



Irish Owls



Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*



Irish name:
Ulchabhán réisc

The Short-eared Owl occurs in Ireland mainly in winter, on rough grassland, coastal marshes and sand dunes, especially on the east and south coasts, though they can occur anywhere in Ireland. In summer they are more likely to inhabit heather moorland, with young forestry utilised for breeding.

The northern European populations winter as far south as the Mediterranean and North Africa.



They usually occur singly, but sometimes parties of up to ten birds gather, depending on prey availability. They are a rare and occasional breeder in Ireland, mainly in the west and south west. The absence of Bank Voles from many areas may be a limiting factor.

They are diurnal, that is they are active by day. They rely on small rodents, birds and even insects for food. They hunt low over the ground and swoop down on prey. They also use posts as lookout points.

They are a relatively quiet species, though they can make a range of sounds, including a long "hoooo" like an old steam engine. Bill snapping, barking, hissing and squealing noises are made when the nest is threatened.

How to identify Long-eared & Short-eared Owls

Short-eared Owls often hunt by day, unlike Long-eared and Barn Owls

The 'ear-tufts' on Short-eared Owl are small and difficult to see

2 to 3 black bands on primary tips

Short-eared Owl has yellow iris

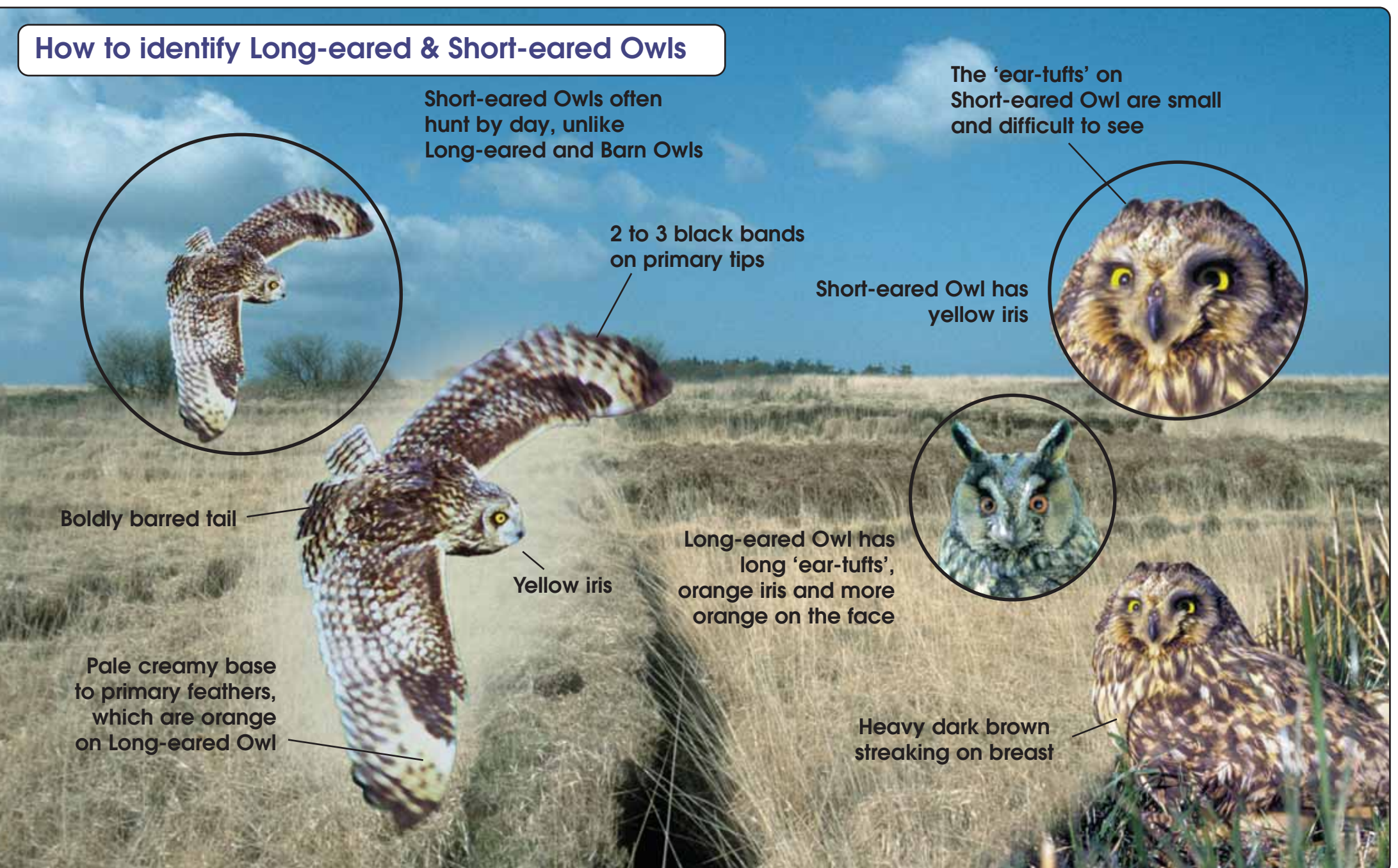
Boldly barred tail

Yellow iris

Long-eared Owl has long 'ear-tufts', orange iris and more orange on the face

Pale creamy base to primary feathers, which are orange on Long-eared Owl

Heavy dark brown streaking on breast





Short-eared Owl



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