

# SAVE THE OWLS



The owls in the story of *Hoot* are burrowing owls. Their name is *Athene cunicularia floridana*. What do we know about these small and very beautiful birds? And why are they in danger?

## What do they look like?

They have long legs and round heads. They are brown and white with big, yellow eyes. They are only about 25 cm high.

## Where do they live?

This kind of burrowing owl only lives in Florida. They usually live in open grassland. They make their nests in deep burrows in the ground. Sometimes they dig these burrows themselves. Usually they use burrows that other animals have left.

## What about the young owls?

The owls lay about 6 eggs in March or April. The young owls stay in the nest for about 45 days. Then they fly away and find their own food.

### What do these words mean?

You can use a dictionary.

**burrow / burrowing nest animal**  
**lay protect / protected wildlife**



## How long do they live?

They can live for about 9 years. Pairs of owls usually stay together for life. They often return to the same burrow every year.

## What sounds do they make?

They don't usually hoot! They make sounds like *Hey, hey, hey* and *Kshh, kshh, kshh*.

## Why are they in danger?

There are probably only a few hundred pairs of these owls left in Florida. New buildings have changed the environment. Now there aren't many safe places for the owls to live.

## Can anyone save the owls?

The owls are protected in Florida now. No one can hurt or kill them. There are also special centres that help owls. These centres care for owls that have lost their homes. They can also move the owls to safe new homes.

### What can you do to help wildlife near your home?



## The Author

The author of *Hoot*, Carl Hiaasen, has lived in Florida all his life. He writes about Florida and cares about its wildlife. His stories show people that it is important to protect the environment and its animals.



## The Film

In 2006 they made a film of *Hoot*. They used real animals in the film – real snakes, alligators and owls! The owls came from a special owl centre. The animals were always comfortable and safe while they made the film. An animal trainer looked after them.