



Making a difference...together

WHO'S HOOTING

Educators Guide

Program at a Glance

On this fun and informative program students discover the who-oo, what and how of these mysterious birds of prey. We will explore a year in the life of an owl and learn about the unique features and behaviors they use to navigate their forest home. There will be a unique opportunity for a close-up and personal look at some mounted owl specimens. Interactive activities along the trail will cover owl habitat, owl eyes, owl hearing, camouflage and silent flight, owl pellets, and identifying and learning to make owl calls. Students will discover the important role that owls play in the forest and how this park and its old coastal forest are an essential home to owls.



Photo: Rick Leche

In this program, your students will...

- Identify the names and calls of local owl species
- Explore the forest and understand how it provides the basic needs for owls
- Discover how owl features and behaviors are adaptations for the forest
- Understand the unique value that owls have in the forest
- Evaluate the impact of our actions on owls and their forest home

Curriculum Connections

Our place-based school programs directly relate to the K-5 science curricula. Below you will find some big ideas, curricular competencies and content that will be addressed on your program.

Big Ideas from BC Curriculum:

- Living things have cycles adapted to their environment (Science Gr2)
- Through listening and speaking, we connect with others and share our world (ELA Gr2)
- Curiosity and wonder lead us to new discoveries about ourselves and the world (ELA Gr2/3)
- Living things are diverse, can be grouped, and interact in their ecosystems (Science Gr3)

Curricular Competencies from BC Curriculum:

- Ask questions about familiar objects and events (Science Gr2)
- Make simple predictions about familiar objects and events (Science Gr2)
- Make and record observations (Science Gr2)

- Safely manipulate materials to test ideas and predictions (Science Gr2)
- Compare observations with predictions through discussion (Science Gr2)
- Identify simple patterns and connections (Science Gr2)
- Compare observations with those of others (Science Gr2)
- Consider some environmental consequences of their actions (Science Gr2)
- Transfer and apply learning to new situations (Science Gr2)
- Generate and introduce new or refined ideas when problem solving (Science Gr2)
- Communicate observations and ideas using oral or role-play (Science Gr2)
- Demonstrate curiosity and a sense of wonder about the world (Science Gr2/3)
- Observe objects and events in familiar contexts (Science Gr2/3)
- Express and reflect on personal experiences of place (Science Gr2/3)
- Use developmentally appropriate listening/ viewing strategies to make meaning (Gr2/3)
- Experience and interpret the local environment (Science Gr2/3)
- Engage actively as listeners, viewers, and readers, as appropriate, to develop understanding of self, identity, and community (Gr2/3)
- Make predictions based on prior knowledge (Science Gr3)
- Make observations about living and non-living things in the local environment (Science Gr3)
- Identify some simple environmental implications of their and others' actions (Science Gr3)

Content from BC Curriculum:

- Metamorphic and non-metamorphic life cycles of different organisms (Gr2)
- Similarities and differences between offspring and parent (Gr2)
- Biodiversity in the local environment (Gr3)
- Energy is needed for life (eg. Food chains/webs) (Gr3)

Suggested Pre-trip Activities

- Have students draw pictures about the field trip and make predictions about what they might see
- Read stories about owls to introduce the lifestyles and adaptations of owls
- Have a sharing circle to allow children to share their stories and experiences about owls

Follow-up Activities

- Start a nature logbook for your classroom. Each time students observe something (e.g. owls, squirrels, etc.) have them write down or draw what they have seen
- Have students create a mural of a night scene featuring owls roosting and hunting

Background information on owls

Common Owl Characteristics

- Wide head with large eyes facing the front (binocular vision)
- large, hooked, downward curving beak with nostrils at base of beak and poor sense of smell
- legs as well as bodies thickly covered with feathers (most owls)
- well-camouflaged with grey, brown, black and white patterned feathers
- principal weapons are their razor-sharp claws, known as talons.
- most hunt at night and sleep during the day, though some hunt during the day.

Habitat

- Owls live in a wide variety of habitats, depending on the owl, from dry prairies to mountains to aspen parkland or northern boreal forest. Most owls are tree nesting birds, a few are ground nesters.

Food

- small mammals, birds, snakes, frogs and insects.
- food swallowed, fur, feathers, bone and all. Food is later regurgitated as a ball of garbage called an owl pellet, which contains the bones and fur or feathers that the owl cannot digest. Owl pellets can be found under roosting trees.

Predators

- big owls prey on little owls, crows, ravens and other birds may prey on young owls in a nest
- threats from humans and the destruction of owl habitat through logging, growth of cities, and agricultural, all of which involve the clearing of wooded areas. The removal of dead and dying trees (wildlife trees) is the removal of homes for many owls

Reproduction

- breed in late winter or early spring (i.e., Barred Owls at Mill Hill Regional Park usually re-establish territory, and nest from late January through February, and are very vocal in the park during that time)
- usually lay around three eggs but may lay more if food is plentiful (clutch size related to food availability). Eggs are white and round and take about thirty days to hatch.

Online Resources

The Owl Pages

A comprehensive site with information and links about all things owl-ley.

<http://www.owlpages.com/index.php>

Habitat Acquisition Trust (HAT)

A website all about the western screech owl, formerly abundant throughout Greater Victoria.

<http://www.hat.bc.ca/western-screech-owls>

Owling.com

A great website that contains information including sounds, video, and great photographs of making types of owls. It focuses on the owls of North and Central America

<http://42explore.com/owls.htm>

Owl Prowl

This online project involves participating classes to research an owl in their environment. Students write reports, draw pictures, write poems and stories about owls

<http://www.kids-learn.org/owlprowl/>

Virtual Owl Pellet Dissection

<http://www.kidwings.com/owlpellets/index.htm>

Additional Resources

Johnsgard, Paul A. North American owls : biology and natural history. Smithsonian Institution Press. 2002

Patricia and Clay. How To Spot An Owl. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1994

Wishart, P. and Hayley, D. Knee High Nature: Fall- A Guide to Nature Activities and fun. Edmonton. Lone Pine Publishing. 1994

Hutchins, Pat. Good Night, Owl! Houghton Mifflin Company, 1971.

Yolan, Jane. Owl Moon. Philomel Books, 1987.