

Western Screech Owl

(*Megascops kennicottii*)

Screech owls are well known for their tolerance of humans, adaptability to semi-urban landscapes, and willingness to nest in boxes. In fact, they often take over nest boxes intended for American kestrels. Though screech owl populations are not immediately threatened, they suffer from loss of habitat and are susceptible to severe decreases, especially in suburban and urban environments. With their intense, bright eyes, strange “bouncing ball” calls, and nocturnal hunting habits, these owls are highly charismatic and can provide a fascinating study of unique avian habits for bird enthusiasts. Owls also provide important environmental services in their roles as rodent predators.



HABITAT Western screech owls of the Sonoran Desert prefer mesquite riparian zones, nesting often in woodpecker holes in saguaro cactus. They are common in Arizona suburbs with at least half-acre house lots and natural vegetation.

BOX MOUNTING Boxes should be placed at least 10 feet high, though heights of 12 to 20 feet may prove most successful.

NESTING FACTS Courtship begins for screech owls as early as January and February, when male owls begin calling near their nest sites. Nests may be occupied by mid-March with fledglings present by mid-April. Peak breeding occurs late April through late May. Nests may be occupied into August. Three to five eggs are incubated for 33 or 34 days. Owlets may be observed peering out of the nest hole about ten days prior to fledging. Screech owls will protect their nests by “dive-bombing” humans, so box-mounting sites should be carefully considered.

Nest Box Specs

HOLE 3" diameter
DEPTH 13"
FLOOR 7 1/2" x 8"
OTHER hinged top for easy, safe monitoring



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