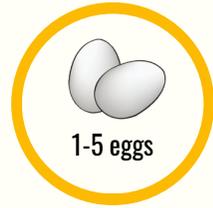
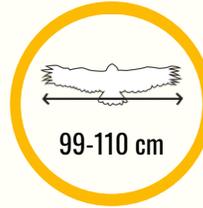




Barred Owl

Chouette rayée, *Strix varia*



IDENTIFICATION

Its fully striped brown and pale plumage earned it its name. Its chest, back and wings are streaked with horizontal brown stripes, while the bands on its belly are vertical. Along with the Barn Owl, they are the only nocturnal birds of prey in Canada with dark eyes.



ECOLOGY

Nutrition

It eats a variety of small rodents, including voles, chipmunks, squirrels and rabbits. Depending on what it finds, it will also feed on birds, reptiles and amphibians. It is nocturnal, but its song can be heard in broad daylight.

Breeding

It seeks out natural cavities in trees, or an old buzzard's, crow's or squirrel's nest. The female incubates her eggs for 4 weeks. The young take flight for the first time at around 7 weeks but remain dependent on their parents for up to 4 months after fledging.

DISTRIBUTION

In Quebec, it is a resident species: it does not migrate. As long as they can find enough prey to feed on, they don't tend to travel long distances. Most Barred Owls will occupy the same territory all year round, if not all their lives! It occupies intact, unfragmented mature mixed or deciduous forests. It is also found in the eastern United States and along the coast of British Columbia.

STATUS AND POPULATION

The species is considered secure.¹ Its population has suffered greatly from the intensive logging that has destroyed its habitat. It is very sensitive to human activity but does not hesitate to use man-made nesting boxes. In maple groves, it helps maple producers control rodents that attack the tubing, such as squirrels.

¹Wild species of Canada report, 2015

