

Endangered Species and Spaces

Home
Up
Table of Contents
Introduction
Classification Systems
Mammals
Amphibians and Reptiles
Freshwater Fishes
Invertebrates
Vascular Plants
Non-Vascular Plants
Plant Communities
Exotic Species
Protected Areas
Summary-Conclusions
Appendix

Birds
Next

Back

4.12 Western Screech-Owl *macfarlanei* sssp: *Otus kennicottii macfarlanei* (Brewster)

Order: **Strigiformes**
Family: **Strigidae**

Status

Global Rank: G5TQ
Provincial Rank: S2
COSEWIC: Indeterminate

Provincial Listing: **Red list**



Distinguishing Features

A small nocturnal owl with well developed ears tufts and yellow eyes. Plumage is rusty brown with prominent dark streaking on the upper and under parts. Abdomen and legs are a tawny colour. Total length 19-25 cm (Godfrey, 1986).

Distribution

Columbia Basin: Infrequent visitor to the dry, southern portions of the Columbia Basin. Not known to breed in the Basin.

British Columbia: The *macfarlanei* subspecies of the Western Screech-Owl is only known in Canada from the southern interior of British Columbia, north to Kamloops. Breeding has been documented only from the Southern Okanagan (Campbell et al. 1990). A recent intensive survey found only one site outside the Okanagan, along the Granby River in the Boundary region (Cannings 1997).

Global: Widely distributed and globally secure at the species level, this subspecies is sparsely and locally distributed in the western Great Basin from British Columbia to Nevada and northern California.

Habitat

In British Columbia, the *macfarlanei* subspecies of the Western Screech Owl is found year-round in deciduous riparian forests in the southern Okanagan Valley. There is an apparent association with riparian areas in open ponderosa pine and water birch woodland habitats similar to the low elevation, deciduous and bunchgrass habitats used in the dry interior of central Idaho (Cannings et al. In prep.).

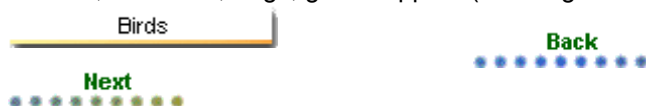
Threats

Population declines due to loss of habitat have occurred in the Okanagan Valley. Data from the rest of the subspecies distribution are lacking. Low elevation deciduous forests and riparian areas are rapidly disappearing in some areas due to agricultural demands and urban development. Also, the Western Screech Owl seems to be particularly susceptible to adverse weather conditions; severe winters cause a certain number of mortalities every year. Increased forest cutting could lead to a loss of essential habitat and nest cavities. (Cannings et al. In prep.).

Biology

The biology of the *macfarlanei* subspecies in British Columbia is not well known. Generally, Western Screech-Owls in British Columbia nest in natural tree cavities, woodpecker holes (e.g., Pileated Woodpecker and Northern Flicker), and nest boxes. Eggs can be found in Western Screech-Owl nests in British Columbia from mid March to late May, but most clutches have been observed in April. Clutches contain 1 - 5 eggs. The incubation period is unknown, but is thought to be similar to Eastern Screech-Owls at 3 - 4 weeks. Broods have been reported in British Columbia from late April to late August, but most are reported in May and early June. Fledging is expected in British Columbia 35 - 42 days after hatching (Cannings et al. In prep.).

The Western Screech Owl is generally nocturnal, feeding mostly on small mammals but occasionally consuming invertebrates, birds, amphibians, reptiles and fish. The foraging behaviour in British Columbia is largely unknown, but the diet includes Northern Flicker, crickets, caterpillars, small rodents, small fish, frogs, grasshoppers (Cannings et al. In prep.).



[[Home](#)] [[Up](#)] [[White throated Swift](#)] [[Great Blue Heron](#)] [[Short-eared Owl](#)] [[American Bittern](#)] [[Swaison's Hawk](#)] [[Bobolink](#)]
 [[Prairie Falcon](#)] [[Peregrine Falcon anatum subspecies](#)] [[Sandhill Crane](#)] [[Canyon Wren](#)] [[Western Grebe](#)]
 [[Western Screech-Owl macfarlanei](#)] [[Flammulated Owl](#)] [[Lewis' Woodpecker](#)] [[Williamson's Sapsucker nataliae](#)]
 [[Sharp-tailed Grouse](#)] [[Long-billed Curlew](#)] [[American Avocet](#)] [[Forster's Tern](#)] [[Bird References](#)]