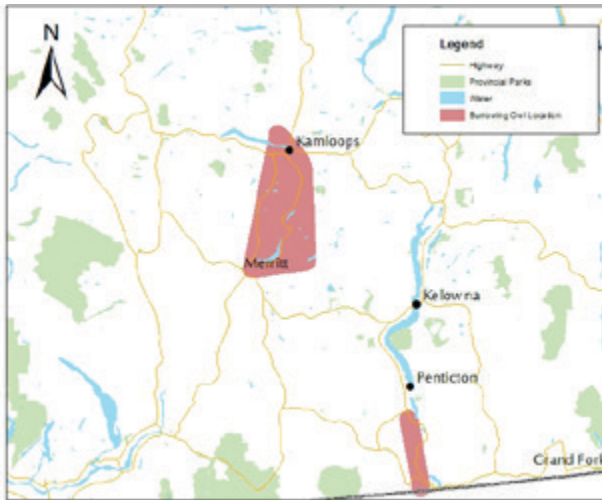


DESCRIPTION

- » Small, ground-dwelling owl (23–28 cm)
- » Round head lacking ear tufts, white chin stripe
- » Yellow eyes
- » Body brown with pale/white bars and spots
- » Long legs, stubby tail, large wings



DISTRIBUTION AND HABITAT



- » Presently confined to areas within the Thompson-Okanagan Plateau
- » Elevation 335 – 1,250 m
- » Important habitat includes short grass and sparsely vegetated areas with available burrows located near densely vegetated areas to supply adequate prey
- » Associated with grasslands and semi-arid desert landscapes

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU SEE AN OWL OR BURROW

- » Keep your distance. Retreat at least **50 METRES** from the owl/burrow.
- » Do not approach a natural or artificial burrow. This buffer is especially important during nesting season which is **APRIL 1ST TO SEPTEMBER 1ST**.
- » Leave the area and contact the Burrowing Owl Conservation Society of British Columbia at bocsbc@gmail.com to report date, time and location of observation.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Please visit the Burrowing Owl Conservation Society of British Columbia at: <https://www.burrowingowlbc.org/> or contact bocsbc@gmail.com



REFERENCES

- » British Columbia Conservation Data Centre
- » British Columbia Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection. 2004. Accounts and Measures for Managing Identified Wildlife. Version 2004. Biodiversity Branch, Identified Wildlife Management Strategy, Victoria, B.C. <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/documents/identified/iwABNSB10010.pdf>

PHOTO CREDITS

Cover: Burrowing Owls on fence by Lauren Meads
Inside gate: Burrowing Owl by Lauren Meads
Inside left: Burrowing Owl by Lauren Meads
Inside centre: Artificial burrows by FLNRORD, Juveniles by artificial burrow by Lauren Meads
Inside right: Burrowing owls before release by FLNRORD
Back: Burrowing owls by FLNRORD

Burrowing Owl

Athene cunicularia



CONSERVATION STATUS

B.C. LIST: Red

COSEWIC: Endangered (April 2017)



Ministry of
Forests, Lands, Natural
Resource Operations
and Rural Development

DIET

- » Prey mostly on insects and small mammals
- » During the day, prey on insects near the burrows
- » At night forage for small mammals

THREATS

- » Decline in suitable grassland habitat due to agricultural and urban development.
- » Decline in natural burrows available due to persecution of burrowing mammals.
- » Insecticide and rodenticide use
- » Increased predation—due to increase in the abundance of coyote and avian predation; Red-tailed Hawks and other raptors.
- » Poaching or accidental shooting (mistaken for ground squirrels)
- » Vehicle collisions



BURROWING OWL CONSERVATION SOCIETY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

The Burrowing Owl Conservation Society of BC is an environmental organization working to restore a self-sustaining population of burrowing owls to the southern interior grasslands of B.C.



WHAT WE DO:

- » **RAISE** and care for owls by breeding populations and raising them in facilities for release
- » **CREATE** habitat by constructing artificial burrows for the released owls
- » **PROMOTE** grassland biodiversity – promote habitat enhancement activities and develop education programs for the public
- » **INSPIRE** conservation



FUN FACTS

- » Burrowing owls do not dig their own burrows but occupy burrows made by mammals (*i.e. badger, coyote, marmot*)
- » Burrowing owls line their nesting burrows with cow chips to attract insects (for eating). This is also believed to reduce predation by masking their scent to avoid detection



MIGRATORY CYCLE

- » April to May: Return to breeding areas
- » late-April to late-May: Egg laying begins
- » mid-May to late-June: Hatching occurs
- » mid-July: Young emerge from nest
- » September and October: Migration occurs

OWL AND HUMAN ACTIVITIES

Humans can pose a threat to the survival and reproduction success of burrowing owls by getting too close to owls and their burrows. Stay at least 50 m away from owls and burrows. If you are too close:



- » The owls may abandon their nests, especially early in the nesting season during territorial establishment, courtship, and incubation
- » The young can be distracted and become easy targets for aerial predators
- » The adults waste energy and hunting time while in defense-mode
- » The adults may fly away from the nests, leaving themselves and young owls at risk of predation

WILDLIFE ACT

Burrowing owls are listed as an endangered species under the *Wildlife Act*. Burrowing owl nests are protected year-round under Section 34 of the *Wildlife Act*.

“MOLESTATION” IS AN OFFENCE UNDER BRITISH COLUMBIA’S *Wildlife Act*.

Activities near nests may be considered molestation if they result in birds abandoning their nests!