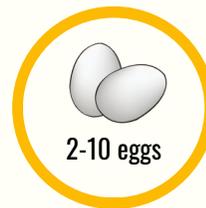
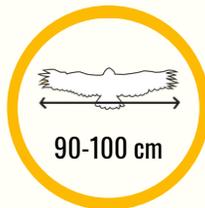




# Long-eared Owl

Hibou moyen-duc, *Asio otus*



## IDENTIFICATION

It is best recognized for its upright, slender stance. It also has long, closely spaced tufts on the top of its head. Its back plumage is brown, while its pale breast is striped with vertical dark lines. Its red facial disk frames two large yellow eyes with white eyebrows. It is much smaller than the Great Horned Owl.



## ECOLOGY

### Nutrition

Its diet consists mainly of rodents, such as mice and field mice, and occasionally birds. To hunt, it looks for clearings in the boreal forest. It is the most nocturnal of Quebec's owls, hunting almost exclusively at night, unlike most strigiformes.

### Breeding

This owl never builds a nest; instead, it uses an old squirrel or crow's nest high up in the trees. Occasionally, it will opt for a hole in a tree. Young birds take flight for the first time when they are 5 weeks old. They depend on their parents until they are 9 weeks old.

## DISTRIBUTION

It nests in open woods, especially on edges or near clearings, throughout Canada, mainly in southern regions. They keep well away from populated areas. In winter and during migration, Long-eared Owls sometimes gather during the day in groups known as dormitories. These groups can number from two to fifty individuals, sometimes more, perched in a grove. Such gatherings offer better protection against predators.

## STATUS AND POPULATION

The species is classified as secure.<sup>1</sup> However, it is poorly monitored in Canada. Since the 1970s, data from the Christmas Bird Census show a significant decline in its population. Habitat loss and degradation, particularly due to urban development, are believed to be the main causes of this decline.

<sup>1</sup> Wild species of Canada report, 2015

