

When do owls lay their eggs? What kind of owls are native to this area?

We have several species of owl that are native to this area and that occur in open space.

The Great Horned Owl (*Bubo virginianus*) nests in January or February when the males and females can often be heard hooting to each other. Normally, two to four eggs are laid and incubated by the female only for 26-35 days.

The Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*) can breed any time during the year, depending on food supply. In a good year, a pair may breed twice. 3 to 6 eggs are laid (occasionally up to 12) at 2 day intervals and are incubated for 30 to 34 days.

The Western Screech Owl (*Megascops kennecottii*) is single brooded, but may re-nest if first clutch is lost. Pairs will often reuse nest sites in consecutive years.

The Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia*) nests in late March or April. Burrowing Owls are usually monogamous but occasionally a male will have 2 mates. 6 to 9 (sometimes up to 12) white eggs are laid a day apart, which are incubated for 28-30 days by the female only.

Owl species which may be in the area but which I do not know are in Open Space are:

The Flammulated Owl (*Otus flammeolus*) breeds in spring. 2-4 white, rounded eggs are laid directly on the dry material on the bottom of the nest cavity. Incubation lasts 3-4 weeks.

The Northern Pygmy Owl (*Glaucidium californicum*) Eggs are laid between April and June, with clutch size ranging from 3 to 7, the incubation period is about 29 days.

The Spotted Owl (*Strix occidentalis*) breeds from March to September. Successful breeding is strongly correlated to the availability of prey, and not all pairs breed every year. Clutch size ranges from 2 to 4 eggs, but averages 2 to 3 eggs. Eggs are laid every 3 to 4 days, usually in April; the incubation period is about 28 to 32 days. Spotted Owls may not defend their eggs and young from predators, watching nearby as the nest is destroyed.

The Long Eared Owl (*Asio otus*) nests from mid March through May. Clutch sizes range from 3 to 8 eggs, incubation lasts 25 to 30 days.

The Short Eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*) often lays more than one clutch of eggs a year (they nest on the ground and predation is high) clutch sizes average 5 to 7 eggs, with large clutches laid during years of high food abundance.

The Northern Saw-whet Owl (*Aegolius acadicus*) breeds in late-March and April, nesting occurs between March and July. Clutch sizes range from 3 to 7 eggs the incubation period is 21 to 28 days.

Ranger Richard E. Bicknell 650 617 3100 ext 1696