

Owls



And vultures



Most owls have huge heads, stocky bodies, soft feathers, short tails, and a reversible toe that can point either forward or backward. Owl's eyes face forward, like humans do. Most owl species are active at night, not in the daytime. Owls are Strigiformes, divided into two groups, Barn Owls, which have heart-shaped faces, and all other owls, which have round faces. Owls vocalize at a low frequency, which allowing their songs to travel long distances. Many owl species are nocturnal, but some owl species are diurnal, or crepuscular.

Owls spend much of their time hunting for food. Most are carnivores, eating small, rodent-like mammals, such as voles and mice, as well as frogs, lizards, snakes, fish, rabbits, birds, squirrels and even skunk! Some owls perch and pounce, perching until they see their prey and then gliding down. Other owls use quartering flight, searching for prey while flying. Some owls hover like a helicopter until ready to zoom in. Other owls run across the ground after their prey.

Owls sometimes hide their food, capturing prey and stuffing the food into a hiding spot—caching—in holes in trees, forks of tree branches, behind rocks, or in clumps of grass.

After hunting, owls return to a roost, generally alone, or near a nest during the breeding season. Owls are not great nest builders so they may use vacant nests in trees or on cliffs built by hawks, crows, magpies, or other birds, or nest in holes, called cavities or hollows, in trees. Some owls nest in the rafters of barns, in empty buildings or silos, or in cavities along cliffs, while others nest in underground tunnels that were dug by ground squirrels, prairie dogs, badgers, or other burrowing animals or use their feet and bills to dig burrows or make simple nests by scraping a shallow bowl on the ground.



Vultures play an important role in our ecosystem eating dead animals, removing them from roadsides, reducing the number of rotten, smelly carcasses, as well as the spread of diseases. They find carcasses more quickly than scavengers that walk. Vultures feed in groups, disposing of the dead animal quickly, keeping bacteria, parasites, and other disease-causing organisms from growing and entering the ecosystem. Vultures don't get sick like opossum or raccoon from eating a diseased minimizing disease spread.

Vultures have adaptations for scavenging:- diverse microbiome with acids and bacteria to tolerate toxins, hooked beak, long broad wings, excellent senses of smell and sight and bald heads

Turkey Vultures average 4 pounds with a 6' wingspan, silver or gray underneath, holding their wings in a "V" shape, appearing to wobble as they soar.

Black Vultures average 4 pounds with a 5' wingspan, with wings appearing to have white patches at the ends, holding their wings horizontally, and flapping more than Turkey Vultures.



Varied menus to *She'll Be Coming Around the Mountain*

I'll be flying round the forest
seeking prey.
I'm an owl rarely venturing by day.
When the vulture's carcass seek,
During each day of the week,
I look for a tasty creature I can
slay!



Avian antics

Can you find an owl nest in a cavity in a tree, or a vulture nest in an abandoned nest?

Find some sticks and grass and arrange them in a paper bowl of hollow log to make a nest.

What snack foods can you use to make an owl buffet?



VERONICA THE VULTURE



Veronica
finds lots
of “V”
friends!

A fun book for kids to learn the letter 'v' through Veronica's vast adventures!