

# Owl HANDBAG

by Barbara Crawford

**E**ngaging whimsy and rich color choices appeal to just about everyone, from the young to the young at heart. Combine that with spectacular colors of wool felt and embroidery threads and you have a recipe that will stir up the creative juices. My Owl Handbag project is whimsical and colorful, embellished with hand or machine embroidery.

This bag is made with wool felt, a non-woven fabric blend of wool and rayon. (I prefer Woolfelt by National Nonwovens.) Wool felt is always beautiful, never fades, and has no raw edges to turn under when appliquéing. It comes in a multitude of colors. This wonderful fabric can be used as is or washed to add texture to the surface. The rayon keeps it soft, pliable, and easy to work with. Prewashing makes the finished project machine washable. Prewash wool felt in cool to warm water by hand or on the gentle cycle of the washer. Each color should be washed separately. Dry it in a hot dryer.

For this project, I layered pieces of wool felt to create dimension and added embroidery for a decorative touch. At first glance, it appears there are many different embroidery stitches used on the owl. But in fact, there are only four: the blanket stitch, running stitch, lazy daisy, and French knot. These basic stitches are easy to learn and stitch (see the stitch diagrams on page 4).



Everyone has a handbag style preference. Some like the ever-easy handle to carry by hand, and others prefer the security and free handedness of a shoulder strap. This pattern offers both options.

Please read through all directions before beginning.

### Getting started

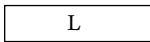

Enlarge the pattern pages 200%. Verify the accuracy of your enlargement with the size-check box. Cut out on the solid lines.

Referring to “Fabric & cutting requirements” for piece counts, use a fabric marking pen to trace around the pattern piece onto the appropriate wool felt. Cut out just inside the drawn line. Only cut a single layer of felt at a time. For the white H and the fuchsia J dots, use the patterns as a guide for the approximate size to cut these pieces. They do not need to be uniform and look better when cut without the pattern piece.

### Embroidering the bag front

For all embroidery, use 2 strands of embroidery floss in the color given.

Pin the white eye pad D to the small inner body piece C. Refer to the photo of my bag for placement. Using brown floss, blanket stitch in place. Pin the black eyes to the eye pad. Blanket stitch using white floss. Using brown floss, do

FABRIC & CUTTING REQUIREMENTS		Skill level: Easy
Bag size: 9½" x 13⅞" x 2"	• Requirements are based on 36" wide wool felt that is not prewashed before cutting. If you prewash, you may need additional yardage.	
Dark brown wool felt – ⅞ yard	• 4 A, 17 G, 6 K, 6 M	
Dark brown wool felt for handle (optional) – ¼ yard	• 2 strips 1½" x 55"	
Medium beige wool felt – ¼ yard or 1 piece 9" x 12"	• 2 B	
Bright yellow-green wool felt – ¼ yard or 1 piece 9" x 12"	• 1 C	
Fuchsia wool felt – ¼ yard	• 36 J (see “Getting started”), 4 L	
Pale orange wool felt – scrap	• 1 F, 2 I	
White wool felt – scrap	• 1 D, 36 H (see “Getting started”)	
Black wool felt – scrap	• 2 E	
* These strips may be pieced		
SUPPLIES: Fabric marking pen or pencil; embroidery thread – brown, yellow, white, turquoise, orange and fuchsia; round rattan purse handles – 8½" diameter; 2 white shank buttons – ¼" to ½"; decorative buttons – 1½" (2 required and 2 optional); snap – size 10 (about ¾" diameter); ⅜" elastic – 8"; safety pin		
ROTARY CUTTING		A through K are templates
 L	L – 3" x 12¼"	 M M – 2" x 2½"
Rotary dimensions include seam allowances.		

a running stitch on the white just outside the black eyes. Sew on the white shank buttons to highlight the eyes.

Pin beak piece F to the face. Using brown floss, secure it to the body with a straight whipstitch (not slanted).

Thread your needle with brown floss and use a running stitch to create vines all over the tummy of the inner body. Go back

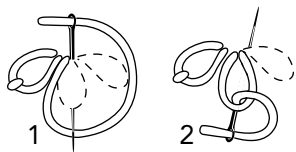
along the vine and add leaves using the lazy daisy stitch.

