

Bird
Brains
Resource





Ever wondered why 'Bird Brains' is an insult? When in fact, birds are very intelligent creatures.

Learn more about our feathery friends and their diet by becoming a detective and discover what's in an owl's pellet.

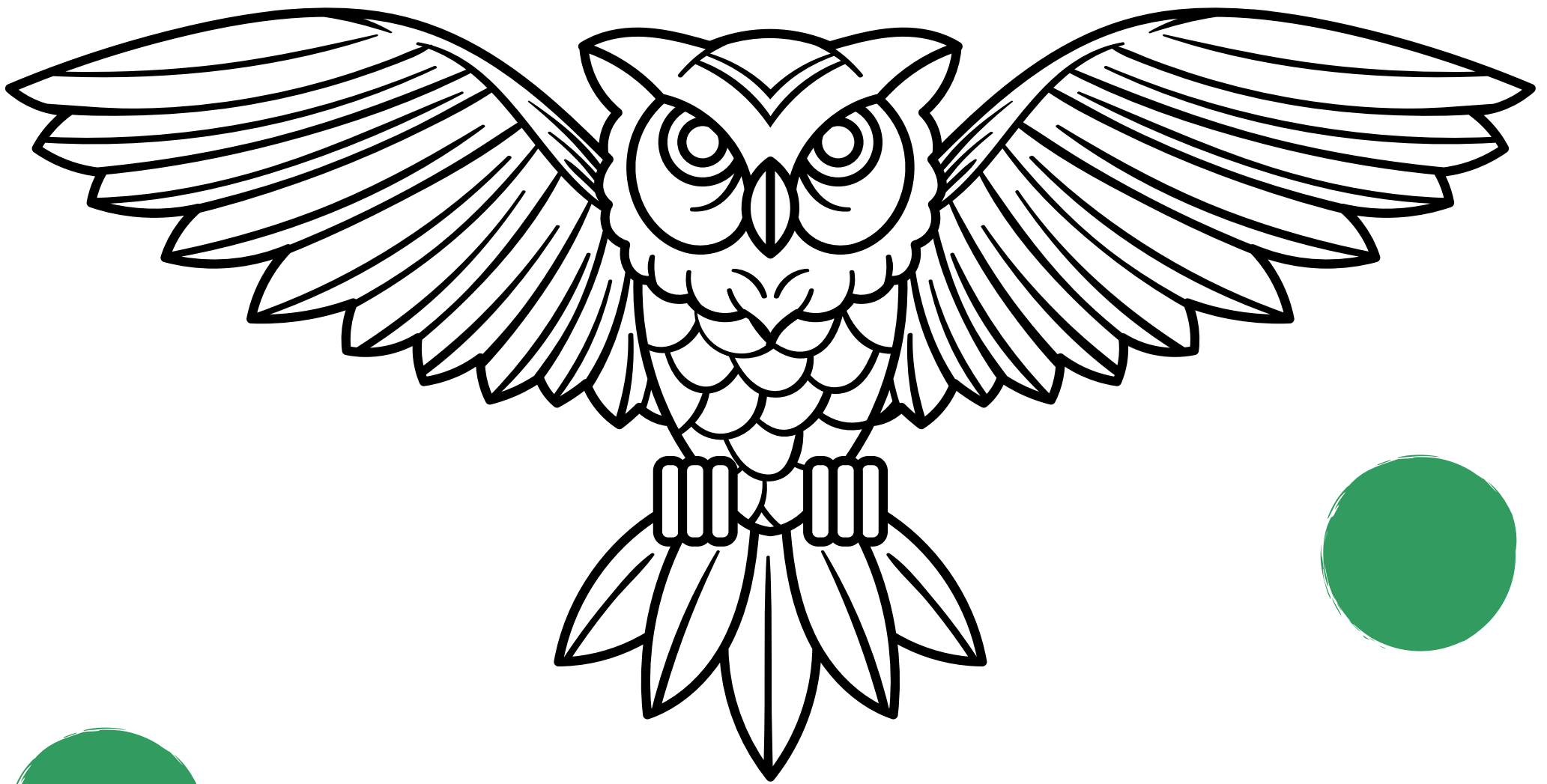


Birds live all around
the world.

Birds are warm
blooded like humans,
but they also lay
eggs.



Colour in the Barn Owl!





