

A close-up photograph of a screech owl perched on a tree branch. The owl has brown and white mottled feathers, large yellow eyes, and a small yellow beak. It is looking towards the left. The tree branch is covered in green moss, and the background is a dark, out-of-focus forest.

Mohawk Group

**SEEKING**  
**THE ESSENCE**  
OF NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS

**THE OWLS COLLECTION**

BY MCLENNAN DESIGN AND MOHAWK GROUP





# CONTENTS

INTERPRETING NATURE	4
SEEKING THE ESSENCE OF OWLS	6
<b>DESIGNERS, THINKERS, MAKERS</b>	
MCLENNAN DESIGN	8
MOHAWK GROUP	10
<b>THE OWLS COLLECTION</b>	<b>12</b>
SNOWY OWL	14
WESTERN SCREECH OWL	16
EASTERN SCREECH OWL	18
GREAT GREY OWL	20
GREAT HORNED OWL	22
<b>INNOVATION</b>	<b>24</b>
ABOUT MOHAWK GROUP	26



A large, high-quality photograph of a snowy owl in flight. The owl is positioned in the upper left quadrant, facing right with its wings spread wide, showing intricate patterns of white and dark brown feathers. Below the owl, a rugged, snow-covered mountain peak is visible against a clear, pale blue sky. The overall scene is serene and evokes a sense of nature and wilderness.

## INTERPRETING NATURE

Owls have captured people's imagination for centuries. As they gaze at us with their large, seemingly all-knowing eyes they remind us a bit of ourselves. We feel a connection with owls, and these sages link us to the larger story of life on this planet.

While many designers take inspiration from nature, Mohawk Group and McLennan Design take every opportunity to integrate it into their work. For Jason F. McLennan and his team, each project is a chance to connect people more deeply to the world around them.

"We are interested in ideas that have multiple layers of meaning and can illuminate something interesting and intriguing culturally, ecologically, technologically and aesthetically," says Jason F. McLennan.

This is the type of vision Mohawk Group looks for when conceptualizing its flooring collections. A manufacturer of commercial flooring, Mohawk Group often takes a biophilic design approach to product development.

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The biophilia hypothesis posits that humans have an innate need for nature. Through biophilic design, architects, builders and designers work to link the spaces they construct with the natural environment.

This can happen in several ways. Directly, through natural light, fresh air, plants and other elements. Indirectly, through artwork or natural materials, colors and shapes. And also through the experience of space and place—how parts of a structure work together, how people move through that structure, or a building's setting in time and location.

The outcomes of biophilic design often include health, environmental, and economic benefits for both people and the world.

COLLECTION OVERVIEW

# SEEKING THE ESSENCE

While owls provided endless inspiration to the designers, for Mohawk Group and McLennan Design it was critical that the flooring patterns they created were not literal reproductions of feathers. They were seeking the essence of the owls.

“It has to do with identification,” explains McLennan. “We want people to be aware of the linkage and make the connection. But we want it to be in the back of their minds, not too literal when they’re first exposed to it.”

The design process began with an exploration of the plumage, distinguishing characteristics of each bird, their movements and their habitats. As the team zeroed in on the essence of each of the owls, patterns began to emerge.

Throughout this stage, the team worked along a spectrum between abstraction and exact manifestation. Skewing too much in either direction could negate the emotional connection that is a central goal of the design process. To create a design that works aesthetically but also on a deep psychological level requires balance.

Eventually the team achieved a point—what McLennan terms a “pulse”—where the ecological performance, story and aesthetics all began to line up into a coherent collection.

# LIVING PRODUCT CHALLENGE

Mohawk Group was able to take the connection with nature a step further by producing the flooring at its plant in Glasgow, Virginia. Located in the Shenandoah Valley this “Living Site” ensures that more than 300 carpet tile products manufactured at the plant meet the stringent requirements of the Living Product Challenge, petal certified flooring solutions by the International Living Future Institute. The Owls Collection has a net positive impact for people and the environment through innovations in materials, manufacturing and community involvement.



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The Red List  
Transparent Material Health  
Human Thriving



Mohawk Group is proud to be the first manufacturer to create a Living Site, a facility dedicated to the future and bettering our planet.





JASON F. MCLENNAN



“We are interested in ideas that have multiple layers of meaning and can illuminate something interesting and intriguing culturally, ecologically, technologically and aesthetically.”

DESIGNERS, THINKERS, MAKERS:  
**MCLENNAN DESIGN**

McLennan Design’s collaboration with Mohawk Group began with the development of the best-selling Lichen Collection. In Lichen, the designers used the beauty of nature to develop a strong biophilic link between flooring and lichen itself. The collection was both beautiful, full of natural inspired colors and textures, and functional, providing a durable product that visually replicated and satisfied our need for the outdoors in a commercial contract environment.

