





Great Horned Owl

Bubo virginianus Gmelin

NG-238; G-174; PE-172; PW-120; AE-pl 282; AW-pl 288; AM(II)-162






	ABANDONED NEST		F-M 1.26-33 DAYS SEMIALTRICIAL 2		BIRDS SM VERTS
30'-50' (15'-70')	FP	2-3 (1-6+)	F-35 DAYS		INSECTS
CLIFF		MONOOG	MF		

BREEDING: Conif or decid forest and woodland, swamp, orchard, park, riparian forest, semidesert. 1 brood. **DISPLAYS:** Male performs noisy aerial courtship display; ritually feeds female. Pair bill, bob, call, and click. **NEST:** In abandoned tree nest of raptor, corvid, occ squirrel; also tree cavity, cave, crevice, stump, and on ground in log, among rocks; of sticks; moss, hair, shredded bark, rootlets, etc., lined slightly with feathers and down. Perennial. **EGGS:** Dull white. 2.2" (55 mm). **DIET:** Esp rabbits and rodents, pheasants, quail, passerines, occ fish, amphibians, reptiles, scorpions. Mainly nocturnal, but also hunts crepuscularly. Ejects pellets. **CONSERVATION:** Winter resident. Occ uses nest box. **NOTES:** Incubating bird oft snow-covered in n; early eggs may freeze. Population density in n tracks snowshoe hare density; disperse when hare numbers crash. Young hatch asynchronously; rapidly develop ability to regulate body temperature. fly at 63-70 days, fed for several months. Adults perform distraction display. Daytime roost in dense conif near trunk. Most do not breed before second year. Arctic populations eat more birds. Cache prey; defrost frozen cache by "incubating" it ("prey thawing"). **ESSAYS:** Irrupations, p. 639; Pellets, p. 297; How Owls Hunt in the Dark, p. 291; Mobbing, p. 425; Brood Reduction, p. 307; Breeding Season, p. 55. **REFS:** Adamcik and Keith, 1978; Marti, 1974; Turner and McClanahan, 1981.

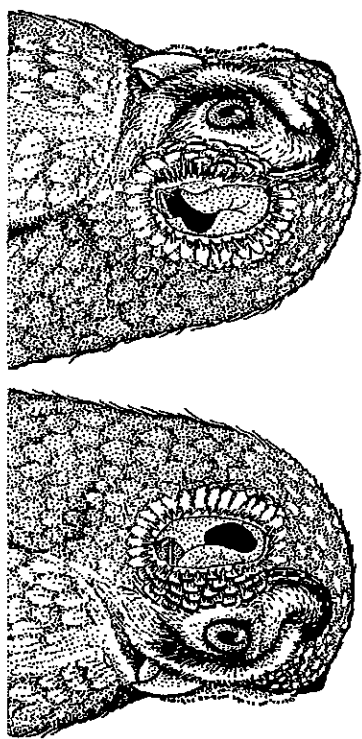
Barred Owl

Supersp #20
Strix varia Barton

NG-240; G-176; PE-174; PW-120; AE-pl 285; AM(II)-170

	20'-50' (15'-80')		?		F 1.28-33 DAYS SEMIALTRICIAL 2		BIRDS SM VERTS
				2-3 (2-4)	F-42 DAYS		HOVER & POUNCE
				MONOOG	F-M		

BREEDING: Dense conif and mixed conif/decid forest, wooded swamps and river valleys. 1 brood. **DISPLAYS:** Loud vocals by perched male and female. Pair nod, bow with half-spread wings, wobbling and twisting head side to side. **NEST:** Also use abandoned nests (esp hawk, also squirrel, crow), scraping hollow in remnant lining; may add green sprigs to open nest, but no material added to cavity. Perennial. **Eggs:** White. 2.0" (50 mm). **DIET:** Esp mice, squirrels, hares, shrews, also crayfish, amphibians, reptiles, rarely fish, insects. Ejects pellets. Of hunts diurnally. Feeding perch near nest. **CONSERVATION:** Winter resident. Range expanding to the n w. **NOTES:** Male feeds incubating female. Young from small cavity nests may leave earlier than young in roomier cavities; parental care extends beyond 4 months. Light, quiet, slow-flapping flight, oft gliding. Audibly snaps beak. Drinks and bathes. Not easily disturbed from daytime roost. **ESSAYS:** Pellets, p. 297; How Owls Hunt in the Dark, p. 291; Mobbing, p. 425; What Do Birds Hear?, p. 299; Altricial Young, p. 581; Parental Care, p. 555. **REFS:** Burton, 1984; Devereux and Mosher, 1984; Barhart and Johnson, 1970.



Both sides of owl's head with feathers pulled back to expose asymmetry of the ears.

region of the midbrain. Each cell is sensitive to a unique combination of time and intensity differentials and responds only to sound issuing from one small area in space. The Barn Owl's brain thus contains a "neural map" of auditory space. So armed, it is little wonder that the Barn Owl has been so successful that today it is arguably the most widespread bird species on Earth.


But their auditory systems are not the only reason that some owls can hunt successfully in the dark. Their sensory abilities are coupled with sedentary habits. As shown in studies of Tawny Owls in England, individuals hold a hunting territory in which they operate night after night. Familiarity with the environment, especially such things as the heights of favorite perches above the ground, seems to be essential to the owls' ability to pounce on prey. Hearing helps to replace the absence of sight, but intimate knowledge of the habitat completes the job.

SEE: What Do Birds Hear?, p. 299; Raptor Hunting, p. 223; Size and Sex in Raptors, p. 243; Site Tenacity, p. 189; Pellets, p. 297. **REFS:** Knudsen, 1980; Konishi, 1983; Martin, 1986.

Birds and the Law

Most people interested in birds know that millions of Passenger Pigeons were killed for sale as food, but few realize that an enormous variety of other native birds once found their way to markets and dining tables. Reading his classic *Birds of America*, published in the early 1840s, one is quickly impressed with the number of species with which John James Audubon had firsthand experience. His numerous comments on hunting and eating eggs and adults applied not just to game birds such as ducks, geese, and prairie chickens, but also to others such as Dunlin ("... my party shot a great number of them, on account of the firmness and juiciness of their flesh"), Eskimo Curlew, Belted Kingfisher ("... the eggs are fine eating"), Ameri-

WOLFE





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Dedicated to:
Ruth Ehrlich;
Gabriel, Adria,
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and all those
who share with us
the pleasure of
watching birds