Class: Aves  
Order: Strigiformes  
Family: Strigidae  
Genus: Pulsatrix

**Distribution**  
From southern Mexico, the spectacled owl spreads south across Central America and into South America.

**Habitat**  
They occupy a variety of habitats. It prefers dense forest in tropics and subtropics. It’s also found in gallery forest, savannas, mangroves, and plantations.

**Food**  
Prime source of food is small nocturnal mammals, e.g. rodents, skunks, rabbits and bats. However it is somewhat of an opportunistic feeder.

**Reproduction**  
In Costa Rica, breeding starts any time in the dry season from December into the wet season in June. Courtship begins with the male displaying to the female. As part of the ritual, he offers her food. Both engage in singing and preening, which reinforces the pair bond.

The spectacled owl is considered to be more common in Costa Rica than other countries. East of the Andes, it ranges down to central Paraguay and Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil’s southernmost state. It also resides in the narrow swath of lowlands west of the Andes from Columbia down to northernmost Peru.

This species usually resides at lower elevations and on foothills. It primarily roosts and hunts in rainforest. However it also frequents forest edges and can be found almost anywhere stands of trees occur. It is more tolerant of deforestation than other owls with similar habitat requirements.

Other targets are frogs, small lizards and insects. Birds up to the size of a pigeon or oropendola are snapped up while the bird is sleeping. Occasionally it will take down an opossum, an animal almost twice its size.

Owls do not build nests and the spectacled owl is no exception – it finds a tree cavity. Two eggs are laid. Incubation lasts about 36 days. The female does most of the brooding.

**Juvenile**
Development
The male brings food to the female who feeds the chicks. At about six weeks, the chicks venture out on nearby branches. Both parents are attentive continuing to care for their young. The young owls stay with their parents for several months.

Characteristics
The spectacled look is created by white eyebrows, lores, and the rims of the facial disks. With the exception of a white throat and buffy underparts, the rest of the body, including a band across the upper chest, is brownish black. The wings and tail have pale-brown barring. It lacks ear tufts. Eyes are orange-yellow.

Adaptations
Owls have the ability to fly with minimal sound being emitted. They have extremely acute hearing. As with other raptors talons are designed for grasping prey and beaks for tearing prey apart. They are nocturnal hunters swooping down from lower branches to pounce on prey.

Status/Threats
In general owls do not have many predators. Larger birds of prey will attack. Eggs and chicks are more vulnerable. Loss of habitat is a key issue.

Sightings at Cano Palma
These are heard frequently at night around the station area.

References

Canadian Organization for Tropical Education and Rainforest Conservation
www.coterc.org