



A Family Of Owls

These watchful egg owls are a hoot to hold and to make

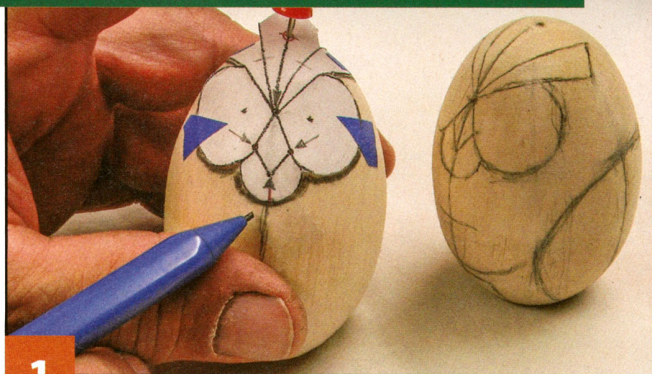
By Steven Kulp

Whether you're packing for a business trip or your next term at Hogwarts, this owl makes a perfect travel companion. Pop a few of these creatures in your duffel and give them out as calling cards at each stop, or wait till Halloween and hand them out instead of candy.

Getting Started

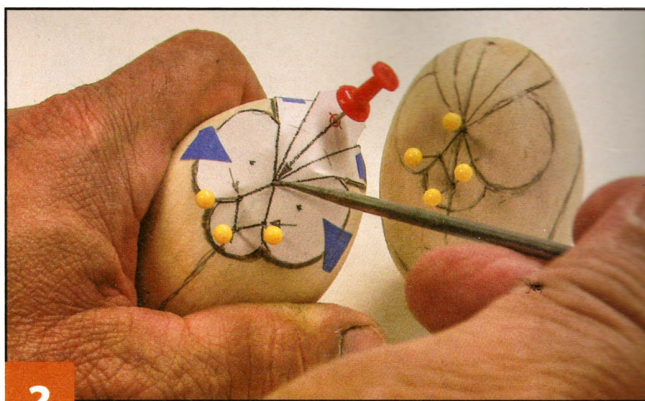
Purchase a basswood or butternut egg made for carving; don't try this with inexpensive turned eggs from a craft store. Photocopy and cut out the pattern.

MARKING THE BLANK



1

Draw a straight line along the length of the egg. Start at the top. I draw it down the edge-grain side of the egg because it holds the details better. Push a pin or small nail through the bull's-eye of the pattern into the top of the egg. Align the center mark on the chin with the line, and hold it in place with a small piece of tape.



2

Transfer the pattern. Take a second pin or nail and stab through the pattern at the corner points of the beak. While holding the pattern flat, trace around the outside. Use the diagram to mark the belly, feet, and wings. Remove the pattern and draw the horn feather lines and beak marks.

CARVING THE PROJECT



3

Carve around the face and horn feathers. Use a small V-tool. Make the V-groove just over $\frac{1}{8}$ " (3mm) deep. Remove the wood between the horn feathers and around the top of the head with a $\frac{3}{16}$ " to $\frac{1}{4}$ " (5mm to 6mm) #8 gouge.



4

Carve toward the V-grooves around the face. Use a knife, and start at the outline of the wings. Then carve from the outlines of the wings to the top of the head in the back. Round the belly and carve a notch between the belly and the top of the feet.



5

Carve from the wings to the sides of the feet. Use a $\frac{3}{8}$ " (10mm) #8 gouge. Remove enough wood so you'll be able to drill a hole through both of the feet or cut a notch for mounting on the edge of a box or cup. Round the top and bottom of the feet, and carve the claws with the knife or the small V-tool.



6

Carve the details of the face. Make stop cuts around the beak and between the eye dishes and the bib. Then carve the bib down to $\frac{1}{16}$ " (2mm) thick with the knife or a skew chisel. Use a $\frac{1}{2}$ " (12mm) #6 gouge to carve the eye dishes down to $\frac{1}{8}$ " (3mm) thick. To get clean cuts, carve from the outside of the eye dish in toward the beak.



7

Carve the beak to a pyramid shape. Use the knife or skew chisel. Make the top point at the widest part of the beak. Carve the horn feathers down to meet the top of the beak, tapering them back from the center of the head.