“When Mohawk approached me to do the sequel, if you will, we wanted this new collection to have that same spirit as Lichen, but yet be very different. We had to think about what would have the same impact of drawing people into nature but in a new way,” explains McLennan. Thus began a new journey into nature and design.

McLennan and his team consider design from multiple perspectives. First, how a product is made and its ecological footprint is vital. Mohawk Group’s continued participation in the Living Product Challenge shows the company’s commitment to responsible, holistic manufacturing. Next, on a pure aesthetic basis, the McLennan team wants their products to be beautiful and desirable. Finally, the designers seek to instill a deeper meaning into their work. A primal connection, an emotional response, a subconscious recognition.

By combining the ethos, the visuals and a linkage to a larger story, McLennan facilitates the process of falling in love with life.



## DESIGNERS, THINKERS, MAKERS: MOHAWK GROUP

Biophilic design—bringing nature into the built environment—creates spaces that are soothing and conducive to well-being.

By partnering with leaders in human-centred design, Mohawk Group is developing products that promote health, productivity and wellness. These collaborations accentuate the company's commitment to excellence in design, production, innovation and sustainability.

The Owls Collection really brings a topic to the discussion about the aesthetics of a product, and what that product offers to an environment.

“At Mohawk, as we continue our evolution in sustainable initiatives, it's really important for us to collaborate and work on the aesthetics and the beauty of our products just as much as we work on the materials that we use to make those products,” says Jackie Dettmar, vice-president of design and product development. “This collection, the Owls collection with Jason, really brings a topic to the discussion about the aesthetics of a product and what that product offers to an environment.”

In working with Jason F. McLennan and his team, Mohawk Group is again leading the industry in the commercial flooring sector.

“We’ve ended up with some very unique ways of putting a collection together that we wouldn’t have necessarily done ourselves. I think the outcome is always better when you have diverse creative minds and more creative energy all focused on solving a problem in a different way.”



JACKIE DETTMAR + JEANETTE HIMES



## THE OWLS COLLECTION

North America is home to many beautiful owls. The design team investigated several species and selected the Snowy Owl, the Great Grey Owl, the Eastern Screech Owl, the Western Screech Owl and the Great Horned Owl to form the basis of this collection.

The species were chosen for their individual attributes as well as the diversity of the regions they inhabit—every region of the continent is represented with an owl.

Part of the beauty of owls is that they are elusive. Their plumage has adapted for hunting in the dark and hiding in the light. An owl's feathers are derived from its environment and are typically mottled shades of black, brown, tan and grey with patterns unique to their habitat.

Owls provides a range of motifs that can be used in different applications in one space. Some designs are more dramatic, while others are softer. Pattern tiles can be paired with solid ones, allowing clients and interior designers to customize their carpet as desired.

Owls is a versatile, economic interior flooring product. Mohawk Group and McLennan Design ensured that the patterns complement each other, so the tiles can be used throughout an entire facility—from accents and transitions, to open concept areas—furthering the biophilic experience of space and place.

In interpreting owls as carpet, Mohawk Group has developed a collection that is multi-functional, environmentally responsible and beautiful to experience.







## SNOWY OWL

This beautiful eye catching owl inspired the most vivid design in the collection. Found throughout Canada and into the northern United States, the Snowy Owl is recognized by its bright white feathers covered with black flecks.

To replicate the snowy owl plumage, Mohawk Group introduced a brand new yarn colorway, Snow, into its production line.

Snowy Feather is a pattern that adds drama to any interior. The high contrast of the ivory white accented with deep blacks and rich greys gives designers a flooring with variety and balance that in combination work to create harmony. It has a truly striking visual impact in contract environments.







## WESTERN SCREECH

This small owl is found on the west coast of Canada, the U.S. and Mexico. Its range stretches eastward only as far as Colorado and New Mexico.

In investigating the Western Screech Owl, the designers took a different approach than with the other patterns in the collection. Here, the team experimented with magnification. Looking at just the feathers on the owl's face, the designers zoomed in and developed a compelling crosshatch pattern with subtle hues of dark and light greys.

The result is a pattern that offers a quiet drama that works well in large open spaces but is also ideal for transitional areas.





## EASTERN SCREECH

The Eastern Screech Owl has one of the widest ranges of coloration and patterning of all of the owls selected for this collection. The designers drew on those colors, playing with warm and cool tones of the spectrum.

