MEET THEM AT PLUMPTON PARK ZOO

SNOWY OWL

Bubo scandiacus

Teacher & Student Fact Sheet · © **2026 Plumpton Park Zoological Gardens Inc.**
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Fast facts

ANIMAL GROUP	Bird (owl)
NATIVE REGION	Arctic North America, Europe and Asia
HABITAT	Open, treeless tundra
DIET	Small mammals such as lemmings and voles, and birds
SIZE	20 to 28 inches
WINGSPAN	About 4 to 4¾ feet
WEIGHT	3.5 to 6.5 lb
LIFESPAN	About 10 years in the wild
STATUS	Vulnerable
OUR OWL	Hedwig



Photo: Plumpton Park Zoo

Did you know?

- Snowy owls hunt by day as readily as by night, which helps in the round-the-clock daylight of an Arctic summer.
- Males grow almost pure white as they age. Females keep dark brown markings for life.
- Their legs and feet have some of the densest feathers of any owl.
- How many chicks snowy owls raise often depends on how many lemmings there are that year.
- Hedwig has a fan built into the roof of her habitat to help keep her cool.

Words to know

Tundra: Cold, treeless land in the far north.
Plumage: All of a bird's feathers.
Scrape: A shallow hollow on the ground used as a nest.
Vulnerable: At risk of becoming endangered.

Think about it

1. Why does Hedwig have a fan in the roof of her habitat?
2. How can you tell a male snowy owl from a female?
3. Why is hunting during the day useful for a snowy owl in the Arctic?
4. How does the number of lemmings affect snowy owl families?
5. How can climate change affect snowy owls?

Draw it

Draw a snowy owl on a perch. Label its golden eyes, its dark markings (if it is a female like Hedwig) and its feathered feet.

Where it lives in the wild



Lives in the wild ★ Plumpton Park Zoo, Rising Sun, MD

STANDARDS · GRADES 3–4 **WRITTEN FOR GRADES 3–5**

Maryland and Delaware (NGSS): **4-LS1-1 · 3-LS4-3**
Pennsylvania (STEELS): **3.1.4.A · 3.1.3.G**

Draw here

Learn more: plumptonparkzoo.org/birds/snowy-owl/ · **Sources:** Cornell Lab of Ornithology; IUCN Red List (2021); BirdLife International; Plumpton Park Zoo.
Supports Maryland and Delaware (NGSS) and Pennsylvania (STEELS) standards: 4-LS1-1 (3.1.4.A) · 3-LS4-3 (3.1.3.G)
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SNOWY OWL

Before and after your visit

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Before you visit · 5 minutes

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Predict: where in the wild does the snowy owl live?
Circle one (or more if it lives on more than one):

Africa | Asia | Australia | Europe | North America | South America

2. Predict: what does it eat?
☐ plants ☐ other animals ☐ both

3. Word hunt: find these words on page 1. Put a check by each one you already know.
☐ Tundra ☐ Plumage ☐ Scrape ☐ Vulnerable

Pick one word and write what it means in your own words:

_____

_____

4. My question: one thing I want to find out when I see the snowy owl.

_____

_____

At the zoo · look closely

Watch for one minute. What is it doing?
☐ resting ☐ eating ☐ moving ☐ watching
☐ with others

Draw or describe one body part that helps it survive, and say how it helps.

Draw here

After your visit · talk it over

1. Check your prediction. Native region: Arctic North America, Europe and Asia. Was your guess right?
☐ yes ☐ no ☐ partly

2. Diet check. The fact sheet says: Small mammals such as lemmings and voles, and birds. What did you learn about how it finds or eats food?

_____

_____

3. Discuss with a partner, then write your best answer.

- How can you tell a male snowy owl from a female?

_____

- Why is hunting during the day useful for a snowy owl in the Arctic?

_____

4. Exit ticket.

One thing I learned: _____

One thing I still wonder: _____

ADJUST IT
Grades K–2: talk and draw instead of writing; read the questions aloud. **Grades 6–8:** add evidence from the fact sheet and the animal page to every answer.