

You Can Help Owls

- ✓ Build a Saw-whet Owl nest box
- ✓ Don't use poison to control rodents, as owls (or other natural predators) may also become poisoned after eating them
- ✓ Plant trees to create habitat for owls
- ✓ Support owl habitat conservation through the Edmonton and Area Land Trust

Owl Facts

- Owls swallow their food whole, and regurgitate a pellet of the inedible fur, feathers and bones a few hours later.
- Not all owls are nocturnal. Some are active during the day, and some are most active at dawn and dusk, referred to as crepuscular.
- The outer edge of owl feathers are soft, allowing them to fly almost silently.
- Some owls have asymmetrical ears on the sides of their heads, and feathers that help draw sound into their ears.
- The Great Horned Owl is Alberta's official bird, and is one of the only predators of skunks.
- Some cultures see owls as a symbol of wisdom; in others, owls are feared and are a symbol of death and destruction.



The Edmonton and Area Land Trust is a charity dedicated to conserving important natural areas in the Edmonton region. Our conservation lands provide essential habitat for wild species, opportunities for local residents to connect with nature, and provide numerous environmental, social and health benefits for everyone.

You can conserve local nature by
volunteering or donating!
Visit www.ealt.ca

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Alberta Owls



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Owl Importance and Conservation

- Owls are top predators and help control populations of rodents, including mice.
- Owls do not build nests, but use tree cavities, abandoned nests of crows and hawks, or in the case of the Burrowing Owl, a burrow from a mammal. Some owls also use artificial nest boxes or platforms.
- Most owls are secure in their status, but some are Sensitive in Alberta, and the Burrowing Owl is Endangered in Canada. Conserving forest, grassland and open habitats is important for ensuring healthy owl populations.

Small Owls



Northern Saw-whet Owl
Aegolius acadicus

Small and secretive nocturnal owl. Found in mature deciduous or coniferous forests. Nests in tree cavities or artificial nest boxes.



Burrowing Owl
Athene cunicularia

Have long legs and spend most of their time on the ground. Nests in old prairie dog burrows in grasslands and open habitats.



Boreal Owl
Aegolius funereus

Small owl with white face outlined in black. Has asymmetrical ears. Found in boreal and mountain forests. Nests in tree cavities or artificial nest boxes.

Medium Owls



Northern Hawk Owl
Surnia ulula

Hunts by day and night in boreal forests, detecting prey by sight but can also find prey completely under the snow. Forehead has white spots and underparts have brown bars. Nests in tree cavities.



Short-eared Owl
Asio flammeus

Hunt during daylight in grasslands and open areas. Wide-spread throughout the world. Nests in a hollow scraped into the ground by the female.



Long-eared Owl
Asio otus

Nocturnal owl with longer feathered tufts than a Great Horned Owl. Requires a combination of open country and dense forest for foraging and roosting.

Large Owls



Barred Owl
Strix varia

Large owl with brown and white striped and spotted feathers, and dark eyes. Live in mature forests and nests in tree cavities. Have a distinctive “Who cooks for you?” call.



Great Gray Owl
Strix nebulosa

The largest owl in the world (by length). Has a round head with a “bow tie” under the face. Grey and white overall.



Great Horned Owl
Bubo virginianus

Large owl with feathered tufts. One of the most common and widespread owls, found in wetlands, forests, grasslands and urban areas. Usually use an old nest from a different species, such as hawks or ravens. Mostly active at night, but especially at dusk and before dawn.



Snowy Owl
Bubo scandiacus

Large owl with white feathers and black or brown markings. Males become whiter as they age. Found in open spaces. Nests in a hollow scraped into the ground by the female.