What do birds eat?:



Fruit
Plants

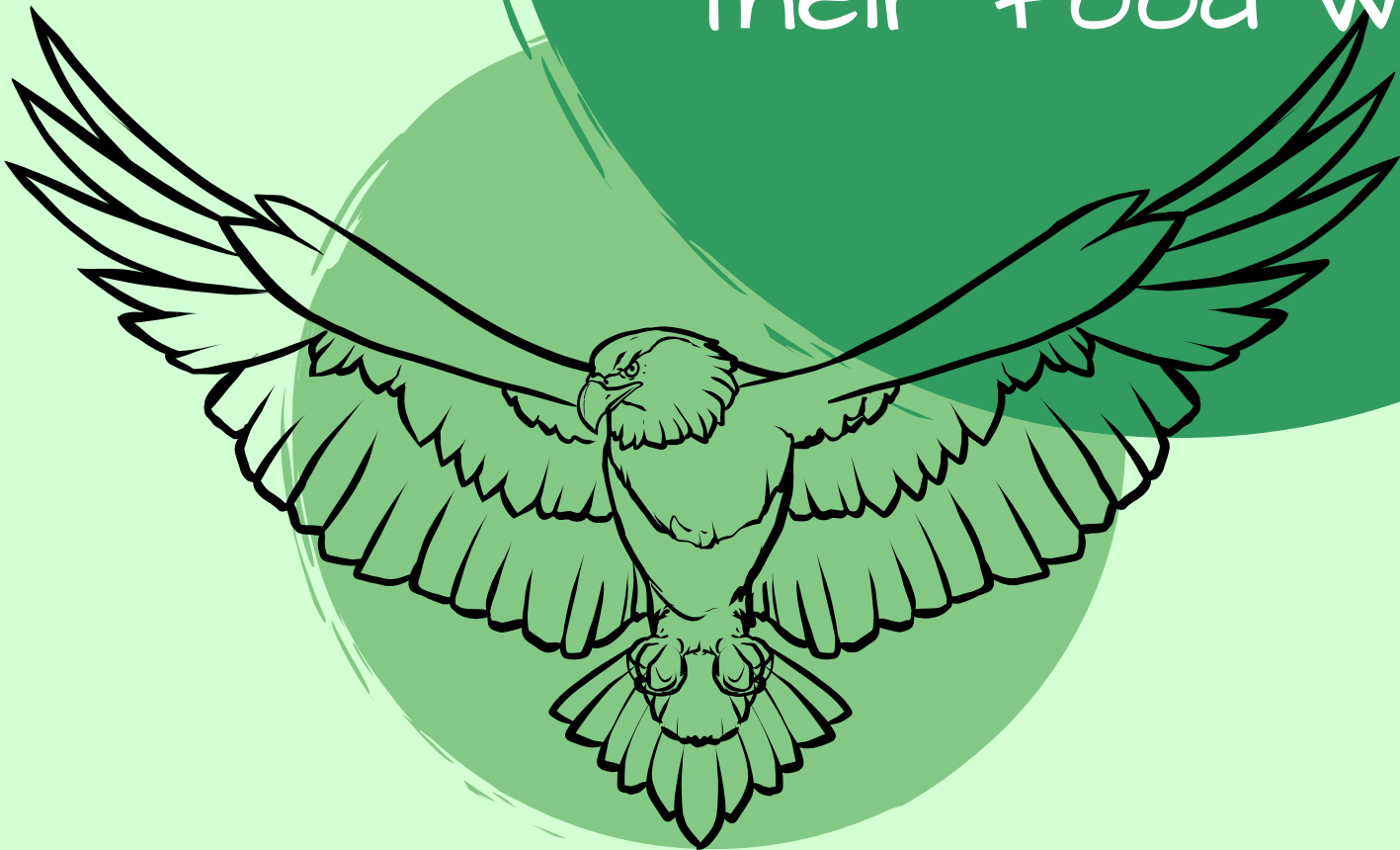
Seeds

Insects

Small animals



Birds don't have any teeth, so their bodies are used to digesting their food whole.





Dissecting Owl Pellets

Barn Owls are unable to digest the fur and bone of their prey, which they usually swallow whole. The fur and bones are regurgitated (coughed up) and this is the owl pellet.

- Barn Owl pellets are typically about the size of a man's thumb and black when fresh.
- Pellets usually contain the remains of 4 or 5 small mammals.
- Pellet dissection can tell you exactly what an owl has eaten.

