



Great Gray Owl

The great gray owl holds the distinction of being the largest owl in North America. Its perching height is about 60 cm and its wingspan ranges up to 150 cm. This huge owl is tuftless, with yellow eyes and a long tail.

Like the snowy owl, the great gray has adapted to its northern habitat. The constantly surprised look on its face is a result of the extra layers of down and feathers that insulate it from the cold. It can hunt not only in the dark but in the daylight during the long northern summer days. Its favourite food is the vole but mice, frogs and fish also contribute to its diet.

The great gray is well camouflaged as its misty-gray colouring makes it difficult to spot in its wooded environment.

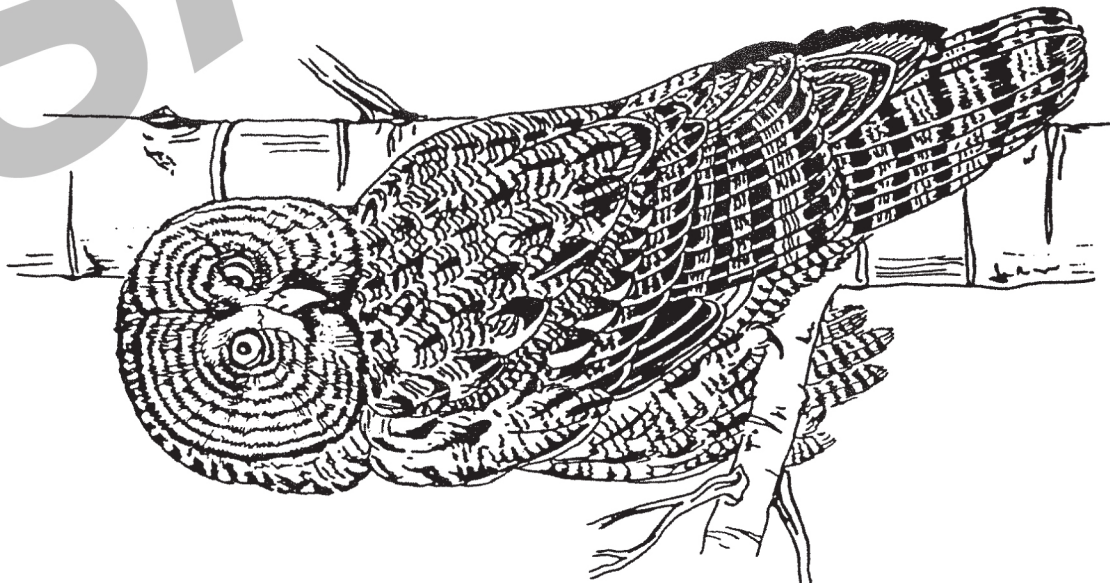
In the spring the female lays 2 to 5 dull white oval eggs. She may use a nest abandoned by hawks or crows and cares for her babies constantly. People or animals who come too close to the nesting site risk being attacked by this vigilant mother.



True or False

- 1. The great gray owl is easy to spot. T F
- 2. This owl eats rabbits. T F
- 3. The great gray owl lives in a cold environment. T F
- 4. This owl can hunt both day and night. T F
- 5. The female can be vicious. T F
- 6. The great gray owl is afraid of water. T F

Rewrite each "false" sentence to make it "true".



Saw-whet Owl

The saw-whet is a very tame little owl which seems to have lots of curiosity and very little fear of humans. It is only 15 cm high, with a wingspan of about 42 cm, and its reddish brown body is marked with white streaks instead of spots. Its buff-coloured facial disks are marked with darker lines, and it has no ear tufts. The only owl smaller than the saw-whet is the tiny pygmy owl of the west.

Saw-whets get their name from a scratchy sound they sometimes make that sounds like a saw being whetted, or sharpened. Most of the time they make a series of low, monotonous whistling sounds that resemble a distant bell.

This little owl likes to make its nest in abandoned woodpecker holes or other tree cavities. The female usually lays 5 to 6 eggs, and both parents hunt for their babies when they hatch. Their favourite food is mice, but they will also take shrews, squirrels, bats, birds, and insects. They start hunting at dusk and are very active at night.

