

barred owl *Strix varia*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Aves

Order: Strigiformes

Family: Strigidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

An adult barred owl is 18 to 22 inches long. The male and female are similar in appearance. This large, gray-brown bird has a rounded head and large brown eyes. There are white spots on its back feathers. The chest feathers are cream-colored with horizontal brown stripes, and the belly feathers are cream-colored with brown vertical stripes. It has a yellow beak.

BEHAVIORS

The barred owl is a common, permanent resident statewide in Illinois. It lives in upland woods, conifers, bottomland forests or swamps. This bird consumes mostly mice but also eats amphibians, birds, crayfish, fishes, insects, mammals and reptiles. Its call is a series of consecutive "hoots" that sound something like "who cooks for you, who cooks for you-all." This owl is mainly a nocturnal bird. Nesting occurs from February through April. The nest may be placed in a tree cavity or an old hawk's nest. Two or three round, white eggs are laid.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests; swamps

Woodland Habitats

bottomland forests; southern Illinois lowlands; coniferous forests; upland deciduous forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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