



MINIS AT HOME

volume 1, issue 17

Greetings kids, parents, grandparents, guardians, friends and neighbors!

Welcome to issue 17 of Minis at Home newsletter. Each newsletter features a special theme and offers pertinent information, a craft (or two), and recommended reading. Grownups: please work on projects together with your children. Your **pARTicipation** is important! We will offer hints and tips for ways to create art as a twosome or a family.

This week's theme = Snowy Owls

If you ever see a snowy owl, you'll know how they got their name! They are white as snow. All January, we've been talking about animals that live in the cold polar regions of our planet. **Snowy owls** are amazing birds that have adapted to live in the Arctic, where it is cold and snowy much of the year. They live on the **tundra**, which is an open area similar to a field, so they camouflage well with the snow and rocks. Snowy owls are the only bird species that can survive on the cold Arctic tundra; however, they will usually migrate south during the winter to the northern parts of Canada and the United States. They have even been spotted here in Maryland on the beaches of Assateague!



Snowy owls are white with **bright yellow** eyes and a **black** beak. Female snowy owls have black and brown specs all over their bodies, whereas male owls are almost completely white. These beautiful birds stand about 2 feet tall, and when they spread their wings, their wingspan is 4 to 5 feet across.



Do you know why snowy owls can turn their heads almost all the way around in a circle? It's because they cannot move their eyes from side to side the way we can (keep your head still and look right and then left. How does what you see change?), so they have to turn their heads to look at something. Snowy owls are the heaviest of all owls because they have extra feathers all over their bodies (even on their feet like fuzzy slippers!) to keep themselves warm in the cold, cold Arctic.

Snowy owls are carnivores, which means they eat meat. They hunt small rodents such as lemmings, mice, rabbits, small birds, and even fish. They sit or "perch" on the snowy ground and watch patiently for their dinner to scurry across the snow. They have excellent eyesight and hearing, which makes them great hunters. Snowy owls fly slowly and low over the ground, and when they spot their meal, they snatch it up with their large sharp claws, which are called **talons**. These sharp talons help them hold on to their prey. Their sharp, curved beak helps them cut up their food into smaller pieces. Snowy owls also have **bristles** (tiny whiskers) on their beaks that help them smell and sense their prey. Their ears, covered with feathers, are located in different locations on either side of their heads. This allows the sounds of scurrying prey to reach the owl's ears at two different times.

Most owls are **nocturnal**, which means they sleep during the day and hunt at night, but snowy owls hunt during the day, usually at dusk and dawn. Although we don't have snowy owls here in Easton, we do have plenty of other types of owls.



Owls will "talk" to each other, hooting and screeching back and forth, which helps them keep track of other owls. Want to hear some of the sounds a snowy owl can make? Look at https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Snowy_Owl/sounds to hear three different recordings.

Snowy owls make their nests on the ground. This is because in the Arctic there are very few trees in which to build a nest. The female snowy owl will lay her eggs and sit on them to keep them warm and safe from predators like foxes, wolves and sea birds. The chicks will hatch after about a month. The father owl will do all the hunting, bringing food back to the nest. He will feed the mother owl first, and then she will share her food with her chicks. Did you know that the number of eggs that a female owl lays depends on how much food is available? Some mammals, such as wolves, will give birth to more or fewer babies depending on the food supply. Nature is very smart!

Activity: **Craft**

Paper Cup Snowy Owl



Materials:

White paper cup

Scraps of paper:
yellow, black and
white

Black marker

White tissue paper
(optional)

Cotton balls or rounds

Aleene's Tacky Glue

Scissors



Procedure:

Cut the following out of paper:

- 2 yellow circles for eyes and smaller black circles for pupils
- 1 black triangle for beak
- 2 black feet with claws, leaving enough length so they can be glued to the inside of the cup
- 2 white oval wings, snipping the edges to create feathers

Using a black marker, such as a Sharpie, draw short, horizontal black lines all over the outside of the cup

Glue on eyes, beak and wings

Glue black claws to bottom rim of cup

Take cotton balls or rounds, pulling the cotton apart to create "fluff"

Glue the cotton fluff (or tissue paper) all over the cup.

Add paper wings on the sides

Activity: Craft

Process Art Snowy Owl

(Kids love painting with nonconventional tools)



Materials:

White paint

Black card stock or heavy construction paper

Scraps of paper:
yellow and black

Small sponge, tin foil or kitchen brush to use for painting

Aleene's Tacky Glue

Scissors

Procedure:

Cut the following out of paper:

- 2 yellow circles for eyes and smaller black circles for pupils
- 1 black triangle for beak
- 2 black feet with claws

Draw a large oval onto a piece of black card stock or construction paper, covering about 3/4 of the paper

Take either a small sponge, crumpled up ball of foil, or a bristle kitchen brush and dip in white paint. Dab the paint inside the oval as well as lightly around the circumference to make the body look "fluffy."

