

Great Horned Owls

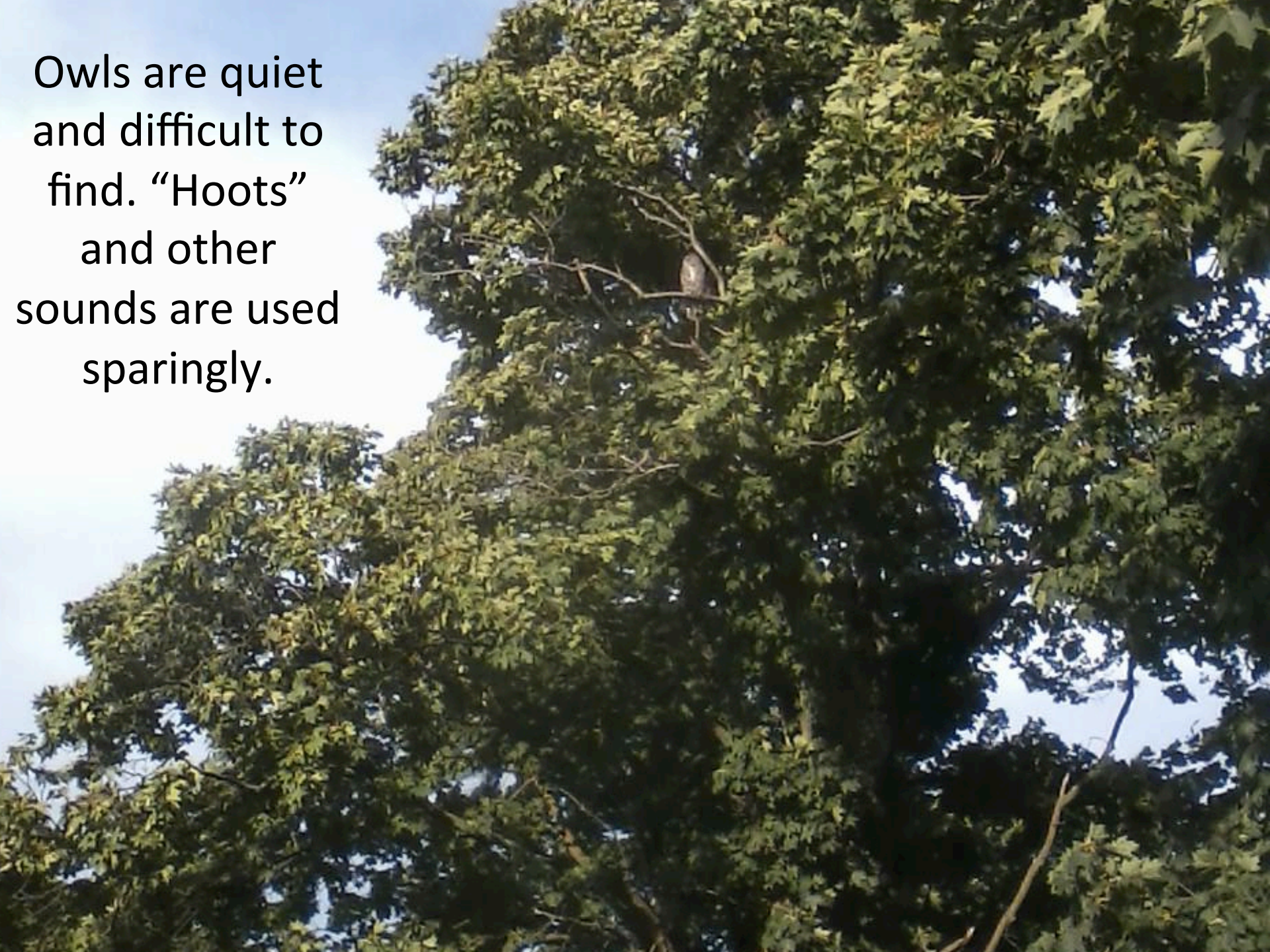


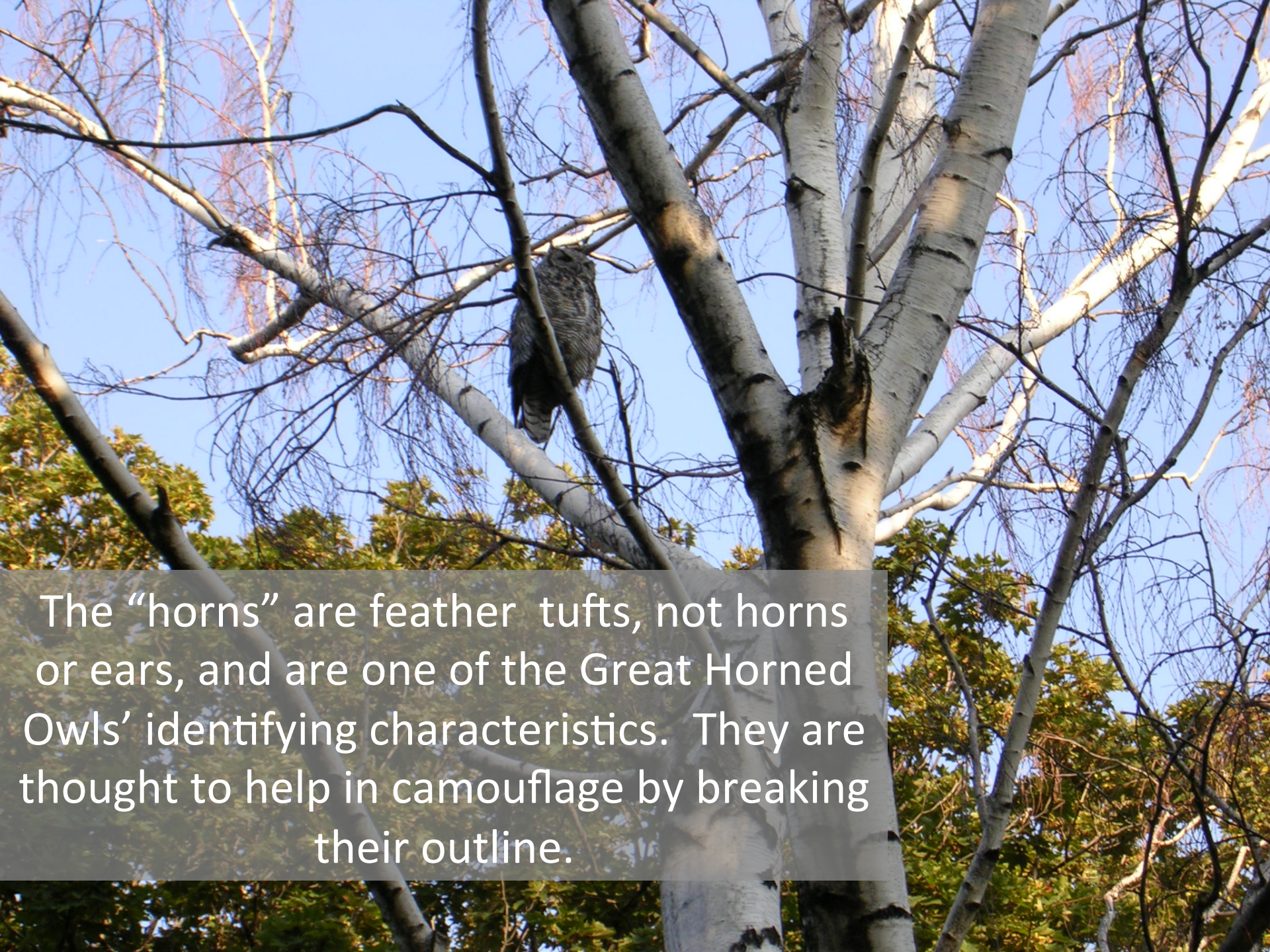
Two Great Horned Owls
Milton Freewater, Oregon 2012
Joyce and Duane Plyter

