

Call for Short-eared Owl Feathers

Kristen Keyes, under the supervision of Dr. Marcel Gahbauer (Migration Research Foundation) and Dr. David Bird (McGill University), is investigating Short-eared Owl movement patterns in North America. She is asking for feather samples for stable isotope analysis from anyone who finds road-kills or who may experience incidental encounters through banding or other research.

From living owls, a small sample of vane tissue (i.e. 1-2 cm²) from the lagging, proximal edge of a primary or secondary feather (see image below) would be ideal, so as to limit impacts on flight. If only a single generation of feathers is apparent, a sample from P1 would be ideal for standardization. If a molt limit is obvious, samples from all apparent generations of feathers are needed, as is photo documentation, as this will allow for the determination of up to three previous summer locations. Take one sample from each age of feathers, balancing the samples from the left and right wing. Samples from juveniles will be used to verify the Short-eared Owl isotopic signature against existing isotope maps, and while P1 is preferable, the age of the owl may dictate that a body contour feather be collected instead. However, in the case that an owl is found dead, a complete wing would be preferable to help with further investigation of the Short-eared Owl molt pattern. If you are interested in providing samples for this study, please contact Kristen (kristen@migrationresearch.org) who will arrange for permits and shipping.

Additional information can be found at

<http://www.migrationresearch.org/research/shortear/project.html>

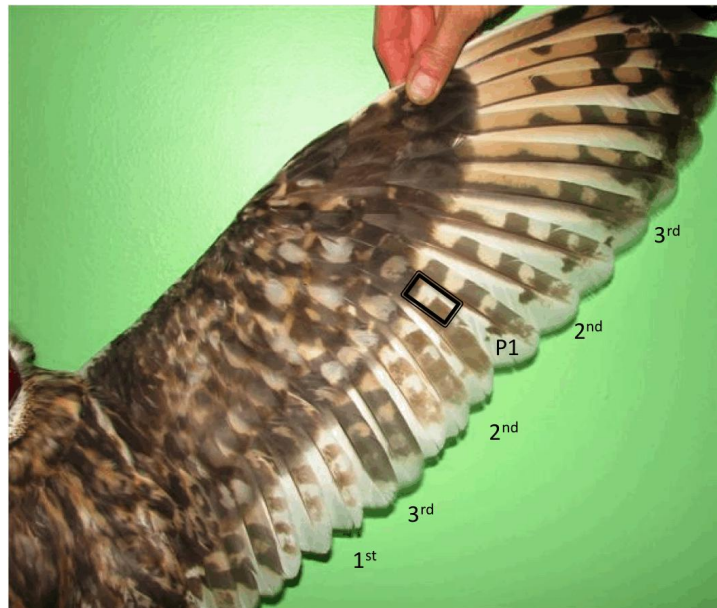


Figure 1: Short-eared Owl wing with three generations of feathers in the secondaries, and two generations in the primaries. Also shown is an example (for P1) of what part of the feather should be sampled on a live owl. (Photo by Geoff Holroyd)