



Fourth Crossing Wildlife factsheet



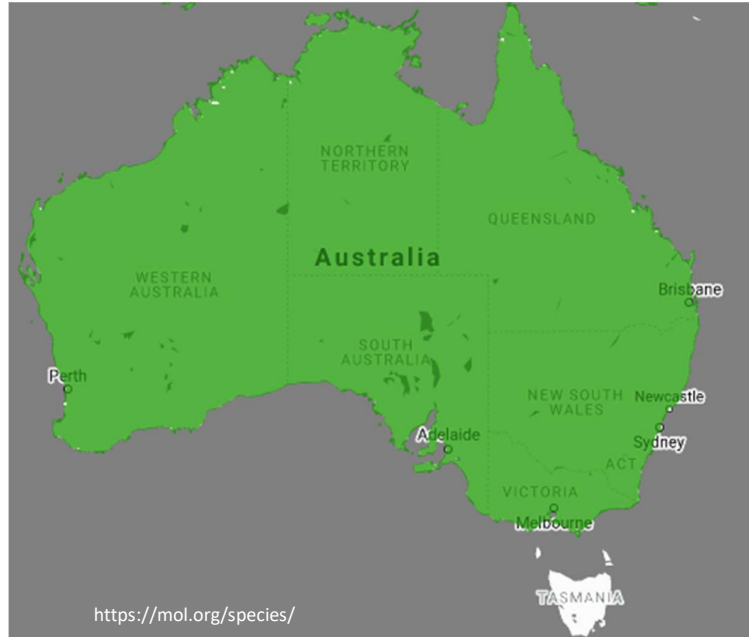
Barn Owl

scientific name
" *Tyto alba* "

other names
Delicate Owl, Screech Owl, White Owl



Barn Owl
Fourth Crossing Wildlife



<https://mol.org/species/>

Description

Adults: Sexes similar in appearance, females slightly more spotted black. Length 300 to 400mm. Upper parts pearl-grey, washed with gold and with numerous fine black spots tipped with white. Flight feathers barred dark grey, the three outermost feathers are the longest. Facial disc white with chestnut mark around the eye. Facial disc is bordered buff and black. Underparts are whit with dusky flecks at tips of some feathers. Feathers on lower parts of feet are usually reduced to few sparse bristles. Toes are pale yellow-brown to flesh colour. The eyes are dusky in colour. Small, bone white bill with flesh coloured cere.

Juvenile: Similar to adults, but more dusky-spotted. Downy young are covered in white, which later becomes denser and more cream in colour.

Voice: The contact call is an infrequent loud, drawn out rasping screech, uttered in flight. Male and females chitter, squeak and snore in courtship. Young beg with a soft rasp.

The Barn Owl is not often seen or heard in Australia due to its infrequent calls and shy character, however it is considered common. It can be found throughout Australia, preferring habitats of open wooded country and grass plains. It is a nomadic bird, with populations rising and falling dramatically with variations to their food supply which consists of mice, native rodents, some marsupials, small birds, lizards and night-flying insects. From a perch the owl watches for prey then flies silently, dropping quickly to the prey, usually swallowing it whole. Indigestible parts such as bone, feathers and fur are regurgitated. Barn Owls live alone or in pairs, roosting quietly by day in tree hollows or thickly foliated trees. Breeding is mainly in Autumn and Spring but can occur year round when food supply is good. The nest made in deep tree hollows lined with soft wood and leaves. Between three and seven eggs are laid on alternate nights. Incubation is between 33 and 35 days, by the female. Young are fed by the female at first and then by both parents. Young fledge in nine to ten weeks.