

Sky Hunters Environmental Education

Silent Hunters – Owl Biology lecture Vocabulary

Adaptation - an inherited change in a living thing that better fits it for survival in its environment.

Asymmetrical – Not symmetrical, as in one ear set higher on one side of an owl's head than the other ear.

Asynchronous Hatching – Not synchronous, or not all young hatching at the same time.

Behavior – the way an animal acts, often in response to something in its environment; an inherited pattern of automatic responses (such as courtship or nesting).

Binocular vision – a way of seeing using both eyes to look straight ahead resulting in a three-dimensional view produced by overlap of vision.

Bird of prey – a predatory bird that uses its strong feet and sharp talons to catch and carry prey, has a hooked bill to kill and tear prey, and eats other animals – also called a Raptor.

Bill – the beak of a bird, used for food gathering, preening, nest building, and defense of a territory. Adapted to the type of bird; example - the hooked bill of a bird of prey that is adapted for tearing flesh, interchangeable with Beak.

Camouflage – concealment by blending in with the background.

Carnivore – a flesh-eating animal, usually a predator.

Cere – a fleshy featherless area around the nostrils of a raptor.

Clutch – the eggs laid by a female bird in one nesting period.

Cones – cells in the eye that work best in strong light and are used to see color and form sharp images.

Convergent evolution – when two unrelated animal groups fill the same roll, or niche, in an environment and evolve similar adaptations.

Crepuscular – active during twilight hours; in the early morning and early evening.

Depth perception – the ability to see an object and at the same time determine how far away it is.

Diurnal – active by day and sleeping at night.

Divergent evolution – where closely related species, or animal groups, develop such distinct physical and behavior differences that their true genetic affinities are not at all obvious.

Ear conch -

Ear Tufts – a pair of movable clusters of feathers on the head of some owl species that resemble ears in position and shape.

Ecosystem (short for ecological system) - an ecological community together with its physical environment, considered as a unit. All ecosystems are "open" systems in the sense that energy and matter are transferred in and out. An example: The Earth as a single ecosystem constantly converts solar energy into myriad organic products, and has increased in biological complexity over time.

Environment – the total of all the factors (such as temperature, humidity, light, rainfall and other living things) that affect a plant or an animal.

Extinct – no longer existing.

Facial Disks – the two circles of short, specialized feathers that surround an owl's eyes. The facial disk channels light and sound into the owl's eyes and ears.

Field of vision – all that can be seen at one time, as when looking through binoculars.

Fledgling – a young bird that has left the nest and is still dependent on the parent birds.

Habitat – the area or type of environment where a plant or an animal naturally live or occur.

Hatching – to emerge from, or break out of the egg.

Migrate – to move from one area or climate to another for feeding or breeding.

Mob – to pester a predator by swooping at it and making a great deal of noise, usually done by a mixed flock of small birds with the intent to drive the predator away.

Monocular vision – vision resulting when only one eye is used to see an object, common in non-raptors with eyes on the sides of their heads.

Molt – the process of shedding feathers and growing new ones.

Nictitating membrane – inner or third eyelid in birds, reptiles, and some mammals that helps to keep the eye moist and clean. To nictitate means to wink.

Nocturnal – active at night and asleep during the day.

Pellet – a round mass of tightly packed, indigestible material (such as fur, feathers and bones) formed in the stomach of many different kinds of birds and regurgitated several hours after eating.

Perch hunting – detecting prey from a perch and then becoming airborne to catch it. Perch and pounce hunting style.

Plumage – all the feathers that cover a birds' body.

Predator – an animal that hunts, kills, and eats other animals.

Preening – The grooming action of a bird in which individual feathers are drawn through the bill to restore their neatness and waterproofing. The bill is rubbed across the oil (uropygial) gland, which is located on the top region of the tail, and supplies waterproofing oil for the feathers.

Prey – an animal that is hunted, killed, and eaten by other animals.

Primaries – The long flight feathers on the tip of a wing originating from the wrist.

Raptor – a predatory bird that uses strong feet and sharp talon to catch and carry prey, has a hooked bill to kill and tear prey, and is carnivorous by nature.

Resident – an animal that stays in the same area year round without migrating.

Rods – The highly light sensitive cells in the eyes.

Rousing – the cleansing action of a bird in which all contour feathers are elevated, wings and tail are held loosely, and the bird vigorously shakes itself.

Roost – to settle for rest or sleep; a place where birds rest or sleep.

Sclerotic ring – bony ring that protects most of the owl's eye.

Stereo hearing – three-dimensional hearing.

Talon – the long, sharp, curved claw of a bird of prey.

Territory – an area used for hunting or nesting that is defended by an animal.

Typical Owls – All owls, other than the Barn owl, in the order Strigiformes.

Wingspan – the distance from the tip of one outstretched wing to the tip of the other outstretched wing.