When dry, glue the eyes, beak, and claws onto your fluffy snowy owl!

Activity: Move and Pretend**Wide-Eyed Owl** (adapted from mrcpl.org)

There's a wide-eyed owl (make fingers in large circles and cup over eyes)

With a pointed nose (use fingers to make a triangle & point out for nose)

And two ears (use fingers for ears)

And claws for toes (wiggle fingers like toes)

He lives up north

Near the cold North Pole (point up)

He flaps his wings (use arms for wings, and flap)

And says "whoop whoop" (continue flapping wings)

**Just Like an Owl!** (adapted from thekiboomers.com)

(sung to the tune of *London Bridge*)



Flap your wings just like an owl, like an owl,

like an owl (flap your arms up and down)

Flap your wings just like an owl

Just like an owl

Open your eyes big and wide, big and wide,

big and wide (open your eyes as wide as you can)

Open your eyes big and wide

Just like an owl

Land on the ground and hop along, hop along, hop along (squat and hop on the floor)

Land on the ground and hop along

Just like an owl

Turn your head and say "whooh whooh," say "whooh whooh," say "whooh whooh" " (turn your head in both directions as far as you can)

Turn your head and say "whooh whooh

Just like an owl

Literacy: POEM TO SHARE



Watch the linked video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AbFKqszMVWM>) on YouTube and then read the poem that follows

Feed Me! by Constance Del Nero

Baby owl, half asleep:
She wakes up,
and begins to peep!

With a hoot-hoot-hoo
and a screech, screech, screee
Is that snowy owl
shrieking at me?

She opens her beak:
She wants some food
Give her a mouse:
she's in a bad mood!

Or a nice fresh fish
(you can skip the dish)
She finds fish
quite delish

With a screech, screech, screee
and a hoot-hoot-hoo,
I think the owl
is shrieking at you!



Literacy: RECOMMENDED BOOKS

Snuggle up in a big comfy chair and read together

Snowy Owl Family by Sarah Toast

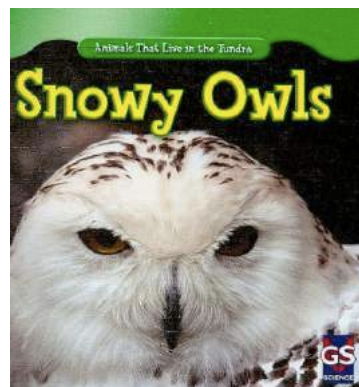
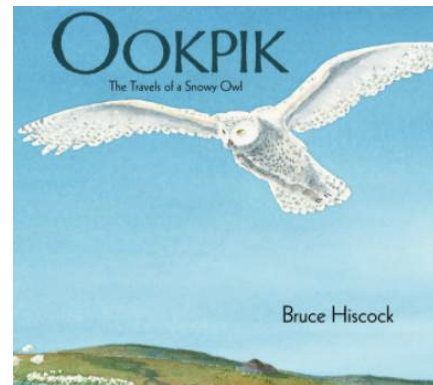
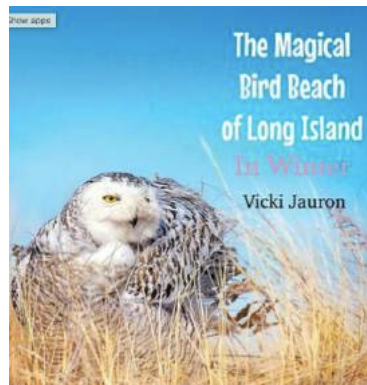
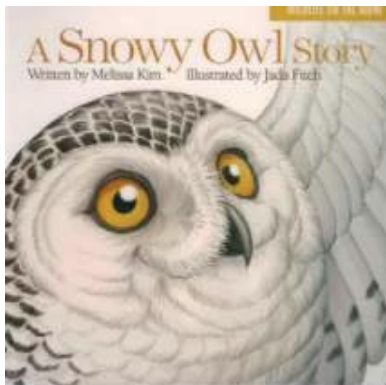
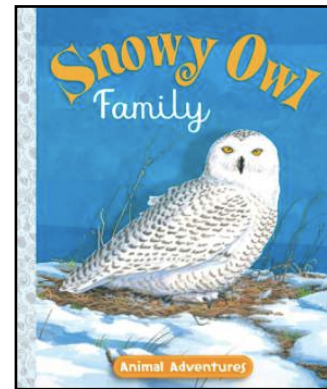
A Snowy Owl Story by Melissa Kim

The Magical Bird Beach of Long Island in Winter by Vicki Jauron

Ookpik: The Travels of a Snowy Owl by Bruce Hiscock

Snowy Owls Are Awesome by Jaclyn Jaycox

Snowy Owls by Roman Patrick



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See you next week with issue 18 of **Minis at Home!**

Share your work on <https://www.instagram.com/minimastersaam/>

or email pictures to Ann Hansen
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