

Northern Pygmy-Owl

(*Glaucidium gnoma*)

WHAT TO LOOK FOR:

Appearance:

A very small owl; males and females are similar but the female is larger; grayish-brown head, wings, upperparts, and tail in the interior West; white spots on the head, neck, upperparts, and wings; round head lacks ear tufts; white brow stripes; yellow eyes; hooked bill is grayish-yellow or horn-colored; black, false eye-spots on the nape of the neck; relatively long, barred tail; white underparts are streaked with brown; yellow-gray feet.

Measurements:

Overall length = 6.5 – 7.5”
Wingspan = 12 – 15”
Weight = 2.5 oz. (70 g)

Voice:

Song is a repetitious, low, single or double “toot”, given at 1- to 2-second intervals. Call is a high-pitched, rattled or trilled “tsisisisisis”.



Photo by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Similar Species:

The Boreal Owl is larger, has a light gray facial disk, and lacks barring on the tail and eye-spots on the nape. The Northern Saw-whet Owl has a shorter tail, and lacks barring on the tail and eye-spots on the nape.

WHERE TO FIND:

A year-round resident in Wyoming, although its abundance is unknown. Inhabits coniferous and mixed coniferous/deciduous forests with scattered openings. Nests in a cavity in a dead conifer or aspen.

BEST TIME FOR OBSERVATIONS:

One of the few owls that is both nocturnal and diurnal. Can be secretive and perches or roosts in thickets to escape from predators. Males may perch on the tallest tree to defend their territory. It is a fierce predator of small mammals, birds, and insects. Can be seen hunting from dawn to dusk, especially near twilight.

STATUS:

Classified as a Species of Greatest Conservation Need in Wyoming with a Native Species Status (NSS) of 4 due to population status and trends that are unknown but expected to be stable, and habitat that is restricted in distribution and vulnerable to loss.