Thread your needle with yellow floss. Place a white H dot over a fuchsia J dot. Stitch to the owl belly using a large French knot (4 wraps around the needle).

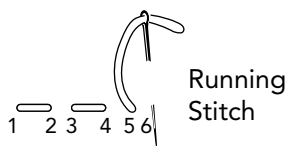
Place the embroidered body onto a medium outer body piece B. Pin to secure. Using brown floss, blanket stitch the 2 pieces together.

Using orange floss, stitch a

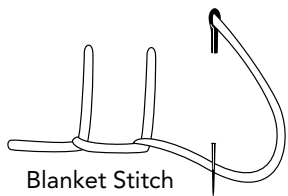
## Stitch glossary



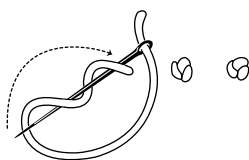
Lazy Daisy Stitch



Running  
Stitch



Blanket Stitch



French Knot

running stitch on piece B all the way around. Still using the orange floss, stitch side-by-side leaves using the lazy daisy stitch all the way around. With white floss, make large French knots in between each set of double leaves.

Place the embroidered piece onto a large outer body A. Pin to secure. Using fuchsia floss, blanket stitch in place. Pin the feet to the body, being careful to place them more than  $\frac{1}{2}$ " from the edge. Us-

ing brown floss, blanket stitch them in place. Set aside.

### Preparing the bag back

Place the remaining medium outer body piece B on a large outer body piece A. Using fuchsia floss, blanket stitch together. Referring to photo 1 for placement, use brown floss to whipstitch feathers to the back piece. For layers of feathers, start with the bottom layer and work your way up. Add more feathers if you like. For the stitched feathers, use whatever color floss you desire to make a running stitch in the shape of a U. Make French knots at the top of each stitched feather. The back does not need to be as ornate as the front but should be pleasing to the eye.

### Assembling the bag

Pin the short sides of 2 fuchsia L pieces together and stitch using  $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam. Press the seam allowances open. Topstitch the seam down, close to the raw edge. Make 2 of these gusset strips. Make short tubes on each end of each strip. To do this, fold in  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " and stitch down close to the raw edge, leaving the ends open.

Find the center bottom of the embroidered bag front. Align the seam of a gusset strip with the center bottom, right sides together. Pin. Continue pinning up the sides of the bag for the length of the gusset strip. Using a  $\frac{1}{2}$ " seam allow-

ance, start sewing at the stitching for the tube on the gusset and continue to the stitching for the tube on the other end of the gusset. Backstitch at each end. Be sure to leave the tubes at each end open. In the same manner, pin and stitch the other long side of the gusset to the prepared bag back.

Cut 2 pieces 2" long of  $\frac{3}{8}$ " elastic. Use a safety pin to pull one piece of elastic through the small tube on one edge of the gusset until the trailing end of the elastic is flush with the end of the tube. Stitch and backstitch through the bag front and tube to secure. Continue pulling the elastic until the beginning end is even with the other side of the tube. Pin and stitch. Repeat for the other side of the gusset. Set aside.

To make the bag lining, repeat the process of pinning and stitching the second gusset strip, excluding elastic, to the remaining bag body A pieces.

Slip the lining into the bag, wrong sides together. Pin all the way around the top of the head. Pinch together the sewn seams of the outer body and pin along those seams. Using turquoise floss, do a blanket stitch along the seams to make a crisp edge (photo 2). Continue the blanket stitching all the way around the head. Stitch both the front and back of the bag. To

join the gusset strips at the top, stretch the elastic in the bag even with the lining gusset strip and pin. Secure with a decorative button sewn through all layers to the outside of the bag. I added a second decorative button below the first (photo 2). Repeat for the other side of the bag.

### Adding the handle & strap

Referring to your enlarged large body pattern piece A for placement, lay one handle down on the inside of the purse. Pin an M piece over the handle in the center with the long side of M parallel to the handle. Pin another M piece over the handle at the left upper edge of the head. Repeat for the right upper edge of the head. Using a coordinating thread (not decorative), whipstitch the strips along the long edges. Repeat for other handle.

