

Spotted Owl (*Strix occidentalis*)

Field Marks:

- Large Owls with rounded heads
- No ear tufts
- Dark eyes
- Length: 18-19in, Wingspan: 40in
- Large, white, oval spots against a dark brown chest.
- Mexican Spotted Owl has a paler facial disk
- Pale markings that form an x between the eyes

Breeding Range:

The Mexican Spotted Owl is found year-round from Colorado all the way through Central America. The Northern Spotted Owl has its range on the Pacific Northwest with the California Spotted Owl with a range further south of the Northern Spotted Owl.

Wintering Range:

Non-migratory

Habitat Preferences:

Spotted Owls generally prefer mature forests with highly diversified vegetation. The Mexican Spotted Owl specifically inhabits mixed-coniferous forests in addition to canyons with little canopy cover that have little to no human disturbance.

Nesting:

A nesting site in a dense forested area is chosen by a male and altered by the female to incorporate a shallow depression and a few feathers. Clutches for Spotted Owls average 1-4 eggs that are incubated for 28-32 days.

Feeding:

Spotted Owls hunt by silently perching on branches before swooping down and catching prey in their talons. The prey of Spotted Owls is dependent upon their subspecies and range. While flying squirrels and woodrats are the dominant prey of the Northern and California Spotted Owl, the Mexican Spotted Owl relies upon mice, voles, in addition to small birds and bats.

Conservation Status:

All three subspecies face significant threats due to habitat loss and have suffered population declines in response to logging, degradation, and agricultural practices. Additional threats include Barred Owl competition as they have migrated into the northern subspecies territory. The Northern Spotted Owl is listed under the Endangered Species Act as threatened.