

Tengmalm's Owl

(previously known as Boreal Owl)

Nyctale de Tengmalm

Aegolius funereus

Nordic Species

(rare visitor to southern

Quebec)



Wingspan: 54 cm to 62 cm



Tengmalm's Owl is a small Nordic owl with white-spotted chocolate brown plumage. As with other small owls, the head does not have any egresses. The facial disks are framed with black and give the owl a surprised look. The beak is typically clear. The top of the head is dark brown and covered with little white dots.



The female is larger than the male.



Tengmalm's Owl lives in conifer or mixed forests, as well as the taiga, by preference in a mountainous region.



The diet is primarily composed of small rodents, mostly voles, but also insects and the occasional bird. The owl is mostly nocturnal, but will occasionally hunt in the daytime.



Tengmalm's Owl can live 7 to 8 years in the wild and up to 15 years in captivity.



The female builds her nest inside a naturally-occurring tree cavity or a hole hollowed out by a woodpecker. The female lays 4 to 6 eggs.



The young first take to flight around 4 to 5 weeks of age. The parents continue to feed the young another 5 to 6 weeks thereafter.



This little owl only frequents southern Quebec during the winter when rodents become too difficult to find in the Nordic regions. The Quebec population of Tengmalm's Owl is threatened by the loss of its nesting grounds by deforestation. In fact, this species depends greatly on woodpecker holes and tree cavities to build its nest; cutting down mature trees thus directly threatens the species' survival.



Generally, birds of prey live longer in captivity than in the wild; their longevity sometimes doubles! In the wild, the bird is subject to several natural stressors; it must hunt to feed itself, protect itself from predators, defend its territory, migrate, etc. In captivity these stressors are reduced or even absent. Once its natural fear of humans is overcome, the captive bird can live a long peaceful life.