



Photo by Nick Saunders

Great Horned Owl

in an oak tree

By day, the mottled plumage of a Great Horned Owl helps it blend into its surroundings. By night, its very soft feathers allow it to fly nearly silently as it hunts for prey. The edges of its wing feathers have comb-like structures that reduce the sounds of air passing over the wing.

Although the two tufts on its head resemble ears, the tufts are only feathers. An owl's ears are lower down on the sides of its head, covered in feathers. The disc-like shape of its face directs sound waves to its ears for the acute hearing it needs to hunt at night.

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