

BARRED OWL

Chouette rayée

Strix varia



ALTERNATE NAMES

Black-eyed Owl; Bottom Owl; Crazy Owl; Hoot Owl; Laughing Owl; Old-folks Owl; Rain Owl; Round-headed Owl; Swamp Owl; Wood Owl.

IDENTIFICATION

Large, gray-brown owl. Smaller than the Great Horned Owl; total length is 43-50cm. Round head lacking ear tufts. Well-developed facial disk surrounding dark eyes and dull yellow bill. Horizontal barring on throat; remaining underparts whitish with broad, dark streaks. Upperparts brownish gray with variable whitish to buff bars; tail brown with approximately 4 whitish bars and tip. Toes naked.

VOCALIZATION

Series of loud rhythmic hoots, often phonetically described as "who-cooks-for-you, who-cooks-for-you-all?" Also, will bark and hoo-ah in a somewhat agitated manner.

Breeding Range of Barred Owl in Ontario



BEHAVIOUR

Generalist predator, hunting mostly mammals (up to the size of a rabbit), and amphibians, and occasionally birds, reptiles, and invertebrates. Barred Owls are non-migratory. Flight light, buoyant, and noiseless; can glide gracefully and quickly among tree branches. Very vocal during the breeding season.

HABITAT

Widely distributed across North America. In Ontario, is a permanent resident of coniferous or mixed woodland primarily of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Forest region; partial to dense moist forest, especially near lakes, streams, and swamps. Is very rare in southern Ontario.

NESTING HABITS

Nests are usually in tree hollows, but will occasionally use abandoned hawk or crow nests but will sometimes use nest boxes. Pairs are faithful to nesting sites and will return year after year. Male provides food to female and young.