

# Asio otus

## Long-eared Owl

31 - 40 cm Tall, 178 - 435 g, 86 - 100 cm wing span

The long-eared owl breeds in Europe, Asia, and North America and is part of the larger grouping of owls known as typical owls, family Strigidae, which contains most species of owl.



It has blackish ear-tufts, which are positioned in the center of the head and make the owl appear larger to other owls while perched. The female is larger in size and darker in coloration than the male. The long-eared owl's brownish feathers are vertically streaked. Tarsus and toes are entirely feathered. Eye disks are also characteristic in this species. However, the eye disks of *A. otus* are darker in color or rusty-orange.



Long-eared owls are silent most of the year, but during breeding season they draw on a complex repertoire. Males give a series of up to 200 whoo notes evenly spaced about 2–4 seconds apart. This call, akin to the sound made by blowing across the lip of a very large bottle, can be heard more than half a mile away. Both sexes utter a variety of alarm calls, including barks, squeals, and a gruff, catlike mew.



The long-eared owl hunts over open country by night. It is very long winged, like the similar short-eared owl, and glides slowly on stiff wings when hunting. Its food is mainly rodents, small mammals, and birds.



It nests in trees, often coniferous, using the old stick nests of other birds such as crows, ravens and magpies and various hawks. The average clutch size is 4–6 eggs, and the incubation time averages from 25–30 days. It will readily use artificial nesting baskets. An unusual characteristic of this species is its communal roosting in thickets during the winter months.



This bird is partially migratory, moving south in winter from the northern parts of its temperate range. Its habitat is forest close to open country. Overall, these owls are secretive, and are rarely seen. In Europe it faces competition from the tawny owl and is most numerous in localities where the tawny is absent, notably in Ireland, where it is the dominant owl.



Conservation status	
Extinct	Least Concern
EX	EW CR EN VU NT LC
Least Concern (IUCN 3.1) <sup>[1]</sup>	
Scientific classification	
Kingdom:	Animalia
Phylum:	Chordata
Class:	Aves
Order:	Strigiformes
Family:	Strigidae
Genus:	<i>Asio</i>
Species:	<i>A. otus</i>
Binomial name	
<i>Asio otus</i>	

