

# Manitoba's Owl Survey

*Annual Report  
2008*



Photo © Dennis Swayze, Winnipeg

# Manitoba's Nocturnal Owl Survey

## 2008 Annual Report



Hundreds of volunteers have participated in the Manitoba Nocturnal Owl Survey since it began in 1991. Their effort allows the monitoring of owl populations in Manitoba

on a scale not possible by any other means. This newsletter serves as a medium to report back to participants with updated population statistics, bar charts, and line graphs. These 'products' are important aspects from a science and conservation perspective. But it is too easy to lose sight of the inspiring poetry of wild owls while fastidiously cataloging and examining survey data.

Not reported in this newsletter are the hundreds of written and verbal expressions of wonder and excitement by veteran and novice owl surveyors about their experiences while doing the surveys. These expressions are conveyed on data sheets, in emails and in phone messages.

The quest for a scientific understanding of past, present and future owl population dynamics is thankfully not at odds with a more aesthetic appreciation of the same phenomenon while standing on a road at night listening to the emotion-laden love song of the Great Horned Owl. In fact, both experiences compliment each other. In the words of Alan Moore, "... a more lyrical eye lending the cold data a romance from which it has been long divorced." (1986. Watchmen. D.C. Comics. New York.)

Equally important and under reported is the effect of the surveyor's cumulative product on others not directly involved. The results of the survey continue to support and inspire others to participate in various ways to help conserve owls, including ...

### Manitoba Owl Activity Updates

- Initiation of graduate research on the breeding biology of the Barred Owl in Manitoba by Todd Whiklo in 2009.

- Start of graduate research on wild and captive breeding-released Burrowing Owls in southwestern Manitoba by Alex Froese in 2009.
- Completion of graduate research on Northern Saw-whet Owl migration at Delta Marsh, Manitoba by Chris De Ruyck.
- Completion of graduate research on Urban Eastern Screech Owl Ecology in Winnipeg, Manitoba by Christian Artuso.
- Sustaining the Canadian Owl, Bird Studies Canada (BSC). In 2007, Debbie Badzinski and Denis Lepage from BSC set up a data base and an associated on-line data entry system for the Manitoba owl survey. We will test it with a small number of surveyors in 2009, and hope to get as many of you to enter your survey data on line in 2010. This database will help us share our data with students and other researchers around the world.
- Alex Froese was contracted last year to enter owl survey data from 2000-2007 and did an outstanding job – she is currently entering data from 1991-1999, and 2008, and has once again put in many extra hours organizing the data.
- An analysis showing high correlation of Northern Saw-whet Owl and small mammal prey data from Manitoba with that from Wisconsin presented at the 2007 World Owl Conference in Groningen, NL.
- Development of a global monitoring strategy for the Short-eared Owl with the Global Owl Project [www.globalowlproject.com](http://www.globalowlproject.com)

- Support for and from Houston, Minnesota's Festival of Owls. Consider attending this event in 2010 and visit their website for updates on their plans to develop an International Owl Center. [www.festivalofowls.com](http://www.festivalofowls.com)

7th Annual  
**International Festival of OWLS**  
March 6-8, 2009  
Houston, Minnesota

- \* Live Owls
- \* World Owl Hall of Fame
- \* Kids' Activities
- \* Raffle & Auction
- \* Merchandise

**The only full-weekend, all-owl event in North America!**

507-896-HOOT (4668)  
Online registration available!  
[www.festivalofowls.com](http://www.festivalofowls.com)

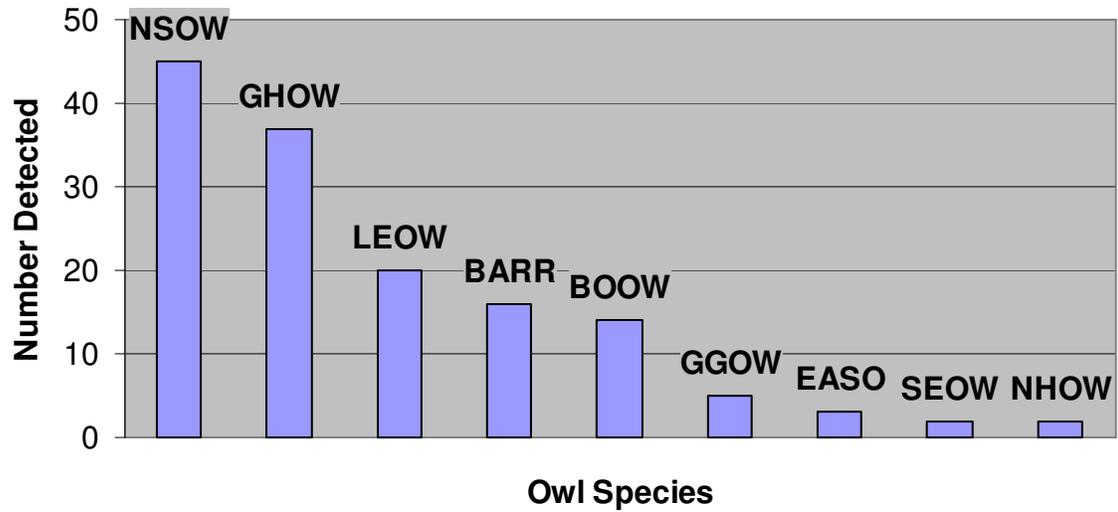
Event sponsored by:

