

Utah Owl ID Cheat Sheet

Mexican Spotted Owl

Vocalizations

4-note location
series
contact

Visual

size - large
ears - no
eyes - dark
key field marks - spotted breast and barred belly

Great Horned Owl

Vocalizations

“who’s awake me too”

Visual

size - largest
ears - obvious, outside of head
eyes - yellow
key field marks - ear tufts, white bib, tawny

Barred Owl

Vocalizations

“who cooks for you, who cooks for you all”

Visual

size - large
ears - no
eyes - dark
key field marks - barred breast and streaked belly

Long-eared Owl

Vocalizations

single deep long breathy hoooo

Visual

size - medium
ears - long, “outside” of head
eyes - yellow
key field marks - ear tufts, freezes in “I’m just a stick” posture

Short-eared Owl

Vocalizations

emphatic, sneezy barked “kee-yow”

Visual

size - medium
ears - short, “inside” of head
eyes - yellow
key field marks - tawny, most diurnal, moth-like flight

Barn Owl

Vocalizations

raspy hiss

Visual

size - medium
ears - no
eyes - dark
key field marks - heart-shaped facial disk, lightest tawny plumage

Burrowing Owl

Vocalizations

rapid woodpecker-like "quick-quick-quick", mellow laughing "coo-hoo"

Visual

size - medium

ears - no

eyes - yellow

key field marks - long legs, on ground near burrow, very diurnal

Boreal Owl

Vocalizations

endlessly repeated "too-too-too-too-too-too" speeding up

Visual

size - medium

ears - no but squarish head

eyes - yellow

key field marks - bad dandruff, white facial disk outlined with black

Flammulated Owl

Vocalizations

single "hoot" or double "hoo-hoot" fairly low pitched

Visual

size - small

ears - very small outside

eyes - dark

key field marks - only small owl with dark eyes, rufous "V" on back

Western Screech-Owl

Vocalizations

hoots in bouncing ball rhythm

Visual

size - small

ears - distinct, outside

eyes - yellow

key field marks - small owl with conspicuous tufts, grey or brown

Northern Pygmy-Owl

Vocalizations

toy boat "toot toot" single or double

Visual

size - small

ears - no

eyes - yellow

key field marks - eyes on back of head, dark belly streaks, long barred tail; spotted head

Northern Saw-whet Owl

Vocalizations

fairly rapid monotonous too-too-too-too-too-too; up to 120x/minute

Visual

size - small

ears - no

eyes - yellow

key field marks - broad rufous belly streaks, slight streaky dander