BIRD NERD for KIDS



November, 2026

Wildlife Center of the North Coast

Owls



Owls of the Pacific Northwest

The Pacific Northwest is home to some incredible owl species

According to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife there are 14 species of owls living in the state of Oregon. While some are more common than others, having such a large number of owl species in our state is one of many reasons that Oregon is such a special place for wildlife! In this issue of *Bird Nerd* we will explore more about Oregon's owls and the adaptations that make them so interesting.

Owls here in the Pacific Northwest range in size from the tiny Flammulated Owl to the giant Great Grey Owl, but they all share features that make them especially well-suited to the environments where they live. Owls are known for their silent flight, remarkable sight and hearing, and their excellent camouflage. Together, these adaptations make owls some of the coolest creatures around.

An Introduction to Oregon's Owls

These 14 species of owl are those most commonly present in the state of Oregon. Some of them are here more often than others (or in greater numbers) but if you are an Oregonian, you can consider each of them one of your animal neighbors!



Boreal Owl
(Aegolius funereus)



Snowy Owl
(Bubo scandiacus)



Barred Owl
(Strix varia)



Great Horned Owl
(Bubo virginianus)



Northern Pygmy Owl
(Glaucidium gnoma)



Short-eared Owl
(Asio flammeus)



Long-eared Owl
(Asio otus)



Flammulated Owl
(Psiloscops flammeolus)



Great Gray Owl
(Strix nebulosa)



Burrowing Owl
(Athene cunicularia)



American Barn Owl
(Tyto furcata)



Northern Saw-whet Owl
(Aegolius acadicus)



Western Screech-owl
(Megascops kennicottii)



Northern Spotted Owl
(Strix occidentalis caurina)

Oregon Owls

Meet the frequent fliers on Oregon's North Coast

Although Oregon has fourteen species of owls, there are some that are more common than others on the North Coast, where the Wildlife Center of the North Coast is located. Here are the owls that we most often see in our animal care clinic. Can you match the owl's pictures to the correct names?



Northern Pygmy-Owl

Northern Saw-whet Owl

Barred Owl

Great Horned Owl

American Barn Owl

Western Screech-owl

Whose Egg is Biggest?

Most owl eggs have a lot in common. They are mostly round and either white or off white. But some owls lay larger eggs than others. Does the biggest Oregon owl also lay the biggest egg? Use a ruler to measure the length of each egg to see if you can figure out the answer. You'll need to print this page to get accurate results!



American Barn Owl
(Tyto furcata)



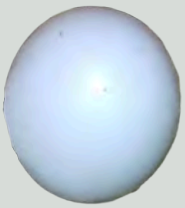
Barred Owl
(strix varia)



Burrowing Owl
(Athene cunicularia)



Great Gray Owl
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Northern Pygmy-Owl
(Glaucidium gnoma)



Snowy Owl
(Bubo scandiacus)



Western Screech-owl
(Megascops kennicottii)



Great Horned Owl
(Bubo virginianus)

Focus on Feathers

Owls are known for their remarkable ability as hunters. When we think about how owls hunt for their prey, we often think of their reputation for silent flight. Owls are uniquely able to fly without making sound. This is a very special adaptation that makes it possible for them to successfully catch prey that hears well and is fast moving.

So how do they do it? Scientists have discovered that owl wings have particular features that make it possible for the birds to fly silently. First of all, owls have relatively large wings for their body size, meaning that they can fly more slowly than a similar sized bird with smaller wings.



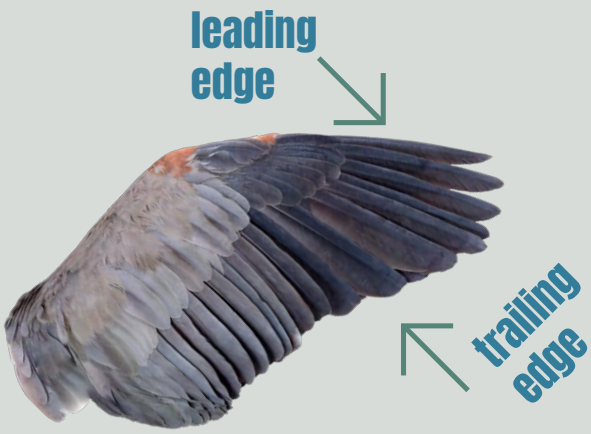
Owl wings aren't just big though. They are also outfitted with feathers made for stealth.

