

Citizen Science Guide:

Eastern vs. Western Screech Owls

Eastern and Western Screech Owls are closely related Screech Owl species with differing ranges. Despite range differences, both species can be found in some part of Montana (see Guide to Screech Owls). To further distinguish these species, this guide will go over physical and vocal differences between the two.

Similarities between the two species include yellow eyes, round heads, brown, grey, and reddish-brown coloration mimicking tree bark, and ear tufts meant for daytime camouflage.

The species range from 7-10 inches tall with a wingspan of 18-24 inches.

Eastern Screech Owl

Megascops asio



Vocals:

- Descending series of whines

Physical:

- Paler Beak: yellow-green or yellow-white
- Reddish-Brown coloration more common
- Wider dark bars on breast

Western Screech Owl

Megascops kennicotti



Vocals:

- Accelerating series of hoots

Physical:

- Darker Beak: grey to black
- Grey and brown morphs more common
- Narrower dark bars on breast