This owl ranges from southern Canada, across the eastern U.S. and into Mexico. Through both color and horizontal elements drawn from its feather patterns, the Eastern Screech inspired a textural design that gives just the impression of plumage.

Mohawk Group embraced the emerging trend of a return to warm tints in interior design, introducing a warm, grey brown. This carpet brings a soothing softness that is well-suited to open areas in any workspace or commercial interior.







## GREAT GREY

The Great Grey Owl ranges from southern Alaska, through British Columbia, across the Canadian prairies and into Ontario and Montana. This owl's plumage has strong vertical elements as well as attractive textural patterns near the neck and head. With a mix of tiny and long feathers, the Great Grey Owl opened new avenues for the design team to explore.

The subtly defined textures in the Great Grey Flight pattern are derived from the tiny feathers and create strong, foundational interior flooring elements, while the Great Grey Feather pattern, informed by the larger and more distinct feathers, offers patterns that are perfect for accents and smaller spaces.





# GREAT HORNED

The Great Horned Owl has the largest range of any of the owls featured in the collection. Its territory stretches from Alaska to Mexico and the Pacific to the Atlantic.

The Great Horned Owl is also one of the more distinct species of the group. With this owl the team concentrated on coloration, using shades of tan and incorporating both warm and cool tones.

The Great Horned Owl is also distinctive for horizontal elements across its chest and face. Drawing on these elements resulted in a carpet that is focused on linear motifs and subtle but strong textures.







# INNOVATION IN MATERIALS AND MANUFACTURING

Owls is a strong collection, satisfying contemporary design trends while providing a classic and timeless color palette, as designers look for nuanced earth tones and nature-inspired neutrals. Brown, grey and snowy white appear throughout the collection. Translating these birds’ beautiful plumage into carpet patterns and color resulted in designs that are ideally suited to today’s environments.

To accurately interpret the essence of the colors seen in the Owls Collection, Mohawk Group has added a range of new colors to its Heathered Hues yarn system, including a beautiful new creamy white for Snowy Owl, along with a new neutral brown/grey that figures prominently in many owl species. Heathered Hues creates a stunning textural effect by using three different colors in every yarn bundle.

Mohawk Group continues to focus on the most sustainable ways to make yarn, by eliminating steps in the manufacturing process, decreasing water usage, and selecting pigments that minimize environmental impact. The new colors bring this collection to life.

# FULFILLMENT THROUGH FLOORING

Each carpet, like the owls that inspired them, is unique. Each has a different texture, different color and is true to the essence of the animal. These varied patterns allow interior designers to create distinct spaces within a larger environment.

While each pattern is unique, they are also complementary, and together they create a cohesive design story, one that is rooted in biophilia. The design team actively considered the interrelation between patterns and spaces throughout an environment to increase people’s comfort as they moved from room to room.

Owls provides both a striking accent and a beautiful all-over space for a variety of interiors. It also provides a link to a larger concept that people will recognize and connect with—the fulfillment that we derive from nature.

# SENSE OF PLACE

Every region of North America is represented with an owl, giving designers the option to really develop a sense of place. By using patterns and colors that come from that region, designers can connect the spaces they are designing to the surrounding environment.







## ABOUT MCLENNAN DESIGN

McLennan Design is one of the world's leading net zero energy, multi-disciplinary, regenerative design practices, focused on deep green outcomes in the fields of architecture, planning, consulting, and product design. We use an ecological perspective to drive design creativity and innovation.

Founded in 2013 by global sustainability leader and green design pioneer Jason F. McLennan and joined by partner Dale Duncan, the firm dedicates its practice to the creation of Living Buildings, net-zero, and regenerative projects all over the world. As the founder and creator of many of the building industry's leading programs while leading the International Living Future Institute, including the industry's first Zero Energy Certification programs, The Living Building Challenge, The Just Label, The WELL Building Standard and its related programs, McLennan and his team bring substantial knowledge, over 20 years of experience, and unmatched expertise to the A/E industry.

To learn more, please visit **[McLennan-Design.com](https://McLennan-Design.com)**.

## ABOUT MOHAWK GROUP

As the world's leading producer and distributor of quality commercial flooring, Mohawk Group believes that better floor coverings emerge from better design, innovation, sustainability, project solutions and operational excellence. Mohawk Group addresses the unique challenges and opportunities in contract interiors with a comprehensive carpet and hard surface portfolio of all types and price points. As the commercial division of Mohawk Industries, the company has a heritage of craftsmanship that spans more than 130 years.

To learn more about our full line of flooring products, please visit **[MohawkGroup.com](https://MohawkGroup.com)**.





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