For the optional shoulder strap, layer the 2 handle strips together and stitch  $\frac{1}{4}$ " from the raw edge all around. Measure the button that you sewed to the outside of bag. At each strap end, cut a slit parallel to the long side of the strap and just large enough for the button to pass through. Machine stitch along each side of the slit so it stays strong. Slip the strap slits over the buttons.

### Finishing the bag

Sew the snap at the top inside of the bag.

Using white floss and a running stitch, embroider a vine along the top edge of 1 wing piece K. Stitch smaller branches off of the large vine. Add leaves using the lazy daisy stitch. Layer the embroidered wing over 2 more K pieces. Using turquoise floss, blanket stitch through all layers around the entire wing. Make 2 wings. The second wing should be the mirror image of the first.

Pin the wings in place on the front body of the bag. Using a small whipstitch and matching thread, attach them to the body.

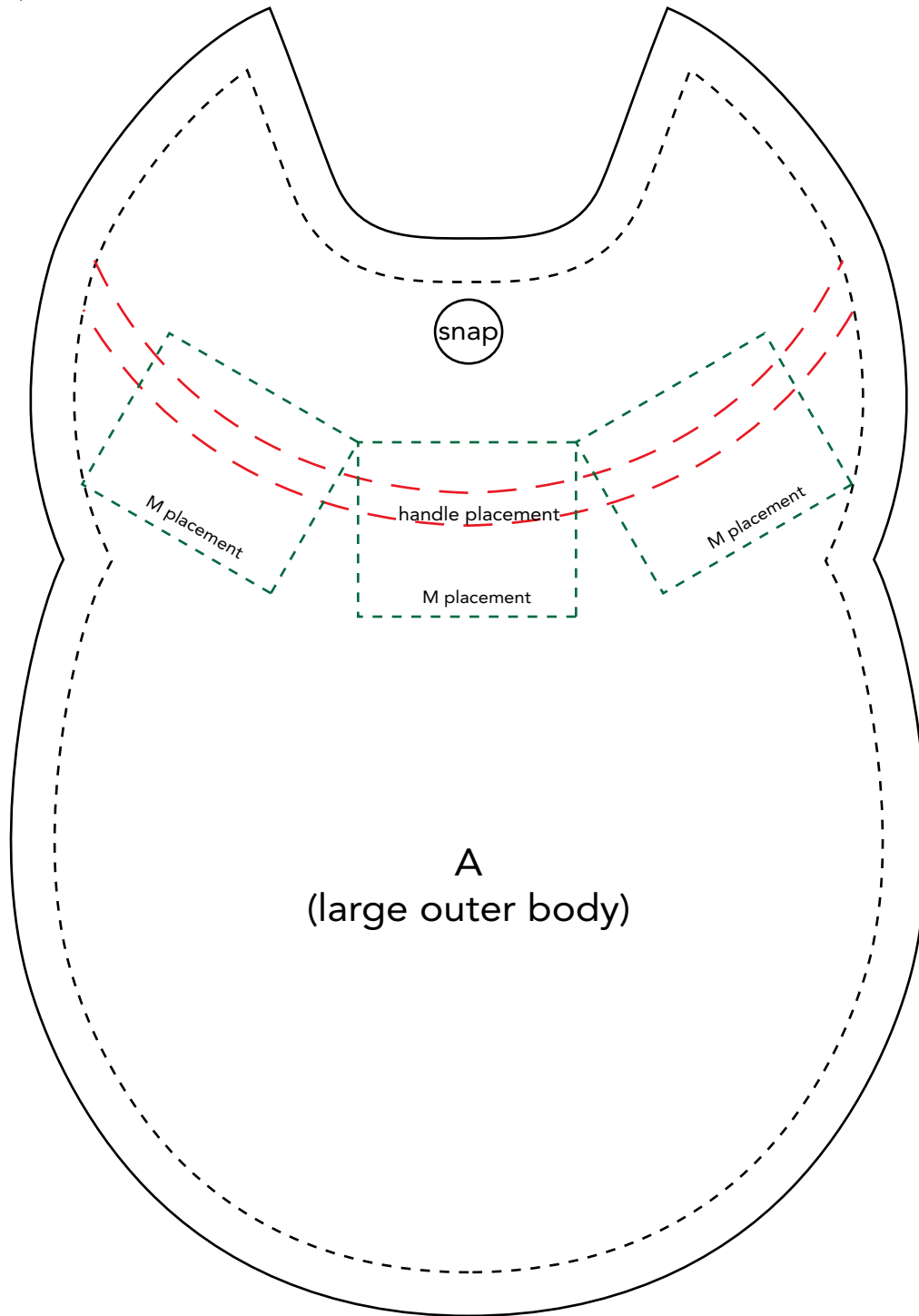


Photo 1



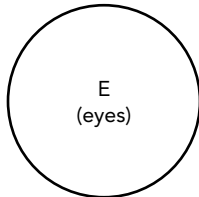
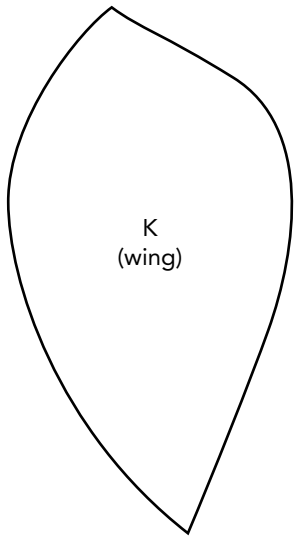
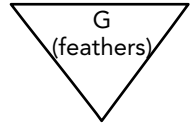
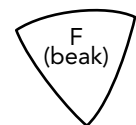
Photo 2

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measures  
1" x 1"  
enlarged  
size check