## Results of the 2008 Manitoba Owl Survey



Year	# Volunteers	Distance Surveyed (Km)	# Routes	Total Owl Detections	# Owl Detections per Km
2000	106	1085	57	165	0.15
2001	91	1070	57	180	0.17
2002	198	2403	115	315	0.13
2003	162	1776	107	267	0.15
2004	150	1304	94	183	0.14
2005	102	1067	74	135	0.13
2006	91	946	65	262	0.28
2007	68	856	52	170	0.20
2008	78	1213	73	144	0.19

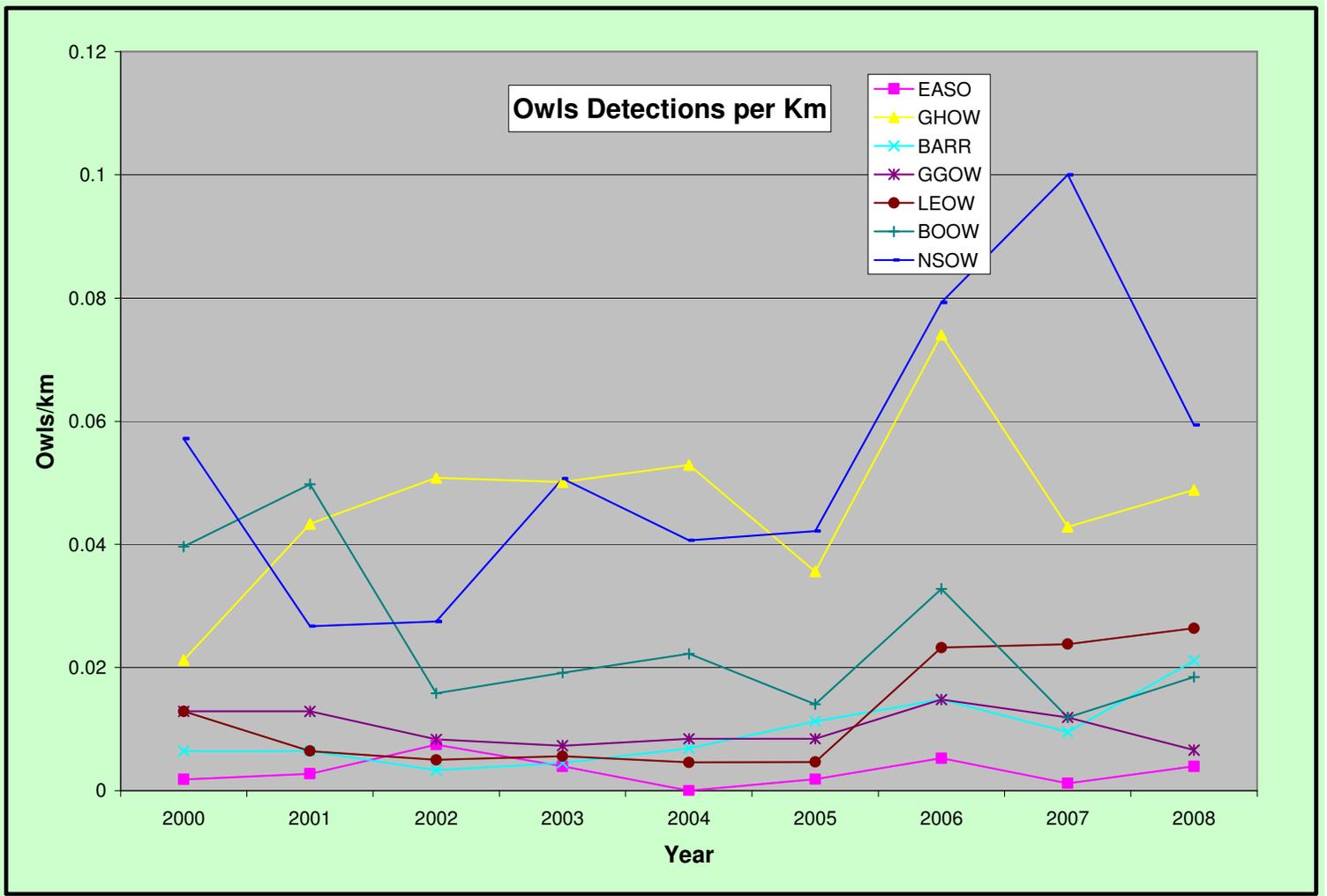
## Owl Species Detected in the 2008 Survey