Two Great Horned Owls

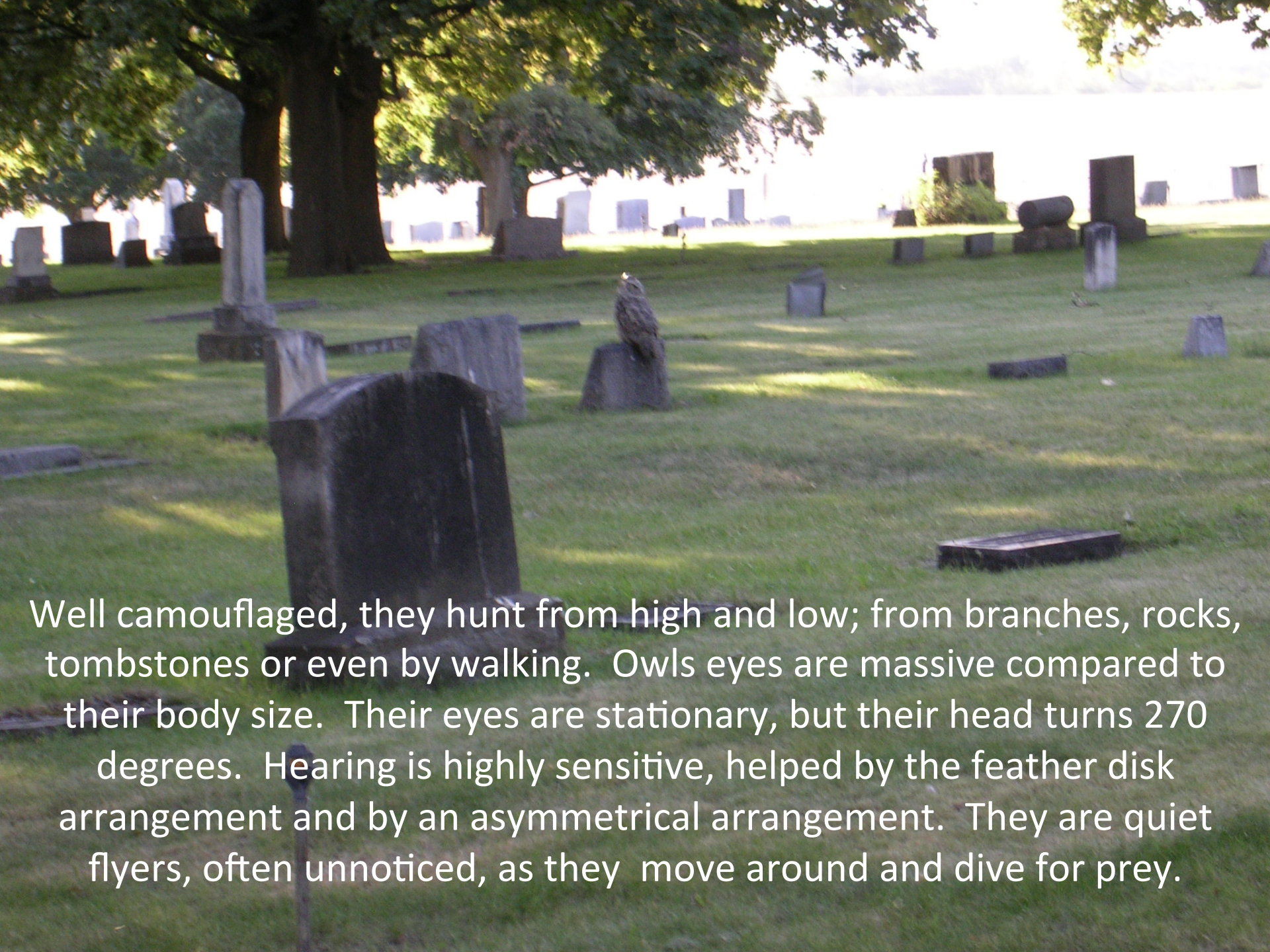
Owls are nocturnal birds of prey, or raptors, with strong talons and beaks. The Great Horned Owl, or Tiger Owl, is a large owl native to the Americas.

Owls are quiet
and difficult to
find. “Hoots”
and other
sounds are used
sparingly.





The “horns” are feather tufts, not horns or ears, and are one of the Great Horned Owls’ identifying characteristics. They are thought to help in camouflage by breaking their outline.



Well camouflaged, they hunt from high and low; from branches, rocks, tombstones or even by walking. Owls eyes are massive compared to their body size. Their eyes are stationary, but their head turns 270 degrees. Hearing is highly sensitive, helped by the feather disk arrangement and by an asymmetrical arrangement. They are quiet flyers, often unnoticed, as they move around and dive for prey.


A Great Horned Owl is perched on a horizontal tree branch. The owl has dark, mottled feathers and a white patch on its neck. The background shows a clear blue sky and the bare branches of a tree, with some green leaves visible at the bottom right. A semi-transparent blue box contains text on the right side of the image.

Great Horned
Owls are 17-25
inches long and
have wing span
from 36-60
inches.

The are heavy
bodied, vary in
color and often
have a white tuft
on their neck.

Most owl prey is swallowed whole. The bones and feathers or fur forms a pellet, which is regurgitated. Pellets often have complete skeletons including skulls.



A close-up photograph of two owl pellets on a forest floor. The pellets are light-colored, irregularly shaped masses of regurgitated material. They are surrounded by dark, moist soil, small rocks, and dry pine needles. The lighting is bright, casting shadows and highlighting the texture of the pellets and the surrounding ground.

Owl pellets are expelled daily. Their dissection reveals the owls diet as well as documentation of small animal species living in the are. This pellet was separated by sprinkler water showing a washed-out rodent skull.



It was the second passing when we noticed the sunset surprise of this quiet owl on a sprinkler head.



Joyce & Duane Plyter, Milton Freewater, Oregon 2012

Photos by Duane and Joyce

Owls: Lily Belle and Williams

Information from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_horned_owl