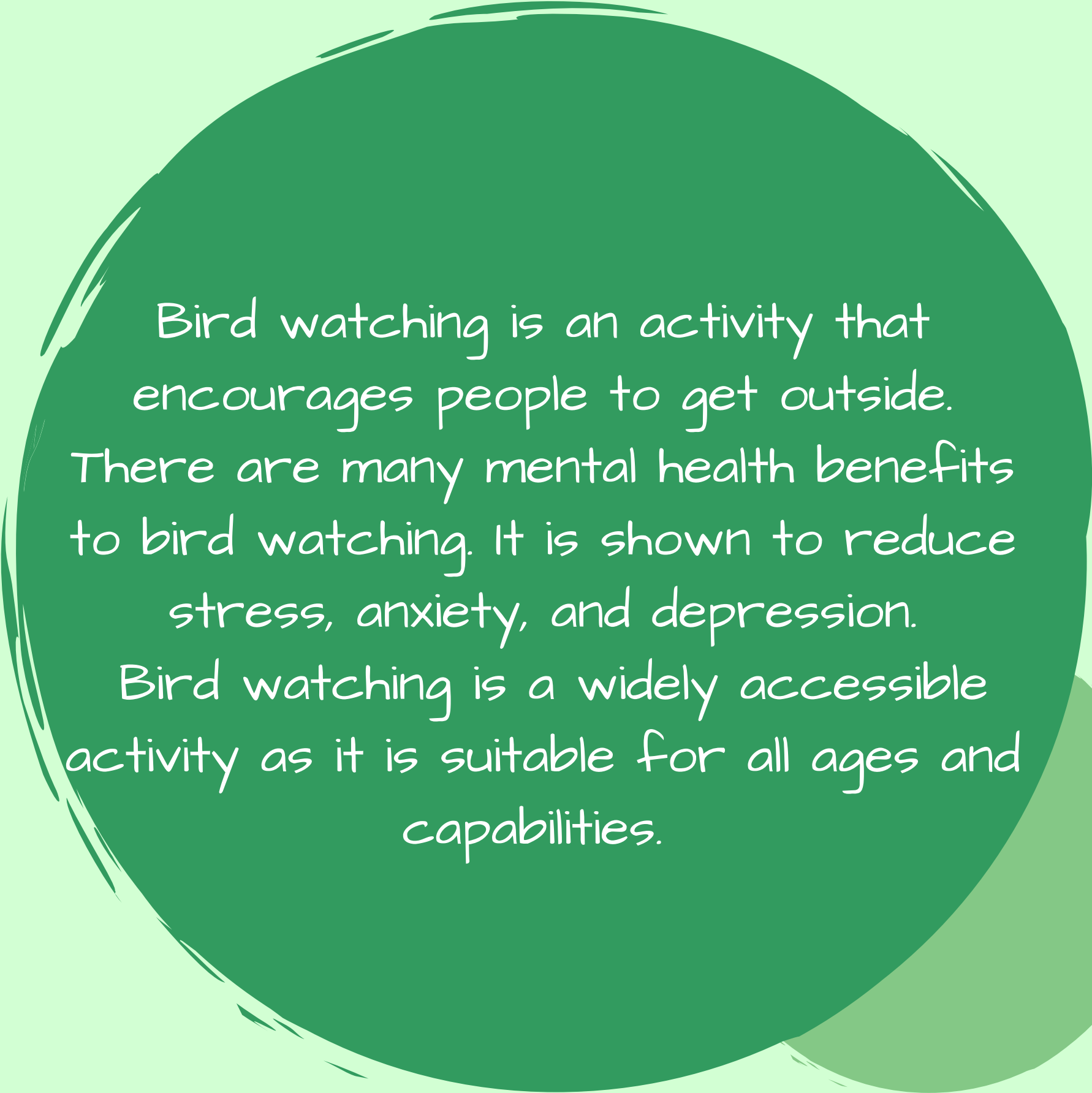
Things you will need:

- Owl Pellet
- Tweezers
- Magnifier
- Wooden probe
- Gloves

**You can purchase a owl pellet dissecting kit here:
<https://www.barnowltrust.org.uk/product/pellet-dissection-pack/>**

Method:

- Gently open the pellet using your fingers or tweezers. Although pellets do not smell, (they are not faeces) hands should be washed thoroughly with soap and water after this activity.
- Wild Barn Owls eat mainly small mammals such as voles, shrews and mice. To identify which small mammals have been eaten, you should search for the lower jaw bones, then 'pair up' the right and left jaws from each pellet.
- The shapes of the bones, especially the jawbones, can tell you what species of animal the owl has eaten.
- You can also count how many prey items are contained within an individual pellet.



Bird watching is an activity that encourages people to get outside. There are many mental health benefits to bird watching. It is shown to reduce stress, anxiety, and depression.

Bird watching is a widely accessible activity as it is suitable for all ages and capabilities.