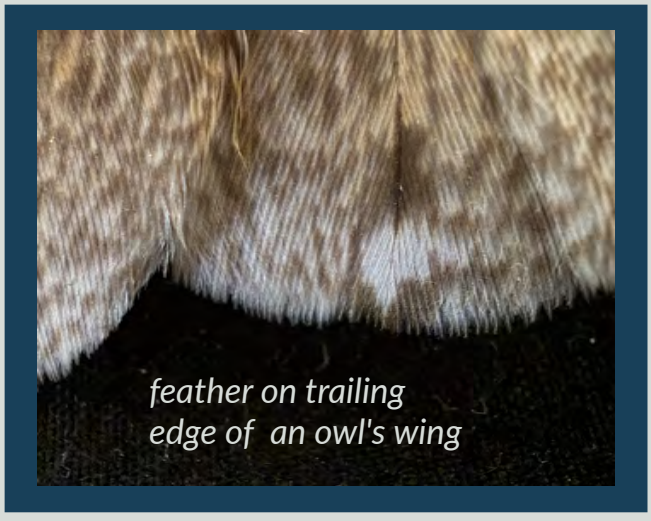
The outer most flight feather on the ***leading*** edge of owl's wing has a series of "teeth" that run along it. It looks a little bit like a comb! The notches along the side of the feather break up the stream of air as the owl flies preventing the air from making noise as it moves through the owls wing.

The ***trailing*** edge of the owls wing also has a soft fringe that further dampens sound. In general, owls have feathers that are soft and plush, making them ideal for absorbing sound made as they push through the air.



feather on the leading edge of an owl's wing





feather on trailing edge of an owl's wing

Owls in Wildlife Rehabilitation



Owls can end up in need of help from a wildlife rehabilitation center for many reasons. At a wildlife rehabilitation center like the Wildlife Center of the North Coast, the staff is trained to provide for the needs of native wild animals and are experts in caring for local species. Owls are frequent patients at WCNC.

The most common situations that bring owls to the center are things like being orphaned, being struck by a car, or eating rodents that have been exposed to poison. The baby American Barn Owl in this picture was found out of the nest without any parents nearby. Looking at its feathers, you may notice that they don't look like the normal owl feathers you may be used to seeing. They look "fluffy" and not very long. That is because this owl has not grown in its juvenile feathers yet, making it impossible for the bird to fly or live outside in wet conditions. If they are not able to be renested, orphaned owls like this need to be raised by rehabilitators until they have the feathers they need to be able to fly well and live independently.

You can see in the photo on the right that this American Barn Owl nestling is starting to grow in some of its juvenile feathers. Notice the tail feathers growing in, as well as some of the feathers on the face and wing, and how different they look from the rest of the owl's body.



juvenile: a young animal that has not yet reached adulthood

A PLACE TO GROW UP



Here you can see the owl with all of its juvenile feathers grown-in.



A PLACE TO HEAL



This Great Horned Owl was brought to the Wildlife Center of the North Coast with what seemed to be signs of a head injury. The owl was examined and found to have a problem with one of its eyes.





After staying at the center for about a month and receiving medical treatment from wildlife rehabilitators, the owl's eye was healed and it was able to be released back into the wild.

PNW OWLS

U	I	L	J	F	O	P	U	P	C	S	B	Q	C	B	V	O	E	L	E
S	J	J	L	I	U	H	R	P	X	P	G	B	K	K	R	F	W	W	Z
A	X	M	U	W	M	S	I	K	W	N	W	N	P	H	T	Y	U	O	P
D	C	L	M	D	O	F	L	W	O	Y	W	O	N	S	B	G	M	G	J
R	L	W	O	T	E	H	W	W	A	S	N	R	E	H	T	R	O	N	P
M	U	O	E	L	J	L	C	Z	O	P	Y	T	N	F	P	B	I	I	W
G	X	L	K	W	W	R	U	E	D	M	U	H	X	Y	V	G	J	W	F
W	R	A	R	O	L	O	N	G	E	A	R	E	D	O	W	L	A	O	K
G	I	E	N	D	K	I	D	W	Z	R	J	R	F	N	B	F	Z	R	D
X	B	R	A	E	P	D	Z	E	W	F	C	N	F	B	C	I	Z	R	K
V	A	O	Z	T	J	A	W	M	R	P	Y	S	J	K	W	E	O	U	B
B	M	B	S	A	H	B	C	X	L	A	O	P	N	V	C	F	U	B	Y
O	J	I	Y	L	C	O	A	O	D	M	E	O	N	R	Y	J	X	R	W
G	M	S	W	U	K	L	R	R	K	B	T	T	K	Z	E	Z	F	K	X
L	W	O	Y	M	G	Y	P	N	R	E	H	T	R	O	N	T	D	F	Y
D	G	A	C	M	R	Y	S	O	E	E	U	E	I	O	H	J	S	D	U
C	H	F	U	A	K	A	A	T	X	D	D	D	M	T	H	G	D	E	K
S	Z	P	F	L	B	O	T	I	U	G	O	O	C	H	U	S	F	U	W
P	E	Q	Q	F	A	P	N	J	F	V	K	W	W	U	F	Y	F	A	T
J	G	R	E	A	T	G	R	A	Y	O	W	L	L	L	S	O	L	H	G

find them all!



