

LONG-EARED OWL

Hibou moyen-duc

Asio otus



Photo: ©Jim Flynn

Breeding Range of Long-eared Owl in Ontario



ALTERNATE NAMES

American Long-eared Owl; Cat Owl; Lesser Horned Owl; Wilson's Owl.

IDENTIFICATION

Medium-sized owl. Total length: 35-40cm. Head large and round with buff-coloured facial disk and obvious ear tufts. Loes and bill black. Upperparts mottled black, brown, gray, buff, and white; underparts whitish-gray and buff with dark brown streaking and barring. Noticeably long wings. Legs and toes are densely feathered.

VOCALIZATION

Will shriek, whistle, and groan when excited. Commonly utters soft, quavering hoots.

BEHAVIOUR

Is a migratory species, although nature of migration patterns is poorly understood. Is nomadic in response to prey availability.

Hunts almost exclusively in open areas, feeding mainly on small mammals and birds. Very agile while in flight; hunting flight consists of long glides interspersed with deep wing beats. Often hovers over prey when hunting. Roosts communally.

HABITAT

In North America, its breeding range includes the southern half of Canada and most of the United States. Prefers dense coniferous and mixed woods adjacent to open areas as well as open forest. Known to breed throughout Ontario.

NESTING HABITS

Uses existing nest structures such as abandoned hawk, crow, or squirrel nests. Prefers to nest in dense stands that may consist of reforestation planting or isolated groves in farmland. Has a tendency to nest in loose colonies.