



The Ontario Wildlife Foundation
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Conserve Natural Habitats • Promote and Participate in Conservation Education • Encourage Outdoor Recreation

Great Horned Owl

Cool Facts

- When clenched, a Great Horned Owl's strong talons require a force of 28 pounds to open. The owls use this deadly grip to sever the spine of large prey.
- If you hear an agitated group of cawing American Crows, they may be mobbing a Great Horned Owl. Crows may gather from near and far and harass the owl for hours. The crows have good reason, because the Great Horned Owl is their most dangerous predator.
- Great Horned Owls have large eyes, pupils that open widely in the dark, and retinas containing many rod cells for excellent night vision. Their eyes don't move in their sockets, but they can swivel their heads more than 180 degrees to look in any direction. They also have sensitive hearing, thanks in part to facial disc feathers that direct sound waves to their ears.
- The oldest Great Horned Owl on record was at least 28 years old when it was found in Ohio in 2005.
- Look for this widespread owl in woods, particularly young woods interspersed with fields or other open areas.
- The broad range of habitats they use includes deciduous and evergreen forests, swamps, desert, tundra edges, and tropical rainforest, as well as cities, orchards, suburbs, and parks.
- **Favourite Snacks:** a wide range of prey items ranging from mice to rabbits, squirrels, and other mammals, as well as birds and sometimes even other raptors.



This great horned owl, named Octavius was imprinted by humans at a young age, meaning that she does not have the skills to hunt and survive in the wild. She hatched in 2006 and arrived at Mountsberg in 2008. She can be seen at The Raptor Centre at Mountsberg Conservation Area (home to more than 30 birds of prey - and also home to the shrike recovery project that OWF currently sponsors - written about in our April 2015 newsletter)

Photo: Tracy Smith, OWF

- **Special Talents:** With almost no sense of smell, Great Horned Owls often prey on skunks!
- **Breeding:** After making a nest in tree holes, stumps, caves, or in the abandoned nests of other large birds, monogamous pairs have one to five eggs, with both the male and female parents taking turns incubating the eggs.

National Wildlife Week

April 10 - 16, 2016

National Wildlife Week falls every year during the week of April 10. This was the birthdate of the late Jack Miner, who passed in 1944. Jack Miner began a lifelong career of lecturing in 1910. He spoke about **wildlife conservation** and the need for the establishment of **sanctuaries** and **wildlife refuges**, and told of his banding, research, and **habitat preservation** methods. The Jack Miner Bird Sanctuary was one of the first of its kind in North America, and remains in existence today. Jack was one of the founders of Canada's conservation movement and is credited with saving the Canada Goose from extinction.

The National Wildlife Week Act's primary purpose is to **recognize** Jack Miner's **conservation efforts**. The secondary purpose of the Act is to **encourage public interest** through nature groups, sporting groups, tourism outfitters, and education and ecology related organizations in the conservation field by passing on information about conservation.

The bill was passed without one dissenting vote, a first since Confederation, in the House of Commons on April 18th, 1947.

Take a moment to see what activities your town is supporting during this week of wildlife conservation. **Volunteers are always needed.**



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Tree

Quiz



1. A common source of wood for baseball bats, this tree is threatened locally by a tiny emerald-colored insect called a borer. This species can be identified by looking for opposite branching.

2. These trees are often found growing around lakes or stream beds, as they like to keep their roots saturated to stay hydrated. Salicylic acid can be extracted from the bark and used to make aspirin. Equally wide and tall, this tree is easily recognizable by its bowing branches and narrow leaves.

3. How many pounds of oxygen does a tree produce in a year?

4. A national symbol of Canada, this tree is quite popular in the U.S. as well. Leaves can be brilliant reds, oranges or yellows in the autumn, depending on the species.

5. How many tons of carbon dioxide does an acre of trees remove from the air each year?

6. What type of trees survive the cold Ontario winters by shedding their leaves and becoming dormant (inactive) until spring?

7. What percentage of Ontario's 266 million acres is forested?

8. What is the most widely distributed pine tree in Canada?

Answers: 1. Ash Tree (emerald ash borer)
2. Weeping Willow
3. 260
4. Maple
5. 2.6
6. Deciduous
7. 66%
8. Jack Pine

Raccoons

Bandit-masked raccoons are a familiar sight just about everywhere because they will eat just about anything.



Their body is normally grey in colour, but can vary from albino to black or brown. The raccoon also has an annual moult when, beginning in the spring, it sheds its fur for about three months. Male raccoons are typically 25% larger than females, and raccoons in northern latitudes tend to be heavier than their southern relatives. They weigh anywhere from 8 - 20 lbs and are, on average, 16 to 28 inches long.

The raccoon can live in a wide range of habitats, requiring only a source of water and food, and a protected area for denning in order to survive. The habitats best suited for it are hardwood swamps, floodplain forests, fresh and saltwater marshes, and both cultivated and abandoned farmland. It is also found in cities all over the country.

The raccoon is one of the few animals that is successfully able to go from family pet back to wild animal. Male raccoons, however, cannot stay captive for long. They are known to become aggressive as they mature and normally have to be set free.

The raccoon is also a strong swimmer, but only when forced to swim. It is known more for its climbing abilities. It is capable of making a variety of sounds, including whistling, shrieking, chattering, clicking its teeth, snarling and growling.

RANGE

In Canada, the raccoon is found in northern Alberta, southern B.C. and Saskatchewan, central Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario, southern Quebec and the Maritimes. In agricultural regions of eastern North America, its range is between one and four square kilometres. In prairie habitat, however, it has areas up to 50 square kilometres, while urban raccoons normally occupy less than 0.1 square kilometres. Their ranges can overlap - there is little evidence that raccoons are territorial.