

A NEST OF A WESTERN SCREECH OWL

Definition

A nest and its supporting structure that either (1) is currently occupied by a western screech owl to hold its eggs or offspring, or (2) is habitually occupied and still capable of holding eggs or offspring of a western screech owl.

Location

- Mainly in low-elevation (360-840 m) forests and riparian areas close to water (0-700 m elevation)
- Often in living or dead black cottonwood, Douglas-fir, water birch, or trembling aspen trees with >25 cm dbh and wildlife tree classes 2-6
- Usually 1-12 m off the ground

Features

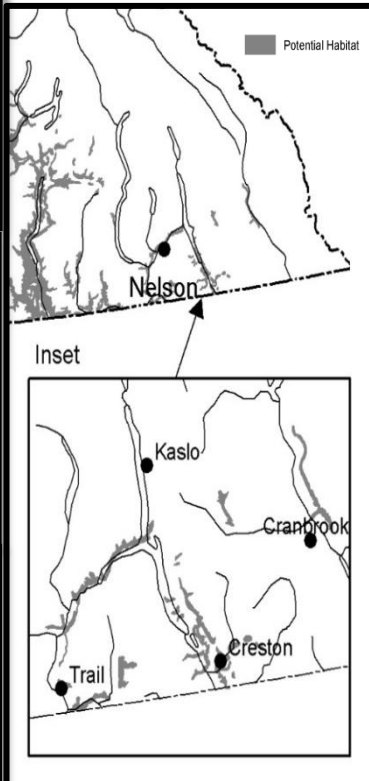
- Use natural cavities and abandoned woodpecker (primarily pileated woodpecker and northern flicker) cavities for nesting and roosting
- Entrance diameter: 7-9 cm
- Depth: 25-60 cm

Notes

- Present year round as resident species
- Designated as a Species at Risk under the *Forest and Range Practices Act* and is Red-listed in British Columbia.
- Designated as Endangered by COSEWIC.

Sensitive Timing

Courtship	Eggs Present	Young Present
Apr 1 – Apr 30	Apr 30 – Jul 31	May 31 – Aug 31



Photos top to bottom: Kevin Alexander, Laura Keene, Jared Hobbs



Similar features to a Western Screech Owl Nest

Woodpecker nest - how to distinguish:

- Pellets and prey remains at the base of the tree will indicate an owl species
- Woodpeckers leave white fecal sacs that are much smaller than pellets and do not have prey remnants. They may have insect exoskeletons.

Flammulated owl nest - how to distinguish:

- Flammulated owls don't always nest near riparian areas like western screech owls, but visual or auditory detection of the owl is required to identify the nest

Habitat	BEC	Variant
Ponderosa Pine	PP	dh1, dh2, xh1, xh2
Interior Douglas-fir	IDF	dk1, dk2, dk3, dm1, mw1, mw2, xh1, xh1a, irregular in xh2, xw
Interior Cedar – Hemlock	ICH	dw, mw2, irregular in xw

Information to Consider

- **Sensitive Timing: April 1 – August 31**
- Establish a windfirm forested retention area centered around the nest tree.
- Maintain forest connectivity between the retention patch and adjacent forested habitat.
- Ensure this corridor is as wide as possible to minimize edge effects and to provide additional security cover, perching, and hunting opportunities.
- Retain large-diameter black cottonwood and Douglas-fir, especially those with existing woodpecker cavities and in forested riparian areas
- During breeding season, consider adding a “quiet” buffer of an extra 100 m to the no disturbance buffer in which no unusual or sudden loud activities will occur (e.g., blasting, tree felling, chain saws, trucking, etc.).

Recommended disturbance buffers around a Western Screech Owl's nest, depending on existing disturbance and disturbance level of the proposed activity.

		Existing Exposure to Disturbance			
		NIL Isolated site, little or no prior access	LOW Undeveloped area with occasional human use	MODERATE Near secondary logging road or minor recreation site	HIGH Near primary road, major recreation site or human development
Disturbance Level of Proposed Activity	LOW Activities on foot. Small group, visual screening present. Livestock attractants. Examples: layout, cruising reconnaissance.	100-200m	1.5 x tree length	1.5 x tree length	1.5 x tree length
	MODERATE Light mechanized activities. Larger group/duration, no visual screening. Examples: spacing, planting, fence construction.	200-500m	100-200m	100-200m	1.5 x tree length
	HIGH Mechanized activities Examples: road construction, falling and yarding , landing sites.	200-500m	200-500m	200-500m	100-200m
	VERY HIGH Blasting, helicopter logging.	1000m +	1000m +	1000m +	1000m +