



Hungry Owl Project
76 Albert Park Ln.
San Rafael, CA 94901
415-453-1000 x 20

info@hungryowls.org
www.hungryowls.org

Western Screech Owl & Saw Whet Owl Boxes *Info & Installation*



Western Screech Owl & Saw Whet Owl - Photos by Kurt Lindsay

Installation & Care Notes

A good site and installation will not only help your chances of attracting owls to your box, but will also help ensure that it will be as successful as possible for both you and the owls for years to come. Unfortunately there is no 100% guarantee that boxes will be occupied, but a good installation will give you the best chance possible. Please read the following topics to help in installing and caring for your box.

Rodenticides

No rodenticides (rodent poisons) can be in use on the property, inside or outside. A single poisoned rodent can potentially wipe out an entire owl family. If rodenticides have been in use on the property, boxes can be installed with a minimum of 3 months since the last use. If possible, confirm that any adjacent neighbors are not using poisons as well.

Noise

Owls can be noisy in and around their nests at night, especially during baby season. Some people may be comfortable with owl sounds within earshot of their home, but as a general rule of thumb, we recommend keeping some space in between owl boxes and bedrooms.

Habitat

Western Screech Owls inhabit a wide variety of habitats. From humid Douglas-fir, western hemlock, western red cedar, and Sitka spruce forests along the edges of clearings, rivers, and lakes to lowland deciduous forests, especially riparian woodlands along river bottoms to lowland riparian forests, oak-filled arroyos, desert saguaro and cardon cacti stands, Joshua tree and mesquite groves, and open pine and pinyon-juniper forests. While they can be found in a wide variety of locations, urban areas included, in general, they prefer open forests, with an abundance of small mammals and insect prey, and cavities for nesting. They roost mainly in natural or woodpecker cavities in large trees, but also in dense foliage of deciduous trees, usually on a branch next to the trunk, or in dense conifers.

Placement

We recommend placing your box 9'-12' above the ground on a straight trunk with no branches within at least 5' of the box. Try to place it away from busier areas with a lot of people/animal traffic. When owlets are present, please be especially considerate of the box. Always try to avoid disturbing the box - especially surprising loud noises and physically contacting the box or it's support. Practice safe and considerate yard work within vicinity of the box. When the young are near fledging, some unusually spunky adults have been noted to swoop down at people or pets who wander too close, even raking them with their claws. So while placing the box away from busy areas is better for the owls, it can be good for us as well.

Cleaning

Cleaning is not required as regularly as it is with Barn Owl boxes. However, it may be a good idea to check on your box once a year or every other year, during the months of October or November. Always approach the box cautiously and if you find any occupants inside, leave the box alone - try again next year. If box is vacant, you can remove the debris inside and replace them with 1" of dried leaves.

Additional Notes

A strong commitment not to disturb nesting owls is required. All native birds are protected by Federal Law, especially when nesting. If you decide that your tree needs tree work, or to be removed, and there are owls using your box, please wait until the fall to make any changes to the tree. Contact HOP for more info. Please contact a licensed wildlife hospital, the Hungry Owl Project, or your local Humane Society if you ever find an injured or orphaned owl.

Installation Instructions

For Installing in Trees

<p>For each box, you will need:</p> <p>Qty</p> <p>2 4 inch lag screws with washers</p> <p>or</p> <p>2 Cables or light chains</p> <p>1 3' wide metal flashing (flashing optional to wrap base of tree)</p>	<p>Tools:</p> <p>Screwdriver/Power Drill</p> <p>Ladder</p> <p>Tape Measure</p>
---	---

Tree installations can be tricky, we highly recommend having an additional set of hands to help you if possible. Please be very careful when climbing ladders and using tools!

1. Open top flap of box by removing eye screw.
2. Make sure box will be as level as possible. A slight lean forward is acceptable, but never lean box back. A box leaning backward makes it more difficult for juveniles to get out of the box. Feel free to attach a small block or wedge between box and tree to help keep box level if required.
3. **ATTACH WITH SCREWS:**
Affix box to tree with three with two lag screws with washers through back of box (this will not harm a healthy tree).
OR
ATTACH WITH CABLE/CHAIN:
Drill 4 holes in back wall of box, two near the top and two near the bottom. Attach a cable or light chain to the box through holes drilled in the back (both top and bottom). The cable or chain should be just loose enough to be worked up over the trunk's irregularities. You might need to tighten the cable or chain when the box is where you want it.
4. Place an inch or so of dried leaves in box.
5. Be sure to secure top flap with eye screws upon completion.
6. **OPTIONAL:** To further deter predators and pests from having access to box, affix 3' wide metal flashing to base of tree, 1' above the ground.