

The **STONHAM** **SCREECHER**

Winter
2021/2022

**Taiga's
Treats**

**Winging
It!**

Red Kites

**The Big
Chill**

**Write to
Cobweb**



Cover image of Mir the Steppe Eagle taken at the Suffolk Owl Sanctuary



Hello,
My name is Hakin and I am a Red Kite. I live at the Suffolk Owl Sanctuary with lots of raptor friends. I hope you enjoy these red kite facts:

You can recognise me when I am flying by my reddish brown colouring and distinctive forked tail.

Our Old English names were puttock, gled and glead. Our ancient habitats are still obvious in place names like Gledehill and Gleadthorpe.

As well as munching on voles, mice and rabbits, we also enjoy road casualties like pheasants and pigeons... yum!!

We are real lightweights! In spring, adults weigh around 900gms. That's less than a bag of sugar!

In medieval times we were valued in towns and cities as scavengers, keeping the streets free of carrion and rubbish. Killing a kite was a crime!

At signs of danger, a mother kite will signal to her young. They will then 'play dead' until the predator leaves the nest site.

We are known to use unusual materials to build our nests. Medieval housewives would protect their linen from thieving red kites!

Our British numbers decreased dramatically over centuries - only 2 breeding pairs survived into the 1930s. This has increased to around 1,800 today, through conservation efforts.

NEW!

PLEASE NOTE: With regret, we are sorry to advise that due to cost considerations we will be unable to send you 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 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/

THE BIG CH...CH...CH...ILL!

As the winter months approach and the temperature drops, humans reach for extra socks and mittens!

But how do owls and other birds of prey deal with the seasonal lows of the British weather?

All birds are equipped with the physiology to regulate body temperature, so are able to deal with cold (and hot) weather conditions as well.

Owls have thick, downy feathers which serve as fantastic insulation during the winter. Large owls like the Great Grey and the Snowy have particularly thick plumage, even in between their toes.

Smaller owls have less dense plumage, but by fluffing up their feathers they can keep cold air away from their skin and trap body heat.

Roost site selection also has an impact on a raptor's winter survival strategy... nestling into small, sheltered cavities, away from the prevailing winds helps to maintain optimum warmth.

Finding plenty of food and eating well provides plenty of energy to heat the body.

Extra thick foot pads enable the birds to stand on icy ground without losing body heat. Their circulation is so fast that blood doesn't remain long enough in the feet long enough to freeze!

In very cold weather barn owls will hunt from a perch rather than the air to save energy - a flying barn owl loses more body heat than a perched one!

They also possess incredible hearing, so they can locate food in snowy conditions. A great grey owl can hear a mouse moving about under 45cms. of snow!

TAIGA'S TREATS



Taiga and Taz the Great Grey Owls are best friends. On Taz's birthday, Taiga would like to invite all their friends to a party!

She has made a list of special raptor party food, but her spelling is not very good.

Can you correct the spelling on Taiga's list to reveal the treats she and her friends will enjoy?

1. SOEMU

2. ERHSW

3. ITBARB

4. TRA

5. OLEV

6. OGFR

WINGING IT!!

Suffolk Owl Sanctuary is home to a wide variety of birds.

Some are small like Holly the Little Owl and some are large like Rocky the Turkey Vulture.

Their WINGSPAN is the distance between the tips of their wings, when they are spread wide.

What is the difference between Tura's wingspan and Holly's?

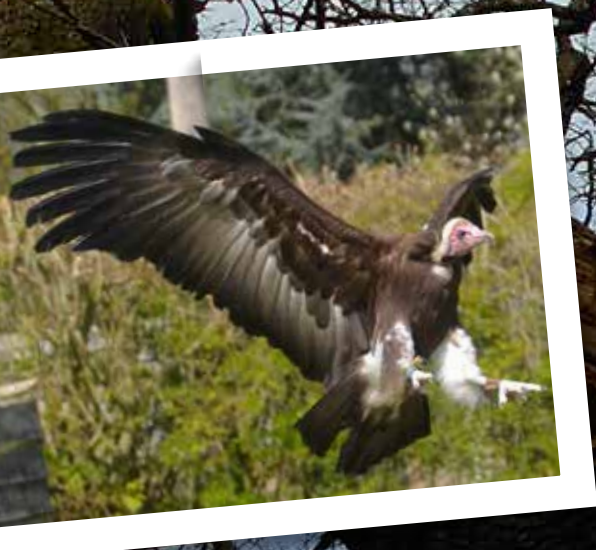
Which birds' wingspans total 120cms?

Which two birds have a total wingspan equal to that of Skye?

Is Nelson's wingspan greater than Bug's?

Find the sum of the wingspans of Woody and Bug.

Which bird has the smaller wingspan - Skye or Tura?



SKYE the GOLDEN EAGLE..... 2.00 metres
BUG the TAWNY OWL 95cms
TURA the SIBERIAN EAGLE OWL... 165cms
NELSON the BURROWING OWL..... 55cms
WOODY the MALAYSIAN WOOD OWL 85cms
HOLLY the LITTLE OWL 35cms