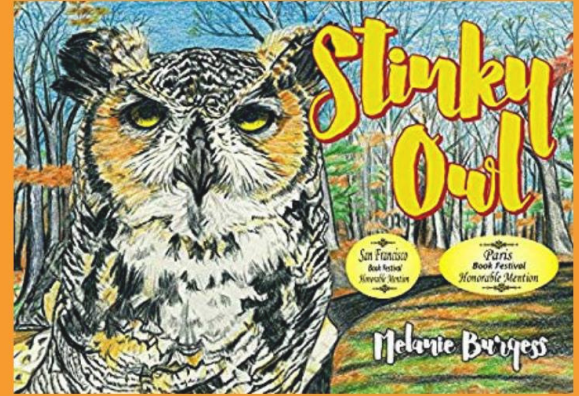


Stinky Owl

*The owl who eats
skunks...and can't
make friends!*



This book was inspired by the birds of prey at the **Rocky Gap State Park Aviary**.

At the time this book was written, all of the birds of the Aviary were included.

Although it is portrayed in this story that the birds could smell Stinky Owl, most birds of prey, particularly with the Great Horned Owl, do not have a sense of smell. The author disregarded that fact for the purpose of storytelling.

The Aviary at Rocky Gap State Park houses and cares for birds of prey that have been injured or impacted in some way that makes them unable to survive in the wild. The birds are ambassadors in a Statewide Environmental Education Program called "**Scales & Tales**", with a three-fold mission:

"Scales & Tales encourages an appreciation for the splendor and diversity of Maryland's Wildlife, promotes an understanding of the relationship between man and wildlife and the habitat they share, and encourages people to visit state forests and parks to further explore that relationship."

The scenery illustrations in this book were drawn from different locations around Rocky Gap State Park, including the **Indian Trail Marker Tree**.

Rocky Gap State Park has not substantiated that several trees were used in this way but the age of the trees suggest that it was indeed possible.

STINKY OWL

Fun Facts



GREAT HORNED OWL

Great Horned Owls are the most fiercest owl and can take down large prey including **Raptors**.

They regularly eat skunks and may be one of the few birds with such an appetite. Their diet may also include, mice, frogs, rabbits, and moles.

Great Horned Owls are also referred to as "*the tiger of the night sky*" because of their keen eyesight and expert hunting skills, along with their ability to capture prey sometimes larger and heavier than themselves.

The eyes of this owl are as large as a human's eye and are 35 times more sensitive. The owl's eyes don't move in their sockets, however, they have 14 neck vertebrae making them capable of moving their heads 270 degrees in any direction.

A Great Horned Owl's talons can exert up to 500 pounds of pressure per square inch against the skin. The strength of a Great Horned Owl's **talons** are comparable to the bite of a German Shepherd.

The tufts of feathers on an owl's head are called **plumicorns**. They are not ears. The Great Horn's ears are asymmetrical and located under the dark edges of the facial discs.

The Great Horn's classic "*whoo-hoo*" sound can be heard from miles away. Their sound may vary depending upon mood and temperament. A mating call is the "*whoo-hoo whoo-hoo*" sound.

If the owl is aggravated, it will clack its beak. Young owls will shriek or scream.



Great Horned Owls take lifelong mates

STINKY OWL

Fun Facts



BARRED OWL

The Barred Owl is named for the vertical feathered barring patterns on his chest.

The Barred Owl is very vocal and has a distinct "*whoo-hoo-hoo-hoo whoo-hoo-hoo-hoo-oo*" call which sounds like, "*who cooks for you, who cooks for you all?*" It is a classic forest sound.

A Barred Owl diet may include squirrels, chipmunks, mice, rabbits, fish, reptiles and crayfish. They hunt mostly right after sunset and during the night. They sometimes store prey in their nest or in the crook of a branch.

The Barred Owl has no ear tufts. Male and female are identical in **plumage**.

They also have great hearing.

The ear openings are **asymmetrical** facing forward, so that the facial discs work to divert sound waves to the ears.

