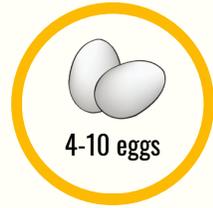
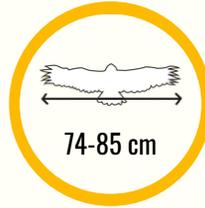


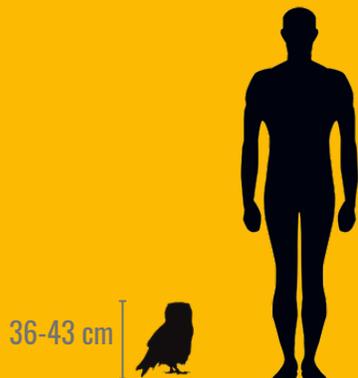
Northern Hawk Owl

Chouette épervière, *Surnia ulula*



IDENTIFICATION

Its long tail and outline are reminiscent of a sparrowhawk. Its head is rounded and its facial disk is edged in black and smaller than those of other owls. Its pale plumage is heavily striped with brown on the breast and mottled on the back. Its wings are short and pointed.



ECOLOGY

Nutrition

It feeds mainly on small rodents and occasionally on birds and insects. It may also supplement its menu with frogs or fish. This small owl is essentially diurnal. Its distinctive flight consists of several rapid wingbeats followed by a short glide. It is the only owl capable of flying in place.

Breeding

It nests in the cavities of broken tree trunks or those created by woodpeckers. The young take flight for the first time when they are 4 to 5 weeks old. They depend on their parents until they are 3 months old. The young develop very rapidly, and their survival rate is quite high: by the age of 3 to 4 weeks, the young have already reached 78% of adult weight! Parents hide food in their territory to ensure the young's nourishment. This enables them to survive the unpredictable conditions of northern regions.

DISTRIBUTION

It nests in northern Canada, right up to the treeline, mostly in open boreal forests. In winter, when it visits southern Quebec, the Northern Hawk Owl frequents coniferous or mixed forests near clearings such as fields, bogs or lakes.

STATUS AND POPULATION

The species is considered secure.¹ Its population appears to have changed little since the 1970s. Breeding in remote and inaccessible areas, it is difficult to keep accurate track of its population.

¹ Wild species of Canada report, 2015

