

Rito

Eastern Screech-Owl

(*Megascops asio*)

Sex: Male



Why is Rito in Captivity?

Rito (short for Pajarito) was found as an adult in 2016 with a permanent soft tissue injury to his left shoulder making survival in the wild impossible. After he was found, he was taken to a licensed rehabilitator in Vicksburg, MI where it was determined he could not be returned to the wild to survive on his own. He was transferred to the Organization for Bat Conservation on February 24, 2017 and then to the Stage Nature Center in February 2018.

Typical Screech-Owl Species Behavior:

- Eastern Screech-Owls are active at night and are more often heard than seen. Even though they are relatively common, many people are familiar with this species only from its trilling or whinnying call. This cavity-roosting owl is attracted to nest boxes and can be spotted in daylight at the entrance to its home in a tree cavity.
- **Habitat:** Found in woodlands bordered by open fields as well as wetlands, orchards, towns, suburban parks, and gardens.
- **Diet:** Highly varied diet consists of large insects, crayfish, and all classes of vertebrates including birds, fish, amphibians, and small mammals such as flying squirrels, shrews, rabbits, bats and rodents.
- **Lifespan:** The oldest recorded Eastern Screech-Owl in the wild was 14 years old. Records show they have lived to be up to 20 years old in captivity.

Fun Facts About Screech-Owls:

- Eastern Screech-Owls come in two different color variations: red-phase and gray-phase. Across their range, about 1/3 of all individuals are red, or rufous.
- Pairs are usually monogamous and remain together for life. Some males, however, will mate with two different females. Sometimes, the second female will evict the first female, lay her own eggs in the nest, and incubate both clutches.