NSOW – Northern Saw-whet Owl  
GHOW – Great Horned Owl  
LEOW – Long-eared Owl  
BOOW – Boreal Owl

GGOW – Great Gray Owl  
BARR – Barred Owl  
SEOW – Short-eared owl  
EASO – Eastern Screech Owl.



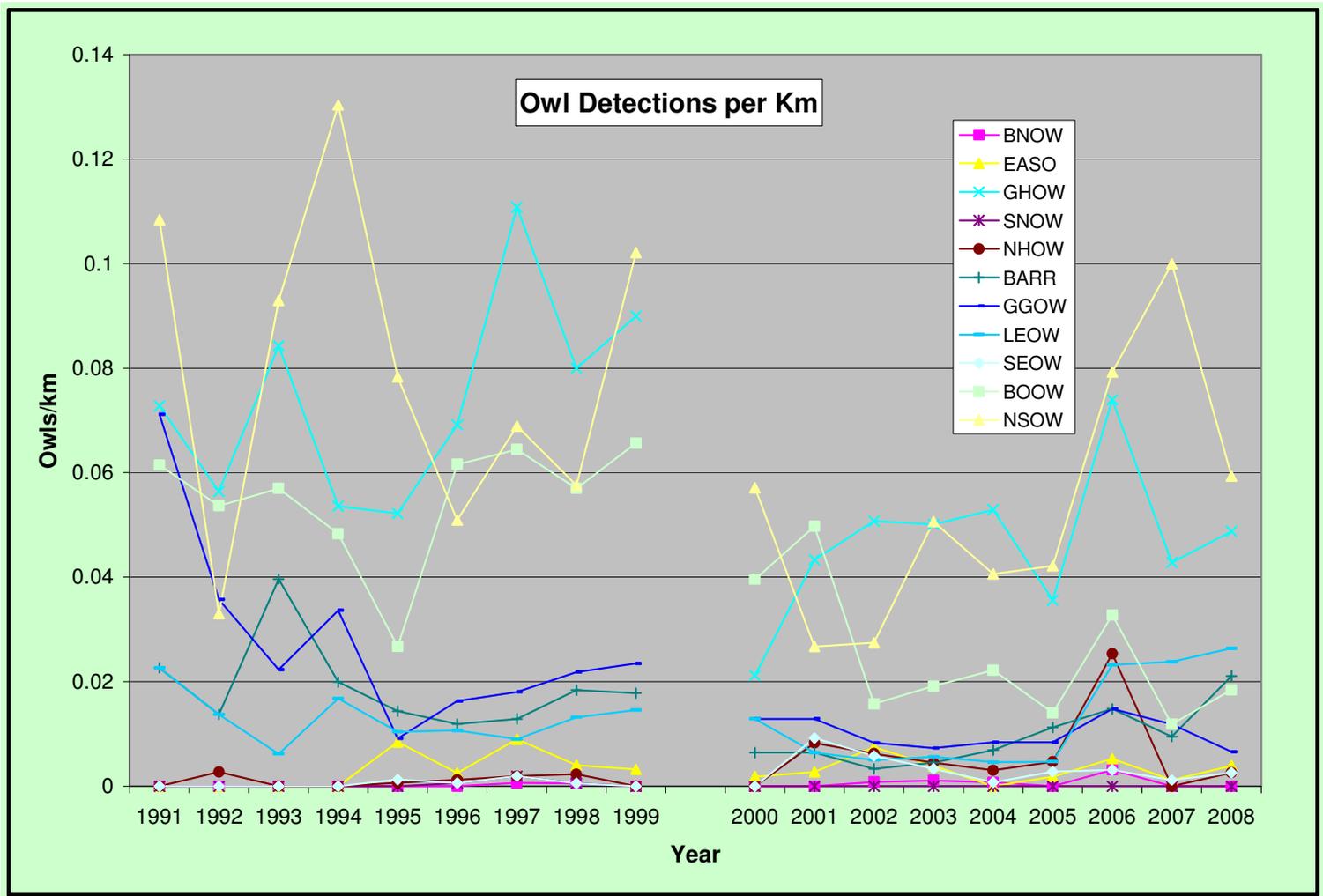


EASO- Eastern Screech Owl  
 GHOW – Great Horned Owl  
 BOOW- Boreal Owl  
 BARR – Barred Owl

