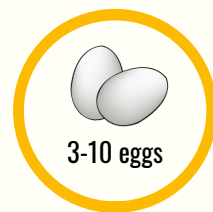
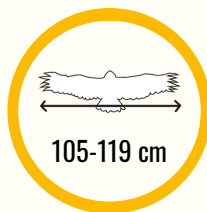




Barn Owl

Tyto furcata



IDENTIFICATION

It can be recognized by its heart-shaped face. Its plumage is pale brown on the breast and rusty or buff-colored with gray spots on the back. Its long, slender legs are lightly feathered and its head has no everts. Along with the Barred Owl, they are the only nocturnal birds of prey in Quebec with very dark eyes. Its butterfly-like flight is similar to that of the Short-eared Owl.



ECOLOGY

Nutrition

Most of the prey it eats is active at night, as are squirrels, and chipmunks are therefore relatively safe. It feeds mainly on rodents and occasionally on birds. During the nesting period, she may store dozens of prey items in her territory, to feed the young once the eggs have hatched.

Breeding

As its name suggests, it nests in church steeples, barns or abandoned houses. It may also use a hollow tree or a nesting box. It doesn't build a nest; the eggs are laid on a layer of shredded cast! The young fledge when they are 8 to 9 weeks old. They remain dependent on their parents for 3 to 5 weeks after fledging.

DISTRIBUTION

Because our winters are so cold, it is rarely found in Quebec. It lives mainly in tropical and temperate regions of the planet. Canadian populations are restricted to southern British Columbia and southwestern Ontario, where it has almost disappeared. It inhabits mostly open areas, such as fields and farmland.

STATUS AND POPULATION

The species is classified as endangered.¹ It is also one of the species likely to be designated as threatened or vulnerable.² Its population has been greatly reduced by new agricultural practices, urbanization and the conversion of rural buildings to more modern structures.

¹ Wild species of Canada report, 2015

² Ministry of Forests, Wildlife and Parks, 2021

