

Long-eared Owl

Migratory

Hibou Moyen-duc

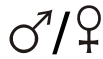
Asio otus



Wingspan : 95 to 112 cm



Straight and slender, this owl is named for the prominent, erect ear tufts on the top of its head. Plumage is brown on the back and lighter with dark vertical barring on the chest, and the facial disk is reddish. This owl has big yellow eyes.



Females are slightly bigger than males, but otherwise similar in appearance.



Long-eared owls are usually found in forests, often close to the tree line or open spaces.



Diet mostly consists in rodents like mice or voles, and sometimes birds. This owl is the most nocturnal of all Quebec species.



Long-eared owls can live up to 27 or 28 years old.



Long-eared owls never build nests. They rather use an old squirrel or crow's nest located high in a tree, or sometimes a hollow in a tree. Females lay 4 or 5 eggs.



Owlets can start flying when they are between 30 and 35 days old, but stay dependent on their parents until 56 to 63 days old.



Not much is known about the state of this species in Quebec, long-eared owls being strongly nocturnal, thus difficult to observe. Populations are probably affected by agricultural activities and urban expansion, which have been constantly increasing since the last 40 years, destroying habitats.



Sometimes, several long-eared owls gather in large communal roosts during the winter. In one instance, 13 of these owls have been observed roosting together. For this to happen, food sources have to be abundant.