

Screech Owls

A Raptor Trust Story & Workbook

The Screech Owl is **one of the smallest owls** in New Jersey, and belongs to a group of birds called "raptors." Raptors are predatory birds who hunt for their prey. All raptors have excellent eyesight, hooked beaks, and strong talons.



The Raptor Trust is home to four resident Screech Owls: Winky, Lee, Penny, and Hootie. Male and female screech owls look the same, but females are a little larger. **Screech Owls come in two colors or "morphs:" red and gray.** Of the three pictured, Winky and Lee are gray and Penny is red.



Winky, Lee and Penny were all found separately, but have very similar stories. They were all hunting at night when they were hit by cars. Each of them suffered the loss of one eye. Owls are unable to hunt with only one eye, so these three now live at The Raptor Trust, where they serve a very important purpose as ambassador birds. They travel to schools and events where they are featured as part of The Raptor Trust educational programming.



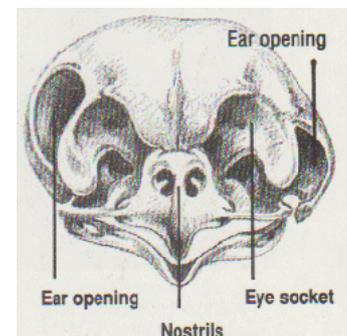
Wild Screech Owls can be found in many different habitats: parks, forests, golf courses, and even people's backyards! They search for holes in trees, called cavities, where they can hide from danger and raise their families. Cavities can be natural holes that form when a branch has fallen, or they can be made by woodpeckers. People can help Screech Owls by putting up man-made nest boxes to create artificial homes for these birds. Screech Owls do not build a nest inside the hole; they simply lay their eggs on whatever debris is already in the bottom of the cavity.



Adult Screech Owls are sometimes mistaken for baby Great Horned Owls because of the feather tufts on their heads. While some owl species have tufts and others don't, all baby owls are covered in downy fluff which helps distinguish them from adults.



Screech Owls are **nocturnal**, meaning they only come out at night and their eyes are specially adapted to see perfectly in the dark. Their ears are located on the sides of their heads like humans, but they are lopsided! This helps improve their hearing and allows them to locate prey by sound. Sitting on a perch, they tilt their head from side to side, listening for movement. When they hear their prey in both ears at the same time and volume, they know they are facing the right direction to **swoop down on silent wings to ambush their meal.**



Screech Owls

Find and circle the vocabulary words from the word bank.

P B X F T R E E H O L L O W R
N A F C O L O R M O R P H R L
A W B P R E D A T O R L T B N
Y Z P E R C H I G O R E Z E O
S P E N N Y S I N X A E G A C
C R B M O U S E S A P O F K T
R N E S T B O X K N T D C A U
E D H U N T X T C X O P O P R
E M C W Q L G H H I R D J R N
C M A D A P T A T I O N Z E A
H U W I N K Y D A S Z L X Y L
O S W P R M Y E R W L J I Z J
W B I R D V R N O T A L O N S
L V N E S T C A V I T Y Z R U
C L F S H O O T I E C D K Y Q

TREE HOLLOW

NEST CAVITY

TALONS

WINKY

BEAK

SCREECH OWL

PREDATOR

HOOTIE

HUNT

PENNY

ADAPTATION

NEST BOX

MOUSE

PERCH

BIRD

COLOR MORPH

NOCTURNAL

RAPTOR

PREY

LEE



Screech Owls

Unscramble each word, then fill in the mystery word by copying the letters from the numbered boxes.

TIELSN

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(quiet)

4

SOPWO

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| | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|

(to dive)

8 7

VAYTIC

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|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|

(hole in a tree)

6

NTSE

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| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|

(a bird's home)

1

NYKSAE

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| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|

(stealthy)

5

TCLONNUAR

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(active at night)

2

3

9

SATF

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| | | | |
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(not slow)

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1

2

3

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5

6

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7

8

9



Screech Owls

Circle each item a Screech Owl would eat



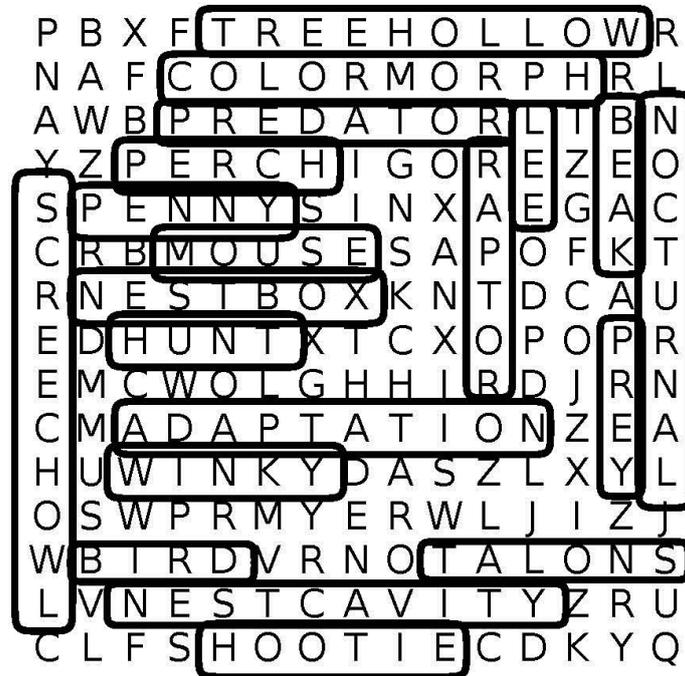


Draw a Screech Owl



Screech Owl Answer Key

Word Search:



Word Scramble:

silent, swoop, cavity, nest, sneaky, nocturnal, fast
mystery word: Screech Owl

Food Search:

