

Eastern Screech Owl

(Megascops asio)



Screech Owl

Instant ID

- A small red or gray owl up to 10 inches long with a wingspan up to 22 inches
- Males and females can be red or gray
- Spotted with lighter and darker markings which provide camouflage
- Has large yellow eyes in a ring of feathers called a facial disc
- Ear tufts (feathers which have nothing to do with hearing) are used for communication and camouflage
- Because of hollow bones, it only weighs up to 6 ounces

Native Niches

- Found in and around wooded habitats east of the Rocky Mountains
- Nests in tree cavities (holes)

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Favorite Foods

- Eats invertebrates (animals without backbones) such as katydids or grasshoppers
- Also eats small mammals, birds and reptiles

Critter Characteristics

- Call is a trilling whistle or whinny, not a scream or screech
- Has one ear higher than the other to improve hearing
- Gray morphs are more common than red
- Both morphs can be found in a single clutch (eggs laid by one female at one time)
- It is Florida's smallest owl

Population Protection

- It has to compete with invasive species, like European starlings, for nesting sites
- It will use appropriate nest boxes if provided

