



# Whooooo's out there in the woods at night?

*A story for children and their grownups about the owls  
in Pocono woodlands ... protected by Pocono Heritage Land Trust*

By Carol Hillestad

*For Pocono Heritage Land Trust*

**L**et's take a walk in the nighttime woods. It will be a pretend walk, so even though it's very dark and maybe past your bedtime, it's OK. We won't get lost. And you can wear your pajamas.

Stand still for a minute and close your eyes. What can you hear? The bubbling creek nearby. Your own breathing. How about the trees? Do they seem to be singing? Right now their leaves and branches are full of katydids, calling each other's name: "Katy-did! katy-did! katy-did!" You might hear an owl calling from across the creek, trilling and whinnying like a horse. That's a tiny screech owl with a warning: "Stay away from my nest!"

When you open your eyes, the woods won't seem quite so dark, thanks to that sliver of moon in the sky. As you walk along the trail, take a deep breath. Maybe you can smell the woodsy smell of old leaves and pine needles under your feet.

*Continued on reverse*



*The tiny northern saw-whet owl weighs less than a small peach. (Contributed photo)*



*Owls like this screech owl are up to 100 times better than humans at seeing small objects in low light. Even in complete darkness, owls can pinpoint prey by their hearing alone. (Robert G. Buckert/Macaulay Library photo)*

## JOIN OUR OWL STUDY

Even smaller than a screech owl, the northern saw-whet owl nests in the forests of Pennsylvania. Would you like to take part in outdoor research that studies these amazing little owls in October 2023? No age limit. Adults must accompany their children. Contact PHLT for information at 570-424-1514 or [adillon@phlt.org](mailto:adillon@phlt.org).

## LISTEN TO OWLS ONLINE

Listen to screech owls at [www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Eastern\\_Screech-Owl/](http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Eastern_Screech-Owl/)

Listen to hoot owls (great horned owls) at [www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Great\\_Horned\\_Owl/](http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Great_Horned_Owl/)

More information about Pennsylvania owls at [www.pgc.pa.gov/Education/WildlifeNotesIndex/Documents/owls.pdf](http://www.pgc.pa.gov/Education/WildlifeNotesIndex/Documents/owls.pdf)



*Whoooo's out there in the woods?*

*Continuing from front*

Shhh! There's a little movement up ahead. Looks like Momma Raccoon is taking her little ones out hunting for dinner. She is teaching them where to find nuts, berries, bugs, eggs, fish and just about anything else that will fit in their hungry little mouths. In a few months, they'll be able to make their way in the woods on their own.

Hmmm. Now there's a smell in the air that tells you a skunk family just went by. That was a lucky miss!

Plenty of other creatures are out tonight, too. You can hear another kind of owl, a really big one, hooting across the creek. Great horned owls sound like they're always asking, "Who? Who-who-whoooo?"

Red foxes, coyotes, possums, bobcats, and many other creatures travel these woods in



*A screech owl enjoying a long winter's nap. (Jay McGowan/Macaulay Library photo)*

the nighttime, when most human girls and boys and grownups are sound asleep in their beds. A pretend walk in the woods is fun — but a real walk is even more fun, and you can walk in woods like these any time you like.

That's because our land trust protects natural places where birds, fish, and animals live — to keep the creatures safe, keep our water safe, and give people beautiful places to walk.

Why not come visit in the daytime? Whoooooo knows what you might see?

*Pocono Heritage Land Trust owns and manages nature preserves throughout Monroe County. One is likely near you! Our preserves have walking trails, creeks and wetlands that children of all ages and their grownups are welcome to explore. Find trail maps at [phlt.org](http://phlt.org).*



**POCONO HERITAGE LAND TRUST**

**ABOUT CONSERVING LAND**

Founded in 1984, Pocono Heritage Land Trust is a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting the natural and cultural heritage of the Pocono region by conserving land and inspiring people to care for, enjoy and explore their natural world. PHLT works cooperatively with landowners to preserve their property and leave a legacy of protected natural habitats, healthy forest, clean waterways and open space for future generations.

You can help Pocono Heritage Land Trust protect land for the future. Learn about membership and volunteer opportunities at [www.phlt.org](http://www.phlt.org).

**PLEASE DONATE** to preserve important lands and natural resources in the Poconos, for generations to come.

- \$25** provides supplies for one trash cleanup day, or one planting of wildflower seeds for meadow habitat restoration.
- \$50** buys tools for managing invasive plants on volunteer days.
- \$150** prints 500 trail brochures to guide visitors on preserves.
- \$500** builds a streamcrossing bridge to improve trail access.
- \$1,500** covers the cost of an appraisal, the first step in acquiring new land for preservation.
- \$3,000** funds construction of a sign kiosk on a new preserve.
- \$5,000** enables development of a new nature trail network, including trail marking, clearing, signage and maps.

**Donate online at [phlt.org/donate.html](http://phlt.org/donate.html)**

or clip this form and send it with your check made out to Pocono Heritage Land Trust to:

**PHLT, 1539 Cherry Lane Road, East Stroudsburg, PA 18301**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_