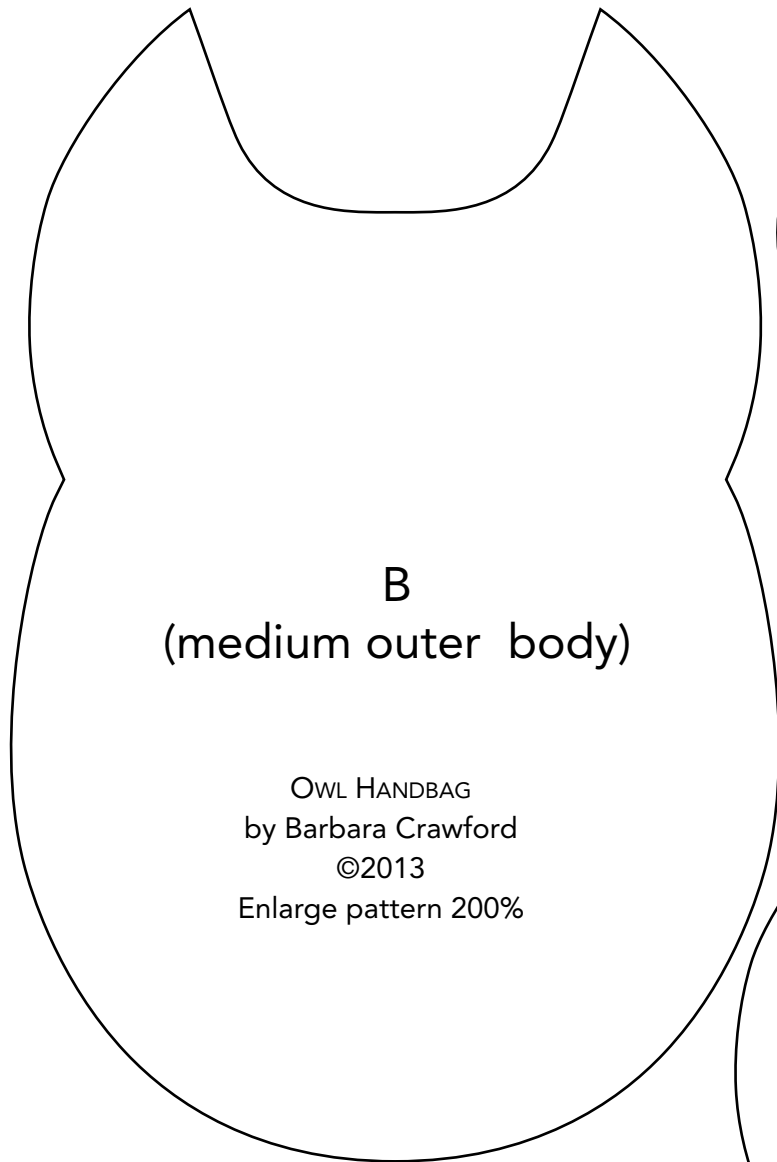


○ H (see "Getting started")

○ J (see "Getting started")

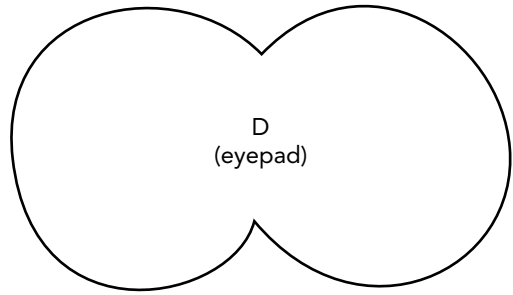


OWL HANDBAG  
by Barbara Crawford  
©2013  
Enlarge pattern 200%



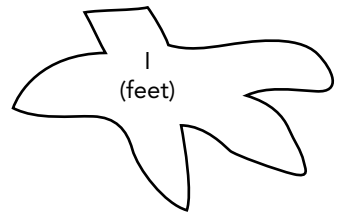