NSOW – Northern Saw-whet Owl  
 LEOW – Long-eared Owl  
 GGOW – Great Gray Owl

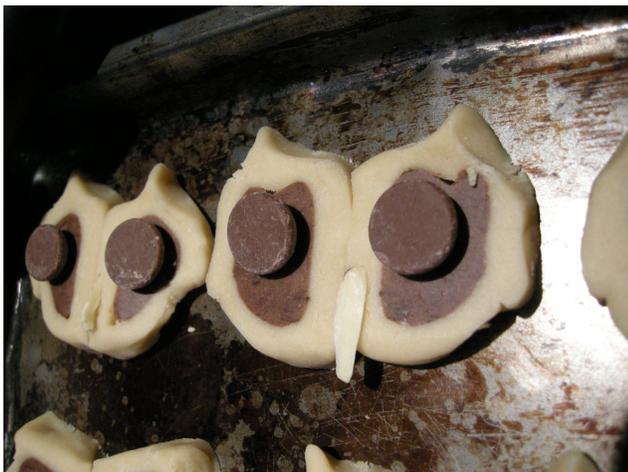


Long-eared Owl facial expressions ...



**NSOW – Northern Saw-whet Owl**  
**BOOW – Boreal Owl**  
**LEOW – Long-eared Owl**  
**GGOW – Great Gray Owl**  
**SEOW – Short-eared owl**  
**SNOW – Snowy Owl**

**GHOW – Great Horned Owl**  
**NOHO – Northern Hawk Owl**  
**BARR – Barred Owl**  
**EASO – Eastern Screech Owl**  
**BNOW – Barn Owl**  
**BUOW – Burrowing Owl**



**Jim’s “Owl Hoot Cookies” are great for snacking on during cold survey nights!**

**Watch for the recipe in the 2009 Survey Report.**

## Acknowledgements

A thank you to all the volunteer surveyors in 2008 including Christian Artuso, Ron Austin, Cheryl Bailey, Vaughn Barkman, Ron Bazin, Mel Belluk, Dean Berezanski, Rob Berger, Jason Boychuk, Adam Brown, Stan Burt, Tim Byers, Bonnie Chartier, Lewis Cocks, Barbara Coombs, Kevin Coombs, Cal Cuthbert, Dave Doucette, Mary Doud, Barbara Dufprat, Zachary Dufprat, Connor Duncan, Jim Duncan, Bev Dunlop, Alvin Dyck, Ross Erickson, Richard Ervick, Gord Hammel, Harry Harris, Wally Jansen, Lars Jansson, Joy Kennedy, Rudolf Koes, Andre Lansard, Elizabeth Lansard, Georgina Larson, Raymond Larson, Sharon Lidbetter, Frank Machovec, Ken Malcom, Kurt Mazur, Alex McIlraith, Patti McIntyre, Carmen McNabb, Marilyn Meyer, Al Mickey, Lorelie Mitchell, Doug Nichol, Jeff Nichols, Wolf Oesterreich, Henry Oleschak, Melissa Paley, Charlotte Pedwell, Morley Pedwell, Les Pelletier, Barbara Pettinger, Raymond Pettinger, Ryan Porteous, Lewis Cocks, Sherry Lynn Punak-Murphy, Amelia Reid, Lois Robertson, Barbara Robinson, John Robinson, Kerry Ryan, Ken Schykulski, Merlin Shoesmith, Rosalie Sigurdson, Peter Taylor, Ken Tilling, Dave Uhrnivr, Piet van Dijken, Liis Veelma, William Walley, Angele Watrin-Prodaehl, Jeope Wolfe, Leane Wyenberg, and Margaret Yorke. Many surveyors more than one route, some as many as six!

**If you participated in the 2008 owl survey and your name is not included on this list perhaps your data sheets were not received. If this is the case, please contact Jim Duncan.**

Like many primates I excel at procrastination, and each spring I struggle with and often lose that important balance between family matters, gainful work, and this passion called owls. So, I must acknowledge the assistance and tolerance of my wife Patsy, and children Connor and Brooke for the late nights and lesser presence during the compilation of this report. Thank you so very much!

Thanks also to Todd Whiklo for helping with owl survey data entry. Doug Collicutt continues to host Manitoba owl survey information and associated documents on his wonderful website [www.NatureNorth.com](http://www.NatureNorth.com) – thanks Doug! Dennis Swayze and others graciously permitted the use of their owl images in this report.

**Many thanks to all of you for making this survey and report possible!**

For more information on the Manitoba Nocturnal Owl Survey please contact

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Image by Richard Clark and Rudolf Koes