

Western Screech-Owl

Megascops kennicottii

Description

The Western Screech-owl ranges widely across western North America and into Central America, displaying various colour morphs like grey Pacific and brown Pacific that aid in blending into diverse habitats from forests to urban parks. Despite its name, it doesn't screech but communicates through trills, hoots, whistles, and occasional barks, crucial for nesting and warning of predators. It nests in tree cavities or nest boxes, incubating clutches of 3-7 eggs for about 26 days, with both parents involved in caring for the young.

Its ability to camouflage by elongating its body and closing its eyes resembles tree bark, highlighting its adaptability to survive in different environments across its range. The Western Screech-owl prefers nesting in natural tree cavities, old woodpecker holes, Saguaro Cactus, or cliff crevices, and also readily uses nest boxes.

FUN FACTS

- They are listed as threatened in Canada on the COSEWIC list
- Owlets remain with their parents for another 5-6 weeks before becoming independent.
- They usually fly from tree to tree, with short flight periods.
- Diet comprising insects like scorpions and cicadas, small mammals, birds, and occasionally reptiles and amphibians.

If you find an injured or orphaned wild animal, please contact the Calgary Wildlife Rehabilitation Society hotline at 403-214-1312, for tips, instructions and advice.

