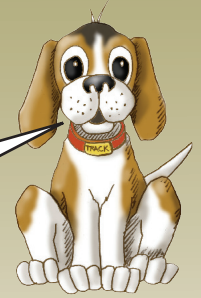




January TRACK-tivity: Owl Prowl



Owls can be hard to find – they are very shy, and most only come out at night. The best time of year to look for owls is in the winter months because this is when many owls are nesting, and they will be out calling for mates or hunting to feed their young. Here are a few tricks you can use to try to hear or see an owl on your next outdoor adventure!

1. Practice Making Owl Sounds

Sometimes owls call to attract a mate, and sometimes they call to defend their territory and warn other owls to stay away. Visit the following links to hear what some of the common owls sound like, and try imitating the calls outside after dark to see if any owls respond!

Screech Owl

http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/eastern_screech-owl/sounds



What does the Screech Owl sound like to you?
Can you think of another animal to compare it to?

Barred Owl

http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Barred_Owl/sounds



Some people think the Barred Owl sounds like it's saying "Who cooks for you? Who cooks for you-all?"
What do you think it sounds like?

Great Horned Owl

http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/great_horned_owl/sounds

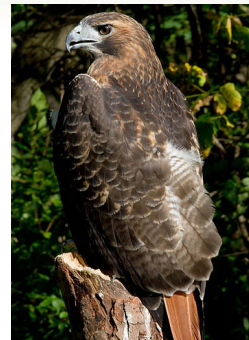


What does the Great Horned Owl sound like it's saying?
Can you imitate its call?

2. Go Where the Hawks Are

Have you seen any hawks in your neighborhood? This could be your first clue to finding owls! Great Horned Owls, for example, share the same habitat as Red-tailed Hawks. So if you see a Red-tailed Hawk hunting over a farm field in the daytime, there may be a Great-Horned Owl hunting that field at night. The same goes for Barred Owls and Red-shouldered hawks.

Red-tailed Hawk



Look for Red-tailed Hawks near farm fields and woodland edges.

Red-shouldered Hawk



Red-shouldered Hawks like swampy areas near lakes and streams

3. Look for Whitewash and Owl Pellets

Owl poop is called "whitewash" because it looks like someone spilled a bunch of white paint in the woods. If you see whitewash while hiking, check nearby on the forest floor for owl pellets. Owl pellets are small balls of fur and bones that owls cough up after their meals. They are usually dark gray or brown in color and about the size of a golf ball or smaller. Whitewash and owl pellets together are a sure sign that owls are nearby!

Whitewash



Owl Pellets



CAUTION:
DO NOT TOUCH!
Whitewash and owl pellets may contain harmful bacteria and viruses.