the owl lives, one thing is certain—they are most active at night. Unlike us humans, owls are nocturnal and prefer to stay awake and be active at night. This is why a person who enoyes staying up late at night is often referred to as a night owl! Most owls do not go through the trouble of making their own nest—they just use another bird’s nest or a hollow tree.
* The color of owl’s feathers helps them blend into their environment to help them hide from their prey
* and predators. This is called camouflage.
* Owls are birds of prey, meaning they hunt and feed on rodents and other small animals to survive. The prey varies, depending on the size of the owl and availability of prey animals in their natural habitat, but includes insects, fish and small mammals.
* For this reason, owls have very large, sharp talons used for catching their food. There are four toes on these talons, and one is opposable (like the human thumb) aiding owls in grasping things like tree branches and prey. Their large eyes help them see and hunt in low light. Owls are farsighted, meaning they can’t see things close to their eyes clearly. They are also well known for being able to turn their heads as much as 270 degrees. They are very good listeners and can hear small sounds far away.
* Owls, like most birds cannot actually chew their food because they do not have teeth. They use their beak to tear apart their food and eat it. Owls usually swallow their prey whole. However, owls differ from other species of birds because they donot have a crop, the bag-like organ used to store food after it has been swallowed so that it can be digested later.
* Indigestible material left in the gizzard such as teeth, skulls, claws, and feathers are too dangerous to pass through the rest of the owl's digestive tract. To safely excrete this material, the owl's gizzard compacts it into a tight pellet that the owlregurgitates. The best way to determine what an owl has eaten is by examining its pellets.
* Owls are *very* silent fliers compared to other birds of prey. This is due mainly to very broad wings and special flying feathers that reduce the noise when an owl flaps its wings. Despite popular belief, not all owls make that infamous “HOOT” sound. Owls can actually make many different sounds – they can screech, clack, hiss, and even growl!

**GEESE FACTS**

**Lifespan:** 15 to 25 years

**Types of geese?** There are around 30 species of geese. **When are geese active?** Geese are diurnal, which means they are active during the day.

**What do Geese eat?** Geese are omnivores**;** slugs, snails, worms, mall rodents, wheat, barley and other grains and green vegetation **Habitat:** Ponds, river and shore lakes **Gestation Period:** Nearly 30 days

A female is called a goose whereas a male is called a gander. Young birds in the goose family are called goslings.

A group of geese is called gaggle. A gaggle that is flying is called a wedge or a skein.

When geese fly in a wedge or ‘V’ shape, they exhibit excellent team work. If the leading goose gets tired, another one takes the guiding position, and the former shifts back in the formation. While flying, the group even honks to encourage those in front to maintain speed. If a goose is sick or injured, other geese will stay with it until it dies or can rejoin the flock.

Nesting generally begins at the age of two years. Geese live in nests which they build at secluded locations near lakes and rivers. The nests are flat, wide and made from grass, twigs, mud and feathers. The babies are fluffy and yellow.

As a part of reproduction cycle, the female goose lays an egg each day to increase the number to 5 eggs. Once all of the eggs are laid off, she incubates eggs in her nest for 30 days.

When she goes far from eggs, she covers them with sticks to make them feel cozy and protected. Meanwhile, the male parent goose keeps the nest protected from a distance so that predators don’t get a hint of the nest and eggs.

When goslings hatch out of eggs, parent geese introduce them to open water within 24 hours.

A day old gosling is capable of diving and swimming as much as 30 to 40 feet underwater.

At the age of three months, goslings begin to fly.

Young goslings stay with their parents during migration period and return to their original place after a year with their parents.

An adult goose undergoes molting, every year, during which it loses its flight and tail feathers. It takes nearly 6 weeks for new feathers to grow back. Meanwhile, the goose dwells near water regions, primarily to get protection from its predators. Major predators of geese include foxes, owls, raccoons and snapping turtles.

Geese vocalize their messages in ten different ways, depending upon the situation. And in a threatening situation, geese stretch out their necks and make a loud HONK.