Barred Owls can locate prey in the dark by hearing, even when they cannot see it.



Barred owls are believed to take lifelong mates

STINKY OWL

Fun Facts

BARN OWL



Barn Owls are sometimes referred to as *ghost owls*.

They have a heart shaped white face outlined with a dark tan trim. Their eyes are small and very dark. They have long pinkish bills and long feathered legs giving them an eerie appearance.

They are white in color and silent in flight. The owl's feathers are soft with frilly edges which allows them to absorb sound. Their call is not a hoot as with other owls, but rather a shriek, sounding perhaps like a woman's scream. No wonder people have mistaken these beautiful birds of prey as a ghostly encounter.

The heart-shaped face helps this owl to be an incredible hunter. It's face is similar to a satellite dish and helps it to pick up the smallest of sounds. It has **asymmetrical** ears which, along with the facial feathers, helps the barn owl successfully find their prey in total darkness.

The Barn Owl diet includes small mammals such as mice, voles, rats, bats, shrews and rabbits.

A female Barn Owl is a showier than the male. Her coloring has a more red hue, and she has a heavily spotted chest.



STINKY OWL

Fun Facts

EASTERN SCREECH OWL



The Eastern Screech Owl is one of the smallest of the owl species.

They compare to the size of a Robin. These owls are found in two distinct colors; gray or reddish brown. They have dark feathered streaks on their chest and large ear tufts.

Their color patterns help them to be supreme in camouflage against tree bark, allowing the screech owl to hide in nooks and tree crannies during the day.

The Screech Owl's diet consists of insects and small rodents. It may eat beetles, moths, crickets, mice, shrew, sometimes bats or small birds, lizards, frogs, crayfish and may even feed on small fish.

Screech Owls become active at dusk.

They have large round yellowish eyes with black eyeballs.

Their beaks are yellowish to a greenish yellow.

The bird's ears are located asymmetrically on its head, enabling the owl to hone in on its prey.

It's hearing is so acute that it can locate mammals under snow.



STINKY OWL

Fun Facts



BALD EAGLE

Bald Eagles are not actually bald. They are piebald, meaning they are partly dark colored and partly white.

The adult bird is mainly dark brown with an all-white head and tail. The male and female are identical in **plumage**, but females are typically 25 percent larger than males. The juvenile has a dark head and tail feathers that will change to all white near 5 years of age.

Bald Eagles eat fish, **carrion**, smaller birds, and rodents.

Bald Eagles have see-through eyelids, called a **nictitating membrane**. They can close this membrane to protect their eyes and it helps to maintain and clean them.

Bald Eagles have much better eyesight than humans. They have a very wide field of vision and can see colors more vividly. Also, they can see ultraviolet light. Their exceptional vision is why people use the expression, "*sharp as an eagle's eye*."

The coolest fact about eagles is that they can swim!

Eagles have hollow bones and fluffy down feathers which allow them to float easily.

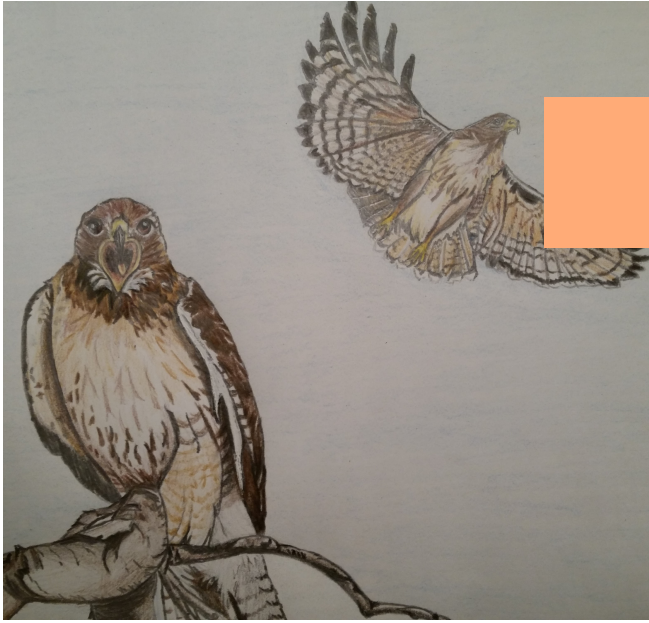
Then they take their huge wings and use them as oars to paddle to shore.



