

Nesting Requirements for South African Owl Species

PEARL-SPOTTED OWL : Found in wooded habitats of savannah regions. They nest in the main trunk of trees, often using old woodpecker holes. These holes are 1 to 6 metres off the ground and have a narrow entrance of approximately 5cm in diameter. The woodchip-lined chamber is between 23 and 35cm deep. Breeding season: early summer

AFRICAN SCOPS OWL : Nests in vertical cavities in trees of open, semi-arid woodland. The cavity is 20-40cm deep and is located 3 to 5 metres above the ground. Nest boxes with side entrances have been successfully used. The eggs are laid on a bed of woodchips in early summer

BARRED OWL : Lives in woodland areas in natural cavities and rot holes in tree where branches have broken off. They require an entrance hole of at least 7cm in diameter, so woodpecker holes tend to be too small. The cavities are 15 to 30cm deep and are found at a height of 4 to 6 metres above the ground. Breeding season: early summer

WHITE-FACED OWL : Lives in woodland, savannah and dry thorn-veld habitats. They utilize old nests of other birds that have a minimum flat base of 20cm and that are found between the heights of 2 to 13 metres off the ground. Breeding season: early summer

BARN OWL : Lives in most habitat types (except forests), and will often utilize manmade structures to nest in. They require a safe, semi-enclosed place of at least 30cm in width. Breeding season: early winter

GRASS AND MARSH OWL : Inhabit vlei and grassland areas, nesting, in early winter, on the ground under tufts of rank veld grass.



WOOD OWL : Nests in natural cavities or rot holes in trees of indigenous forest areas. They will sometimes utilize artificial boxes in evergreen forest patches. These cavities need to be 20 to 25cm wide, approximately 25cm deep and have an entrance hole of approximately 11/12cm in diameter. The box should be placed at a height of between 2 and 5 metres above the ground. Breeding season: early summer

SPOTTED EAGLE-OWL : They occur in all different biomes, except forest and desert regions. They nest most commonly on the ground, amongst rocks or under shrubs, or in a wide crotch in a low tree. They make a scrape out of woodchips, leaves or pebbles. Man-made structures and old nest sites are also used, but preferred nest sites are all open. Breeding season: early summer

CAPE EAGLE OWL : Nests on rocky prominences or cliff faces and make scrapes of 28 to 38cm in width. They prefer a scrape that is covered by a ledge or foliage. Breeding season: winter

GIANT EAGLE OWL : Nests in large stick platforms, that are often old eagle nests, at a height of 3 to 15m above the ground. (Like Wahlbergs eagle nests, for example) They do not build or repair the nest, but just make a shallow depression in which to lay their eggs in winter.

PELS FISHING OWL: Is found nesting in low-lying, floodplain forest fringes in large trees close to a river. They use large holes or spacious crotches in trees at a height of 4 to 5 metres above the ground. These nests are between 30 and 40cm in diameter and the hole is 1/2 to 1 metre in depth. The nest becomes lined with debris, scales and bark.

Breeding season: late summer