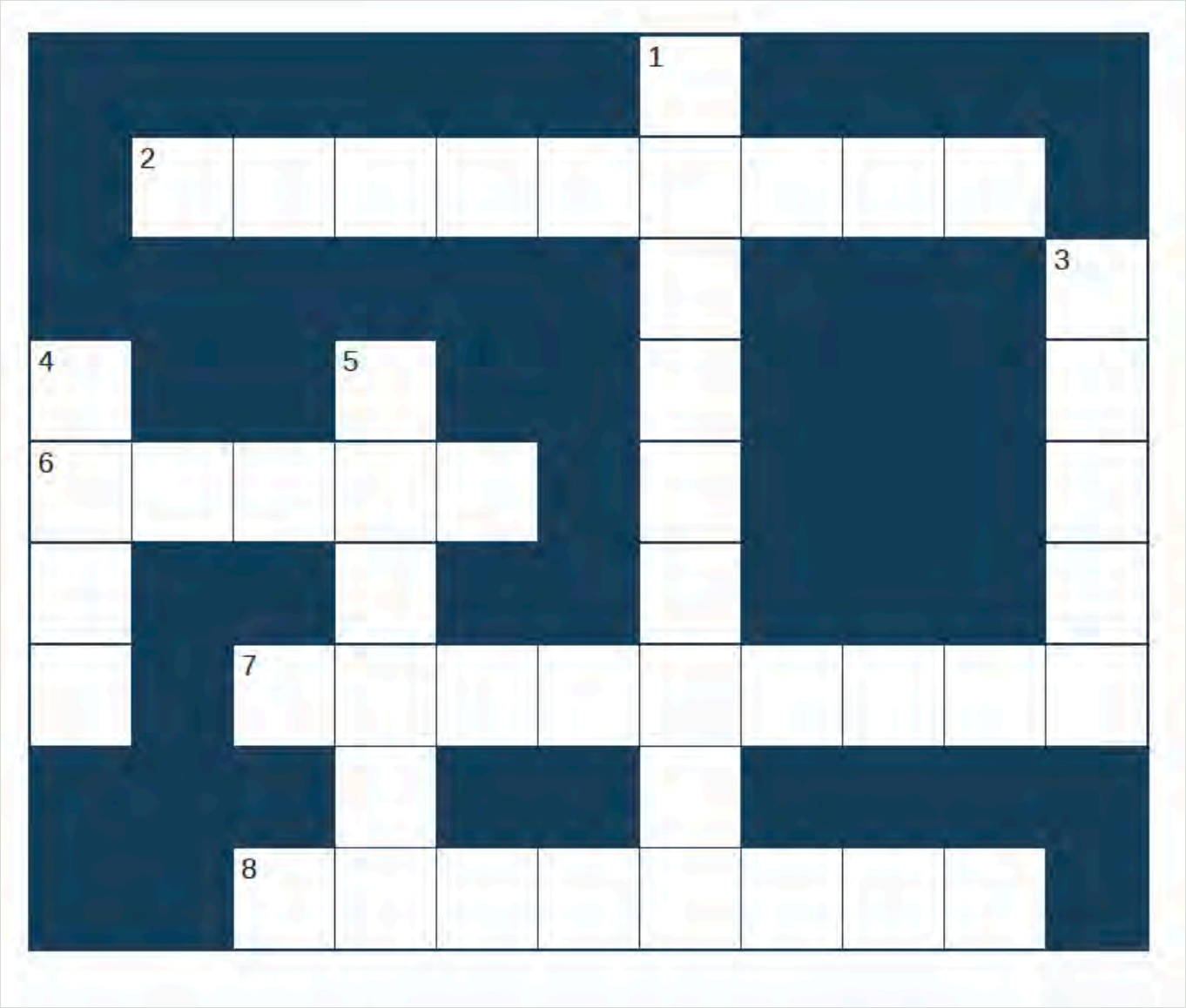
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Western Screech-owl
Northern Pygmy Owl
Burrowing Owl
Flammulated Owl
Northern Spotted Owl

Owls are known for their excellent vision. How's yours? See you can find all 14 Pacific Northwest owl species hidden in the grid.

Test Your Owl Terminology

Use the clues at the bottom of the page to place the following words in the correct place in the puzzle:

owlet
plumicorn
nocturnal
molt
pellet
talon
branching
strigine



Across

2. Active mainly at night, as most owl species are

6. A baby or young owl

7. A tuft of feathers resembling a small horn or ear

8. Resembling or relating to owls

Down

1. The stage when a fledgling owl hops among branches before it can fly well

3. A sharp, curved claw used to grip prey

4. To shed and grow new feathers

5. A regurgitated clump of fur and bone an owl can't digest