

## Instructions for Adding an Owl Component to Nightjar Surveys

Many owl monitoring protocols are implemented in late winter or early spring in order to target resident breeding owls. Programs in most Canadian provinces plus Minnesota, Maine and Connecticut enlist volunteers in March and April. Some programs use playbacks to elicit owl responses while others do not. In Pennsylvania, owl monitoring routes using playbacks to target Northern Saw-whet owls have been conducted in June, and these surveys also detected Whip-poor-wills.

This project investigates the possibility of adding an owl monitoring component to nightjar surveys. Owl surveys have proven to be wildly popular in some states. In Maine, for example, the demand for owl monitoring routes far exceeds the number of available routes. At any given time there are more than 80 people on the waiting list for Maine owl monitoring routes. People who are enthusiastic about monitoring owls in winter are likely going to be equally enthusiastic about owl (and nightjar) monitoring in the spring. Expanding the opportunities for these people to contribute to wildlife conservation is a great way to keep them interested, and maximizes the efficiency of volunteer recruitment.

You will need a CD player or MP3 player with speakers to participate, as well as a copy of the 20-second Northern Saw-whet Owl call (either digital or on CD). The call can be downloaded from the Maine Audubon website ([www.maineaudubon.org](http://www.maineaudubon.org)), follow the Nightjar link, or it is also Track 4 of the Maine Owl Monitoring Program 2007 CD. For a copy of the CD, e-mail [sgallo@maineaudubon.org](mailto:sgallo@maineaudubon.org). Because players vary in their volume, it is important to test your player to see what standards it meets. Please see the "Test Your CD Player" handout for more details about how to test your player. The player should be tested prior to the survey.

The Maine Owl Monitoring Program 2007 CD also has recordings of 9 owl species as well as 6 other possible nightbirds you might hear (including both whip-poor-will and common nighthawk). The Nightbird Narrative follows the CD, and has more detailed information about both the species calls and their habits and life history. If you need a copy of the Nightbird Narrative, e-mail [sgallo@maineaudubon.org](mailto:sgallo@maineaudubon.org).

Nightjar surveys with the added owl component should be conducted during the times and dates outlined in the Nightjar Survey Instructions. If you need a copy of those, please e-mail Pam Hunt at [phunt@nhadubon.org](mailto:phunt@nhadubon.org).

Follow the directions for the Nightjar Surveys, and spend three minutes at the survey point listening passively for all target nightbirds (see the Owl Component datasheet for the list of targeted owl species). At minute 3 of the survey, play 20 seconds of Northern Saw-whet calls (Track 4 of MOMP survey CD). Note that if you are using the digital MP3 file from the Maine Audubon website, it is six minutes long and the 20 second owl call is embedded in the file at minute three. Continue to listen for and write down all nightbirds you hear for the next three minutes, following the protocol outlined in the survey instructions and remembering to use one line on the datasheet per bird heard (or seen). Please make a note somewhere on the Nightjar Survey Form that you have added the owl component. If two individuals are conducting the nightjar survey, then be sure to fill out a second Owl Component datasheet.

Questions? Call Susan Gallo at Maine Audubon, (207)781-6180 ext. 216 or [sgallo@maineaudubon.org](mailto:sgallo@maineaudubon.org).

## Owl Component Information

Please attach this form to the Nightjar Survey Form, and return to your state coordinator or Pamela Hunt, Audubon Society of NH, 3 Silk Farm Road, Concord, NH 03301, phunt@nhaudubon.org

Nightbird Route (name or #): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Observer: \_\_\_\_\_

### Playback Test:

Player used in other owl survey

(list route name and year: \_\_\_\_\_)

New Player (fill in additional information)

Tape or CD (circle one)

Volume: \_\_\_\_\_

Brand/Model (if known): \_\_\_\_\_

Power/Wattage (if known): \_\_\_\_\_

Audible at (circle all that apply):  1/10 mile       2/10 mile       3/10 mile

### Key for Owl Species:

Barred Owl=BARR

Barn Owl=BNOW

Boreal Owl=BOOW

Chuck-will's-widow= CWW

Common Nighthawk=CONI

Eastern Screech-owl=EASO

Great Horned Owl=GHOW

Long-eared Owl=LEOW

Northern Saw-whet Owl=NSWO

Short-eared Owl=SEOW

Whip-poor-will=WPWI