

Nocturnal Owl Survey: Using a ZOOM recorder



Your Zoom device should already be arranged with the correct settings, but it is good practice to double check before leaving the house, as settings may be changed accidentally. Refer to the Zoom Settings on the back of this page to ensure the recorder is ready to use.

WHERE to make recordings

- **Each of the 10 stops in your owl route:** At each stop of your owl route, record the entire survey period, from before you press play on the owl track until after the final beep when the owl track is over. It is important to record the entirety of the stop to avoid missing any owls that only call for a brief period of time.

HOW to make recordings

1. Park safely, turn off your vehicle, and walk as close to the owl stop location as possible.
2. Attach the Zoom to a tripod with the recorder at breast height, and use a microphone windscreen to reduce wind noise on the recording. Make sure you set the Zoom up at least 10 m away from the speaker you will use to broadcast the owl track.
3. Double check the gain is set at 10; turn on the Zoom device with the slider on the side, and press the RED button under the screen to start the recording. The light above the screen will glow red when recording.



4. **At the beginning of the recording, state the following:**

- **The owl route name**
- **The stop number**
- **The date and time**
- **Your name**

Example: *“Stop number 4 of Cormack owl route, on April 12th 2024 at 10:45 pm, made by Jane Doe.”*

5. Start the owl broadcast track.
6. Stand quietly a few metres away from the recorder to reduce noise on the recording caused by chaffing fabric, shuffling feet, etc.
7. Stop the recording 10-15 seconds after the final beep of the owl track by pressing the RED button again.
8. Note the Zoom file name (ends with .MP3) on the owl data sheet or your notebook, as well as the route number and stop number.



If you are interested in listening to/viewing spectrograms of your recordings, download the free program Audacity. A spectrogram is a visual representation that shows the frequencies which make up sound and how they change over time, allowing you to ‘see’ the bird calls on your recording.

QUESTIONS?

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Zoom Settings for Nocturnal Owl Survey

Step 1: Turn the dial on the top of the recorder so the white triangle points to **2ch**.



Step 2: Set the gain dial on the side of the recorder to **“10”**. Make sure to double check the dial is in the right position before making a recording, as it can move in transport.



Step 3: Select the Audio Format.

- Click the **MENU** button on the side of the recorder
- Use the PLAY toggle to highlight **REC** and push the PLAY toggle to select it
- Select **REC FORMAT** and scroll using the PLAY toggle to select **WAV44.1kHz/16bit**
- Exit by clicking the MENU button repeatedly

Step 4: To change the 2 AA batteries, press down with both thumbs on the back of the Zoom and slide the plastic case off.



Step 5: To access the SD card, open the plastic flap labeled “SD HC” on the bottom of the Zoom. Wav files are large; make sure you have enough space on the card.



You are now ready to make recordings! Make sure you clearly state your name, the date, time, and survey location at the beginning of EVERY recording.