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This New Russian Spy Drone Looks a Lot Like an Owl

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Marina Lystseva / TASS

Russia has unveiled a combat surveillance drone intended to resemble a menacing owl spreading its wings.

The avian imposter was showcased at the Defense Ministry's annual military expo in the outskirts of Moscow on Tuesday.

Footage from the event published by the ministry's Zvezda news channel show the remote-controlled wheeled drone rolling across a grassy field before takeoff. The owl drone is equipped with a laser beam to guide artillery and aviation, the channel reported.

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From afar, it might be able to pull off the disguise. But an up-close glimpse reveals eyes permanently affixed with a sedated expression and a gaping hole where a beak should be.

When viewed from the ground, the drone's incognito appearance allows it to approach targets without being noticed, the state-run TASS news agency cited its developer as saying.

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Weighing in at 5 kilograms and capable of identifying targets 10 meters away, the army-green owl drone clocks in up to 40 minutes of flying time and can cover distances up to 20 kilometers, according to Interfax.

The unmanned aerial vehicle's exterior can also be changed to resemble a falcon or other birds of prey, Interfax reported.

Not one to be outshone, the U.S. intelligence community is reportedly developing lightweight owl spy drones of its own.

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