

Great Horned Owls

Hoo, hoo-oo, hoo, hoo!
A great horned owl hoots in the night. Maybe it is hunting for a rabbit to eat.

The great horned owl is one of the largest owls of North America. Great horned owls have two tufts of feathers on their heads. The feathers look like large ears, or like horns. That is why the birds are called great horned owls.



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God made great horned owls' eyes to see well at night. Owls can also hear very well. When they hear an animal moving, they can swoop down and grab it with their strong grasping feet and claws. God made their wing feathers in a special way that helps them to fly without making any noise. The animals they hunt cannot hear them coming.

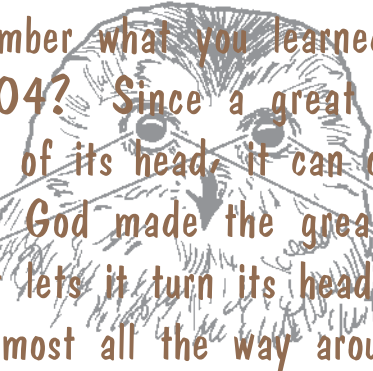
They eat many small mammals—rabbits, squirrels, mice, skunks, and others. Sometimes they eat birds too.

Great horned owls use their hooked bills to tear off pieces of meat. Because they do not have teeth, they must swallow the meat whole. The owl's body cannot use the

Lesson 3

fur, bones, and feathers of the animals they eat. It makes these parts into little balls and coughs them up. If you ever find an owl's nest, you will likely see these little balls on the ground around the nest.

Do you remember what you learned about owls' eyes in LightUnit 204? Since a great horned owl's eyes are in the front of its head, it can only see what is in front of it. So God made the great horned owl in a special way that lets it turn its head very far. It can turn its head almost all the way around to see what is behind it! Can you do that?



Fill in the blanks.

1. Great horned owls have tufts of _____ on their heads that look like horns.
2. Great horned owls eat small _____ and birds.
3. Great horned owls have _____ bills and _____ feet.
4. Great horned owls cough up little balls made of the fur, _____, and feathers of the animals they eat.



Look up *great horned owl* in your field guide. Use the guide to help you do these activities.

5. About how long are great horned owls?

△ 6. Do great horned owls live in your area?

☆ 7. Great horned owls are sometimes called _____ owls.



Turn to the back of your LightUnit and use colored pencils to color the picture of the great horned owl.



Lesson 4

Mallard

WE REMEMBER



Write the letter of the correct answer.

1. The calls *coo-ah, coo, coo, coo*.

- a. great horned owl b. mourning dove

2. The calls *hoo, hoo-oo, hoo, hoo*.

- a. great horned owl b. mourning dove

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3. The eats small mammals and birds.
a. great horned owl b. mourning dove
4. The eats seeds.
a. great horned owl b. mourning dove



Answer this question with a complete sentence.

5. Why do mourning doves swallow small stones?

Mallards

Have you seen a farmer's white ducks swimming in a pond? Have you heard their loud quacks? Mallards are wild ducks, cousins of the farm ducks you may have seen.

Mallards are prettier than farm ducks. A male



mallard has a beautiful green head, with a white ring around the neck. Its back and wings are grayish-brown. A female mallard is brown. Both the male and female have a bright blue patch on their wings.

Mallards live near ponds, swamps, or rivers. They usually hide their nests in tall dead weeds along the water's edge.

Mallards eat seeds, water insects, and small water animals. To eat, mallards dip down—heads in the water, tails in the air. They use their bills to pick up seeds from the mud at the bottom of the water.

Do you remember that all birds molt at least once a year? Male mallards molt twice. In the summer, they lose their lovely bright feathers and grow brown feathers. Then they look almost like female mallards. In a few months, they molt again. They lose the brown feathers and grow bright ones.

But for a few weeks in the summer, while they are molting, they cannot fly. When they molt, they lose the long strong feathers that help them fly. While they wait for the feathers to grow, they must hide. If an enemy would find them, the mallards would not be able to fly away. The dull brown feathers help them hide.



Circle the correct answer.

6. Mallards belong to the **sparrow, duck** family.
7. Mallards have webbed **swimming, perching** feet.

Lesson 4



Answer these questions.

- △ 8. Why do you think the female mallard is not as brightly colored as the male?

- _ 9. What do we mean when we say a bird molts?



Look up *mallard* in your field guide. Use the guide to help you answer these questions.

- _ 10. Look carefully at the picture of the male mallard. Can you tell why this duck is sometimes called the *curly-tail*?

11. About how long is a mallard?



Turn to the back of your LightUnit and use colored pencils to color the mallards.

