

Whip-poor-will



copyright Kanae Hirabayashi

GARDEN EARTH
NATURALIST

ECO-SERVICE CARDS

WHIP-POOR-WILL

Caprimulgis vociferus

ORDER: Caprimulgiformes

IDENTIFICATION CLUES



- ◆ 10 inches long, a “plump” bird with a relatively large head
- ◆ coloration is a mottled brown and gray which provides good daytime camouflage for this nocturnal bird
- ◆ tips of tail feathers are white and they have a white neckband
- ◆ white neckband and whiskered cheeks



Where to Look

During the day, the nocturnal Whip-poor-will roosts quietly on the ground or low branches. In the evening they can be located by their distinct call.



What It Eats.

The Whip-poor-will feeds primarily on moths which they hunt at night and swoop to catch on the wing.



Nesting

Whip-poor-wills lay 2-3 eggs on the ground. The eggs are splotted and spotted with browns and grays to blend in with the leaf litter.



Call or Song

The Whip-poor-will has a loud and distinct call, a repeated chant that sounds like its name, “whip-prrr-WEEL” with an emphasis on the last note.



Migration?

Whip-poor-wills spend the winter months from the Gulf Coast to the Honduras in Central America.



Did You Know

Very little is known about whip-poor-wills because they are so secretive and difficult to study.