

BARRED OWL

Strix varia



The Barred Owl is a large with a round head, no ear tufts and a long tail. Primarily gray and brown with white bars and edges, and the face is gray-brown. Barred owl under parts are buff with vertical streaks, the collar is barred horizontally, contrasting with a streaked breast. These owls have dark brown (virtually black) eyes and a yellow or white beak almost covered by feathers. They are about 16-25 inches in length, weight about 1-2.3 lbs and have a wingspan of about 38-50 inches. The females are slightly larger than the males.

The Barred Owl is buoyant and light, noiseless with slow, heavy wing beats. Rarely soars, but frequently flies high.

They are extremely vocal in February and March, and again during late summer and fall. They are probably the most vocal of all owls.

Barred owls prefer mature forests and heavily wooded swamps. They roost in densely forested areas, and hunt over farmland, open country, roadsides and rivers.

The barred owl is found all over the eastern United States, north into Canada and south into Florida and Texas. They are also found in the Pacific Northwest, overlapping with spotted owl habitat.

Barred owls are fairly sedentary, a behavior that may contribute to establishing long-term pair bonds and nest territoriality. They frequently use abandoned Red-shouldered Hawk or crow nests, deep hollows in trees or nest boxes. Barred owls will often nest close to a Red-shouldered Hawk without conflict, and may use the same nest several years in a row. They lay 2-3 (rarely 4-5) white eggs, with a slightly rough texture. Incubation is all done by the female, and lasts approximately 28-33 days. The young owlets begin branching by 4- 5 weeks, but do not fledge until they are closer to 6 weeks old.

Barred owl prey size spans from insects to woodchucks, geese, and herons. They are opportunistic hunters, and will often eat easy to catch prey such as lizards, frogs and small rodents.



(Picture above is of an adult male Barred Owl's release that was Hit By Car.)



Barred Owl while in flight cage recovering

Cool Facts

- The belly feathers of some Barred Owls are pink. This coloring may be the result of eating a lot of crayfish.
- Barred Owl populations have expanded westward in the last century. The more aggressive Barred Owl may displace the endangered Spotted Owl. Hybrids of the two species are also known.
- Great Horned Owl is the most serious predatory threat to the Barred Owl. Although they often live in the same areas, the Barred Owl will avoid parts of its territory occupied by a Great Horned Owl.



KOLA WAKON OF WILDLIFE”

Roughly translated it means “Sacred Friend of Wildlife”. This is what every Wildlife Rehabilitator, every person who rescues wildlife, everyone who transports and every Veterinarian that works with wildlife are to the wild kingdom.

In any State, you can call your local Game & Inland Fisheries, local Veterinarian, or animal shelter and they should have some phone numbers for local Wildlife Rehabilitators.

If you have any questions you may call Pearl Beamer, State & Federally licensed Wildlife Rehabilitator within the state of Virginia about wildlife. Pearl specializes in Raptors. 757-855-2922 (7am-7pm)

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