**B**  
(medium outer body)

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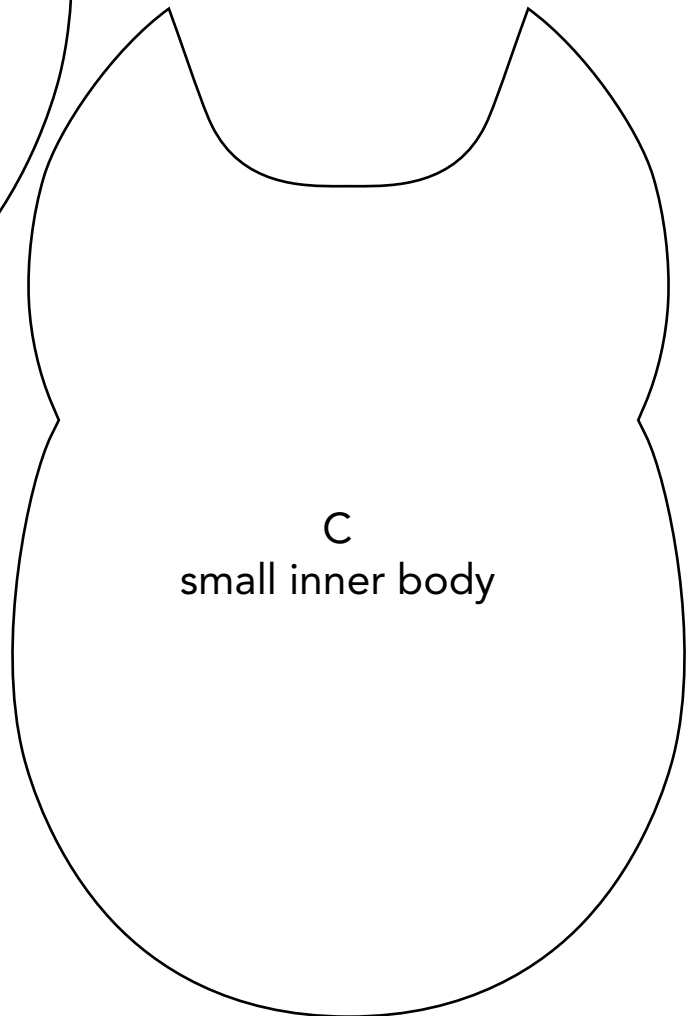


**D**  
(eyepad)

This box  
measures  
1" x 1"  
enlarged  
size check



**I**  
(feet)



**C**  
small inner body

