

Owl Prowl

Family

Take your family out into the night and prowl for owls. Just after dusk is a good time to prowl. December is the best time of year as owls are calling and courting. Enhance your experience by learning a bit about the owls in your area. Our most common owls are the Barred Owl, Eastern Screech-Owl, and Great Horned Owl. (See the images below) Start with a good bird book or an online resource such as [The Cornell Lab All About Birds](http://TheCornellLabAllAboutBirds) site. This site also plays the calls for each owl. Listening to the calls ahead of time will help you recognize them on your prowl. Consider making your first prowl about just listening. Discover which owls are in your area, then focus a second (or more) prowls on looking for that species. Practice imitating the calls to entice a response. But don't over do it. **Be kind**, limit calling. Let the owls spend their time "talking" to a potential new mate and not you.

Pre-prowl Planning

- ⇒ Find a likely green space - quiet, mature trees, a mix of shrubbery and open spaces. Mature cemeteries are wonderful owl habitats and great for an owl prowl. They have level, litter-free grounds for walking, benches for sitting and a place to parking.
- ⇒ Scout out a sit-spot ahead of time, sheltered from wind and noise
- ⇒ Dress warmly, you will be sitting still (and "prowling" with your ears!)
- ⇒ Bring something to sit on - see our Sit-upon Made Simple activity.
- ⇒ Bring along a snack for a "late night" picnic. Remember - Leave no trace you were there.

On the Prowl

- ⇒ Find your sit-spot and sit quietly
- ⇒ Keep the flashlights off, after a few minutes or so, your eyes will adjust to the dark.
- ⇒ Put on your "owl ears" to better hear nature.
- ⇒ Be patient. Nature heard you arrive and get settled, give it time to forget you are there.



Great Horned Owl
Large - 53 cm (21")
ear tufts,
yellow eyes



hoo-h'HOO
-hoo-hoo.

When this page is printed (8.5x11) the grey silhouette is the size of a screech-owl. The other two owls are almost as tall as two copies of this page end to end.

Eastern Screech-owl
Small - 20 cm (8")
yellow eyes, ear tufts



I whinny
like a pony!

Who cooks for
you? Who cooks
for you-all?



Barred Owl
Large - 50 cm (20")
black eyes,
round head

Tip: Put on a mini light show while out in the dark. Crunch a Wintergreen Lifesaver with your teeth so others can see sparks fly in your mouth. Fun and tasty. This optical phenomenon is called triboluminescence. It happens when light is created as a material is mechanically pulled apart, ripped, scratched, crushed, or rubbed.