



Position Description: Ontario Owl Survey Participant (volunteer)

Survey Summary: For a quick synopsis, participants are assigned a roadside route and are asked to conduct a standardized survey annually on a single night in April. Surveys take place after dark and occur on isolated roads. Participants use a broadcast call technique to elicit owl responses.

Purpose: The goals and objectives of the Ontario Owl Survey are to monitor nocturnal owls that reside in our forests, particularly the boreal forest and the large forest tracts in Central Ontario. One of the goals is to monitor owl populations in Ontario to determine whether owls are being affected by logging practices. The four main target species are Great Grey Owl, Barred Owl, Boreal Owl and Northern Saw-whet Owl.

Location: Predetermined routes along roads lined with forests in northern and central Ontario. We have considerable coverage in these areas and we have no plans on creating new routes. Further, the conditions in the remaining portions of Ontario (south western and south eastern) do not meet the survey needs and we do not survey these areas

Key Responsibilities:

- Register to survey and confirm your annual participation.
- Annual review of survey protocol and knowledge of the calls of Ontario breeding owls as well as Ruffed Grouse, Common Snipe and American Woodcock.
- Visit route in advance of the survey and ensure access (often completed during daytime on the survey evening).
- Survey following the standard protocol, ensuring a minimum of ten pre-determined stops are visited.
- Collect data at each stop following the standardized data form.
- Mail data to Birds Canada or enter it online.
- Be available to answer any questions regarding the data you collect by email or phone (if needed).
- Assist in route adjustment or the collection of stop information (if needed).

Reports to Kathy Jones, Volunteer Manager,
volunteer@birdscanada.org, 888-448-2473 ext. 124

P.O. Box 160, 115 Front Road
Port Rowan, Ontario Canada N0E 1M0

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The Length of Appointment: Surveyors are asked to participate for as many years as possible. Many participants create traditional events surrounding their owl surveys making them special annual outings that they conduct with family and friends. If volunteers do not provide data for two seasons they will be removed from the active participant's list and their routes will be reassigned.

Time Commitment: About 10 hours annually with more time needed as you learn the program. This includes review of protocol and CDs, map review, daytime route check, night time survey (approximately 2-5 hours) and data submission (by mail or online).

Qualifications: Must be willing and able to survey at night, must have good hearing, must know or be able to learn the species calls.

Support: Bird Studies Canada will provide a training booklet, training CD, broadcast CD (MP3 versions are available online), digital maps and coordinates, and data forms. YouTube training webinars are available and participants can contact the Volunteer Manager if they have questions or concerns.

Birds Canada stores the data collected, analyses it annually, shared it with program supporters and makes it available online (upon request and approval). Birds Canada reports on the data via the annual newsletter, OMNRF report and periodically produces summary reports.

Birds Canada can provide a charitable tax receipt equivalent to volunteer expenses using the Birds Canada volunteer support protocol.

Age Requirement: None but a driver is needed to survey.

Dress Code: Dress appropriately for winter conditions in remote northern areas. Wearing a high visibility reflective safety vest is recommended.

Risks and Safety Concerns: Potential participants should also be aware that surveys occur along remote roadsides in less than ideal road conditions – this may impact their decision to participate. On some routes a four-wheel drive is required. The most common issues seen are vehicle failure often due to overuse of battery or safety concerns caused by excessive snow on road shoulders and/or poor road conditions (water, mud, snow, washouts).

Equipment Needed/Other Concerns: A vehicle is needed to conduct owl surveys. Participants will be asked to take a survey partner, cover their transportation, and will need a broadcast unit to survey (basically a set of speakers and something that plays a CD or an MP3 file). A flashlight, clipboard and a writing instrument is needed. While a GPS is not required they are helpful.



Additional resources & how to register.

General: www.birdscanada.org/volunteer/onowls

Survey Map (red dots are available):

https://drive.google.com/open?id=1tqS7m32_zlxsht1RwcPxs53rNMjyUQsC&usp=sharing

Please keep in mind that this is our most popular survey, there is a waiting list in some regions and the readily accessible routes tend to be adopted very quickly. But, there is annual turnover and, while we cannot guarantee that you will be provided with your ideal route, there will be routes for you to consider particularly in Northern Ontario.

Request a survey route: <http://eepurl.com/deQmpz>

I recommend that you review the website and when you are certain you want to participate look and see if there is a route readily available where you are willing to travel (**red dots only**). Once you have a couple of tentative route choices complete the wait list form providing a full mailing address and identifying your preferred survey area and/or the distance you are willing to travel. **Wait list members always get first option on all routes available**, they also receive the newsletter, regular program updates and are invited to attend any of the webinars we plan.

Volunteer Portal: www.birdscanada.org/birdmon/onowls (for registered participants).

Owl Route Map (accurate March 1, 2020 please check the map to see available routes)

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