

**C.O.D.E.  
GREEN**

WALLOWOLOGY  
YOUTH PROGRAM



# Discover OWLS!

## Hoot! Screech! Hiss!

*Because most owls are nocturnal, meaning they are most active at night, they are usually very hard to spot, but their calls are as varied as they are and can be heard from dusk until dawn.*

*Oregon is home to 14 species of owls, many of which spend some or all of their time in the Blue or Willamette mountains. They hunt for insects, frogs, birds, mice and other small mammals. Owls don't build their own nests, instead they nest in tree cavities, nests or dens built by other species, or human-made nesting platforms. Get to know some of our local owls below and then get outside and try to spot or listen for them!*



### **Great Grey Owl**

*Strix nebulosa*

Great Grey Owls have large heads and yellow eyes. They prefer older forests and can be found nesting on broken tree tops or using nests made by other raptors. They feed primarily on mammals like voles, pocket gophers and mice – they have to eat 7 prey animals of this size a day to survive!



### **Great Horned Owl**

*Bubo virginianus*

This large and powerful owl has large, yellow eyes and strong talons that help it prey on mammals and birds larger than itself. It gets its name from the large tufts of feathers above its eyes that look like horns – but they are actually the owl's ears!



### **Barred Owl**

*Strix varia*

Historically, the Barred Owl lived only in the eastern U.S., but its range has expanded into the west. This is a large owl with brown and white feathers and stripes on its chest and throat. It is believed to be a serious competitor to native Spotted Owls.



### **Northern Pygmy Owl**

*Glaucidium gnoma*

This is one of Oregon's smallest owls – about the size of a sparrow. They have brown to grey feathers with white spots. Two black spots on the back of its head are shaped like eyes, confusing predators. They may live in trees, like Cottonwoods, near rivers or streams and are frequently seen around Willamette Lake.

# Flammulated Owl

*Psilosops flammeolus*

Even though this is one of Oregon's smallest owls, it has one of the deepest sounding hoots. These little owls can also fly great distances to winter in Mexico and Central America. Flammulated owls forage for insects at the tops of fir or pine trees.



# Barn Owl

*Tyto alba*

These owls have heart-shaped faces, dark eyes and white to tan feathers. They are very adaptable and can thrive in many different habitats. They often make nests in barns and haystacks.



# Short-eared Owl

*Asio flammeus*

Short-eared Owls are ground nesters and can be seen flying over open wetlands or grasslands, like the Zumwalt Prairie. They are impressive acrobats and can hover before pouncing on their prey.

# Boreal Owl

*Aegolius funereus*

These small, shy brown owls live in the remote alpine forests of Oregon, often above 5,000 feet. But in the spring they can be spotted hunting lower down in fields and clear-cuts.

- Owls are zygodactyl, which means two of their toes face forward and two of their toes face backward. Unlike other zygodactyl birds, however, owls can pivot one of their back toes to the front to help grip and walk.
- About 20 hours after eating, owls spit up a pellet, which contains the hair, claws, bones, and other indigestible parts of the owl's meal.
- Many owl species have asymmetrical ears. Located at different heights on the owl's head, their ears are able to pinpoint the location of sounds in multiple dimensions.
- A group of owls is called a parliament. This originates from C.S. Lewis' description of a meeting of owls in *The Chronicles of Narnia*.

## Did you know?

- Owls have tube-shaped eyes that don't move, giving them good binocular vision.
- Because their eyes don't move – their necks have to do the work. Owls can move their heads 270 degrees – that's almost all the way around!

