

LEVELED BOOK • I

Owls Overhead



**Multi
level
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Written by Karen Mockler

www.readinga-z.com

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Table of Contents

Flying in the Moonlight	4
Eyes for the Night	6
Even Better Ears	8
Silent Hunters	10
Where Owls Live	12
Owls Are Out There	14
Glossary	16



Flying in the Moonlight

It's a moonlit night. A dark shape
floats over you and into the trees.
It's an owl!

More than two hundred different kinds of owls live around the world. The way they look and act helps them **survive**.



Long-eared owls



Northern hawk owl



Burrowing owl

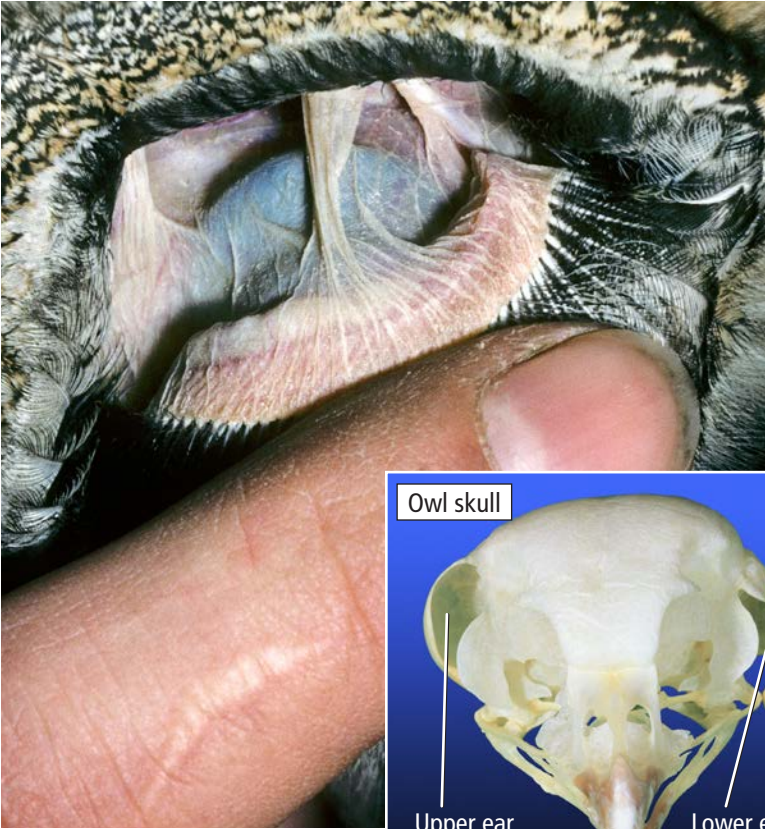
Eyes for the Night

Owls can't move their eyes, so they turn their heads. Owls can turn their heads almost all the way around. They can even turn their heads upside down!

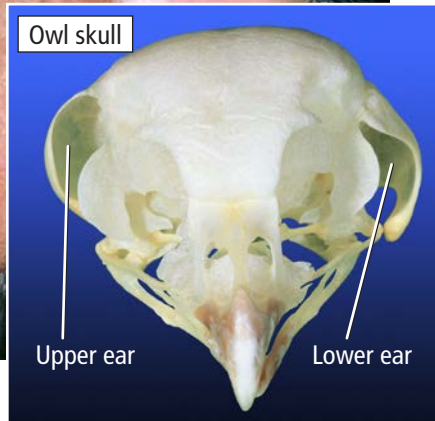


An owl's pupils are small in bright light (top) and large in low light (bottom).

Owls have big eyes, but they can't see in total **darkness**. They see better in low light than most animals, though. That's because of their pupils—the black circles in the center of their eyes. Their pupils can grow large to let in more light.



Owls have very large ears, but their ears are hidden under feathers.



Even Better Ears

Most owls use their **hearing** to **hunt**.

Owls have huge ears. On most owls, one ear is higher than the other.

Owls can hear **prey** that's hiding in grass or snow.



Owls, such as this barn owl, often crush their prey. The grip of some owls can be ten times stronger than a person's grip.

Barn owls can hear a mouse and catch it in complete darkness. Barn owls have the best hearing of any animal.



Pellets!

Owls can't chew their food. Instead, they often swallow animals whole. A part of their stomach rolls unwanted animal parts into small balls called *pellets*. A few hours after they eat, owls cough up a pellet.



A saw-whet owl flies silently through the trees.

Silent Hunters

Owls must **attack** by surprise if they want to eat. The soft feathers that cover their bodies help them fly without a sound.



Great horned owls are great hunters. They can even catch another bird that is flying.

The main food for most owls is small animals—lots of them. In its lifetime, a barn owl may eat 11,000 mice!



A barn owl raises its young in a barn.

Where Owls Live

Some owls can live in many different places. Other owls cannot.

An Owl's Housekeeper

Screech owls hunt snakes. However, they bring the blindsnake back to their nest alive. They let it go inside the nest, where it eats the bugs that feed on the dead animals stored there. The snake becomes a housekeeper!





Spotted owls can only survive in old forests with huge trees. Many of these forests have been cut down. Today, few spotted owls are left.



People take pictures of a great gray owl, the largest owl in the world.

Owls Are Out There

People don't see owls very often, but they are out there. Go out at sunset and listen for their calls. If you stay out too late, people might think you're an owl.

A night owl, that is.



Owl Sounds

Owls aren't always quiet. They all make different sounds. A great horned owl can bark like a dog and meow like a cat. Barn owls don't hoot—they scream.

Barn owl



Glossary

- attack** (v.) to act harmfully
toward (p. 10)
- darkness** (n.) the state of having
little or no light (p. 7)
- hearing** (n.) the sense that allows
some living things
to receive sounds
through the ears
(p. 8)
- hunt** (v.) to kill animals for food
(p. 8)
- prey** (n.) an animal that is
hunted and eaten by
another animal (p. 8)
- survive** (v.) to stay alive (p. 5)

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Front cover: Barn owl

Back cover: Little owl

Title page: Tawny owl

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