8

Decide how to carve the eyes. You can make a realistic eye centered in the dish, or make oversized cartoon eyes looking off to one side. You can carve a recess and add small yellow glass eyes or paint them. I woodburn mine.

materials & tools

MATERIALS

- Wooden egg, basswood or butternut: any size you are comfortable carving; I used a hen-sized egg for this article.
- Sandpaper
- Danish oil: natural
- Acrylic paint: black, burnt sienna (optional)

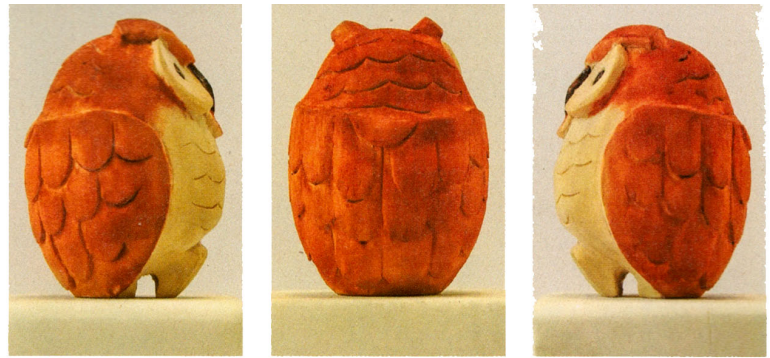
The author used these products for the project. Substitute your choice of brands, tools, and materials as desired.

TOOLS

- Knife
- Skew chisel: $\frac{5}{16}$ " to $\frac{3}{8}$ " (8mm to 10mm)
- #6 gouge: $\frac{1}{2}$ " (12mm)
- #8 gouges: $\frac{3}{16}$ " to $\frac{1}{4}$ " (5mm to 6mm), $\frac{3}{8}$ " (10mm)
- V-tool: $\frac{1}{4}$ " (6mm)
- Paintbrushes (optional): $\frac{1}{4}$ ", $\frac{3}{4}$ "
- Woodburner (optional)
- Pins (for pattern transfer)

SPECIAL SOURCES

- Hen-sized basswood eggs are available from:
- The Woodcraft Shop, 800-397-2278, TheWoodcraftShop.com
 - Chipping Away, 888-682-9801, ChippingAway.com



Finishing the Owl

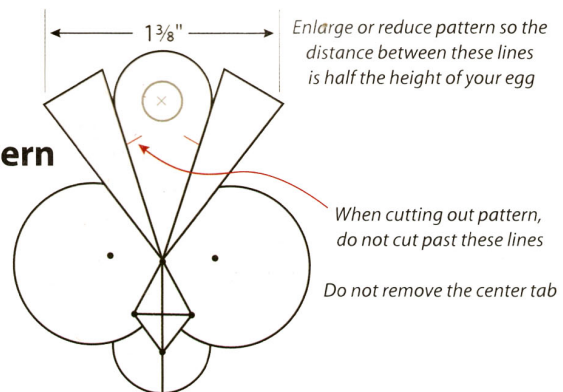
You can finish the owl several ways. Refer to the diagram and carve, paint, or burn feathers. If you decide to paint, seal the egg with natural Danish oil and let it dry. Then drybrush the wings and shoulders with a wash of burnt sienna acrylic paint, and paint the eyes and bill black. If you choose to burn, follow the diagram for the feathers, and then blacken the eyes and bill with the woodburner. I use a small heat gun to darken the back of the wings slightly. Then apply another coat of Danish oil.

Displaying the Owl

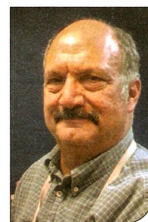
Use your imagination to come up with a way to display your owl (or owls). To get you started, here are a few suggestions:

1. Drill a $\frac{3}{16}$ " (5mm)-diameter hole horizontally through the feet and perch him on a stick.
2. Drill a hole up from the bottom and have him sit on a pencil or dowel.
3. Notch the bottom up to the drilled hole so he can sit on the edge of a cup or box (a small dowel or pushpin may be needed behind the notch to help hold the owl straight up).
4. Set him on his base.

Owl Pattern



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Steven Kulp was introduced to woodcarving by his uncle, Norris White, in 1983, and has been carving off and on since then. Recently, he has started competing in local and national carving competitions and has won a few ribbons for his work. Steven lives in Souderton, Pa., with his wife, Elda, and son, Mike, and is a member of Delaware Valley Wood Carvers. See more of his work on Facebook at S. G. Kulp Carving.