STINKY OWL

Fun Facts

RED-TAILED HAWK



The Red-tailed Hawk is one of the most common hawks in North America. It is frequently referred to as a “chicken hawk,” although it feeds on prey other than chickens.

The Red-tailed Hawk’s diet includes voles, rabbits, squirrels, small birds, frogs, toads and snakes.

The Great Horned Owl is the Red-tailed Hawk’s biggest foe. Great Horned Owls usually live in the same area as a Red-tailed Hawk where they compete for food. The Great Horned Owl will even take a hawk’s nest as its own.

A juvenile Red-tail Hawk has slate gray eyes, that go to yellow and then change to a whiskey brown as it matures. The Red-tail's eyes are large and deep, a design that gives great distance vision.

Like other hawks, the Red-tails have colored oils in their eyes that refract wavelengths of light. Having both eyes on the front of its head gives the bird a binocular vision (the ability to see an object with both eyes at the same time.) Along with the **asymmetrical** placement of the ears, these features make this bird an accurate hunter.



STINKY OWL

Fun Facts



PEREGRINE / GYRFALCON

Both of these falcons are excellent divers that can achieve speeds of 130 mph (Gyr) to 200+ mph (Peregrine.)

Both falcons' diets consist mainly of other birds, including other birds of prey. They also may feed on mammals such as rabbits, squirrels, and mice.

The males are much smaller than the females. Peregrine Falcons are blue-gray on top with a barred underpart.

The Gryfalcon can range from a regal white bird with black spotting to one in shades of white, grey and dark brown. They may have heavily barred wings and tails with spotted chests.

The name Peregrine means "wanderer".

They are a North American long-distance migratory bird. Some move over 15,000 miles in a year.



STINKY OWL

Fun Facts

BLACK VULTURE



Black Vultures have glossy black **plumage** with white patches on the underside of their wing tip.

Their head has no feathers because of their eating habits; they stick their heads in rotting carcasses which would cause feathers to become extremely dirty and hard to clean. Its head is wrinkled and dark gray in color.

Its bill is strong, slender, and dark with a yellowish tipped hooked beak.

Vultures serve an important purpose of cleaning the environment and limiting the spread of disease. They feed mainly on **carrion**, and they sometimes rummage through dumpsters and landfills.

They are seen along highways because they often eat **road kill**.

Black Vultures have no vocal organs. They make raspy hissing sounds while feeding or fighting. They also make a grunting noise sounding similar to a pig and a noise that sounds like a sneeze or even a cough.

Black Vultures will vomit when approached or disturbed or to quickly shed weight when they need to lift off to safety.

They also poop and pee on their own legs to cool themselves off.



STINKY OWL

Fun Facts Glossary

Indian Trail Marker Tree—An Indian Trail Marker Tree is a tree that has been bent as a sapling by Native American Indians to mark their trails.

Birds of prey—Birds of several species that hunt and feed on rodents and other small animals.

Plumicorns—Tufts of feathers on the head of an owl. They are used to communicate and show expression. They are not ears.

Hybrid Falcon—A cross between different species of falcons bred to gain characteristics of both species. Hybrids do not often occur in the wild.

Raptors—Birds of prey

Roadkill—An animal that has been killed by a vehicle along a road.

Carrion—The decaying flesh of dead animals.

Asymmetrical—Having parts that are unequal to one another in shape, size, or arrangement.

Talons—A claw belonging to a bird of prey.

Plumage—A bird's feathers.

Nictitating membrane—A whitish or translucent membrane that forms an inner eyelid in birds, reptiles and some mammals.