

# The **STONHAM** **SCREECHER**

Summer  
2021

Hooded Vultures

Hack in the Box

Cobweb Club

Task Force

Stop - Start - Stop!

The Schools Newsletter of the Suffolk Owl Sanctuary | [www.owl-help.org.uk](http://www.owl-help.org.uk)

Cover image taken at the Suffolk Owl Sanctuary by Paul Sherman





Hello,  
My name is Jack and I am a hooded vulture. I live at the sanctuary with all my owl, eagle and vulture friends. Here are some hooded vulture facts:

We do not hunt for prey, but scavenge on the carcasses of animals killed by other predators.

We have a weak beak compared to other birds of prey. This is well suited to eating soft, rotting flesh....yum!

Our latin name, *necrosyrtes monachus* means "monk-like one who drags away the dead"!

There are not many of us left in the world! Our numbers have declined due to people hunting and poisoning us

We have only one mate and only lay one egg each year - another reason why we are an endangered species.

We can live for between 20 and 25 years in the wild, but longer when cared for in a sanctuary like S.O.S.

We are not frightened of humans and often follow them whilst working in the fields to feast on grubs and insects.....just like seagulls do!

**NEW!**

PLEASE NOTE: With regret, we are sorry to advise that due to cost considerations we will be unable to send you future copies of The Stonham Screecher in the post.

**HOWEVER**, all is not lost! We will still be able to send you a regular copy of 'The Stonham Screecher' by email and will be extending the benefits of you being a COBWEB CLUB member by providing extra competitions, quizzes and fun games as often as we can. If you would like to join the new digital Cobweb Club (it's FREE!), ask **Mum** or **Dad** to sign you up at [www.owl-help.org.uk/cobweb-online](http://www.owl-help.org.uk/cobweb-online). We look forward to hearing from you!

Find out more about how we manage and respect your data @ [www.owl-help.org.uk/sos-privacy-policy/](http://www.owl-help.org.uk/sos-privacy-policy/)



# Hack in the Box

In Spring many of the S.O.S. hospital casualties are very young owls which have fallen from their nest or been abandoned by their parents.



Orphaned babies are cared for together so that they can form a bond (or friendship) and grow together.

Once they are big and strong enough to look after themselves, they are gradually returned to the wild.

First, they are taken to a hack box. This is a specially built box in a quiet, secluded location well away from human activity.

The falconers place the youngsters in the open-sided hack box with plenty of food and return to the pen every day to check that the birds are safe and well.

Gradually, the young birds will become confident enough to explore the surrounding countryside and practice their hunting skills, whilst returning to the pen for food and security.



Eventually, the birds will leave the hack box completely - when they stop returning for food, the falconers know that they are catching plenty of prey and have become independent.



Larger hack pens are used for the gradual or "soft" release of larger bird species, such as buzzards and red kites. The spacious pen allows plenty of space for the birds to build condition and confidence before their return to the wild.



# STOP - START - STOP!

Nelson the burrowing owl likes to write a daily diary but he is still learning how to use full stops and capital letters!

Every time he writes a sentence, he needs to use a capital letter at the beginning and a full stop at the end.

Can you help him with his diary by inserting the capital letters and full stops, please?



I had a very interesting day today I had a delicious breakfast in my aviary after that I had a brilliant exercise sessions on the flying ground my friend Boris the Ashy Faced Owl is going to fly in the displays this year I hope that if I practice hard I will be able to do that too after having a scrumptious tea I snuggled down in my next box!

## Task Force!

Every morning there are lots of jobs to do at the sanctuary. Staff and volunteers work together to get the tasks completed.

Time is allowed for each morning job:

Cleaning water bath - 7 minutes  
Weighing bird - 3 minutes  
Raking aviary - 10 minutes  
Papering night box - 5 minutes  
Checking aviary netting - 15 minutes

How long will it take to paper 4 night boxes?

Does it take more time to rake an aviary than clean a water bath?

How long will it take to weigh 3 birds and paper 4 night boxes?



Does it take more than half an hour to clean 6 water baths?

Can two aviaries be raked in 15 minutes?