



SOUTH COAST SPECIES AT RISK

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR Owls at risk



Photo: Sean McCann



Barn Owl

The South Coast of BC has 12 different types of owls. Some live and breed here year-round, while others migrate through in the winter months. The owls can be found in variety of habitats, such as forests, wetlands, grass fields, and barns.

How to Identify Owls

By sight: Look at the SCCP's Owls of BC's South Coast Identification Guide (on-line or paper version available)

By sound: Search for sound files on the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's All About Birds website

This document will guide you to the best resources to learn about and help to protect BC's South Coast owls. They can be mostly found on-line.

Visit www.sccp.ca for a PDF version with on-line links.



**SOUTH COAST
CONSERVATION
PROGRAM**

www.sccp.ca
info@sccp.ca

There are currently four species at risk: Barn Owl, Western Screech-owl (*kennicottii* subspecies), Short-eared Owl, and Spotted Owl.

BARN OWL

Barn Owls roam low elevation fields, pastures and roadsides hunting mostly for small rodents. They nest in trees, barns, old buildings or other structures that are covered.

WESTERN SCREECH-OWL

Western Screech-owls live in low elevation mixed forests sometimes close to streams. They feed on a large variety of small animals. Their call is not a screech, but a series of accelerating whistles (like a bouncing ball).

SHORT-EARED OWL

Short-eared Owls are found in open areas, such as old pastures and edges of marshes. They build their nests on the ground and are most active during twilight and at night.

Western Screech-owl



Photo: Anthony Bucci

Short Eared Owl



Photo: Sean McCann



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What can you do?

Explore These Resources to Learn More about At-Risk Owls

- SCCP's Species Profiles (via website or phone app)
- Province of BC's Species and Ecosystems Explorer (searchable on-line database)
- Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) website
- Government of Canada's Species at Risk Act (SARA) Registry website
- Province of BC's Northern Spotted Owl Recovery and Breeding Program: www.nsobreedingprogram.com
- Barn Owl Conservation in BC: www.barnowlsbc.ca

Report an Owl at Risk

Sharing information about owls helps us to better understand how populations are faring.

- First, record the location, date and time, the species and number of owls. And take photos!
- Then, send your information to the Province's BC Conservation Data Centre (by accessing their on-line data forms)

For help deciding if you have spotted an at-risk owl, contact the SCCP at info@sccp.ca

Learn Where Owls Live

Use these websites with maps showing owl locations in BC:

- **eBird Canada** website's searchable map
- **Atlas of the Breeding Birds of BC** website

Just because a species is not recorded in a certain area does not necessarily mean that they are not present there.

The purpose of the South Coast Species at Risk Series is to provide stewardship guidance for species at risk. Before undertaking land-use changes, make sure all relevant regulations are being followed. Under the *BC Wildlife Act*, it is illegal to capture, move, harm or kill wildlife without a permit, as well as disturb nests when occupied by a bird or its egg.



Old field habitat

Threats to Owls at Risk

- Loss of areas needed for nesting and hunting – forests with older and larger trees, natural areas next to streams or wetlands, and open grass fields
- Being hit by vehicles while flying across roads
- Exposure to rodenticides

What Can You Do to Help?

- Install a Barn or Screech-owl nest box on your property
- Stop using rat poison products
- Create old field hunting habitat – let grass grow and become fallow
- Review the Province's Develop with Care Guidelines for the Western Screech-owl
- Volunteer for a local owl nest box monitoring project
- Read the Habitat Acquisition Trust's Owls Protection and Stewardship factsheet for the Western Screech-owl



For **free personalized property advice** on creating habitat for owls and other wildlife in your backyard, contact the SCCP's Nature Stewards Program. Visit www.sccp.ca or email info@sccp.ca.

V.1 March 2018

This project was undertaken with the financial support of the Government of Canada.

Ce projet a été réalisé avec l'appui financier du gouvernement du Canada.

Canada

Support provided by:

