

Species Sheets: Long-eared Owl



photo by Kate Davis ©

Common name: Long-eared Owl

Latin Name: *Asio otus*

Field Marks: Length 15 inches
Wing span 36 inches



Medium-sized owl with truly long ear tufts, close set but not always visible, especially in flight. Resembles Great Horned Owl, but smaller, and without white throat patch. Round facial disk and yellow eyes. Paler facial disk and underwing on male. Brown with dark streaks and bars that help them blend in to tree bark and lichens during the day. Lives all across the Northern Hemisphere.

Habitat:

Forest bird that relies on openings to hunt at night. Open coniferous woodlands, mixed deciduous forest, and shelter belts.

Behavior:

Feeds mostly on small mammals, whatever is common in area. Voles, mice, shrews, pocket gophers. Mostly nocturnal, but may be crepuscular during breeding season. Will fly low over hunting area and locate prey by hearing with very quiet flight, listening while in the air to drop on rodents. Sight may be secondary on these occasions. During breeding, male will have flight display with zigzagging and wing claps below body in flight.

Vocalization:

A long series of “hoo” notes by the male during the breeding season, often lasting for up to 200 notes spaced at 2-4 second intervals. Variety of cat-like calls given during defense of nest and young. Also barking alarm call, but usually silent, so may be overlooked in much of territory.

Nest and eggs:

Will use tree nests of other birds, such as crows, magpies, and hawks. Eggs number 5-7. Male continues to feed the young up to six weeks after fledging.

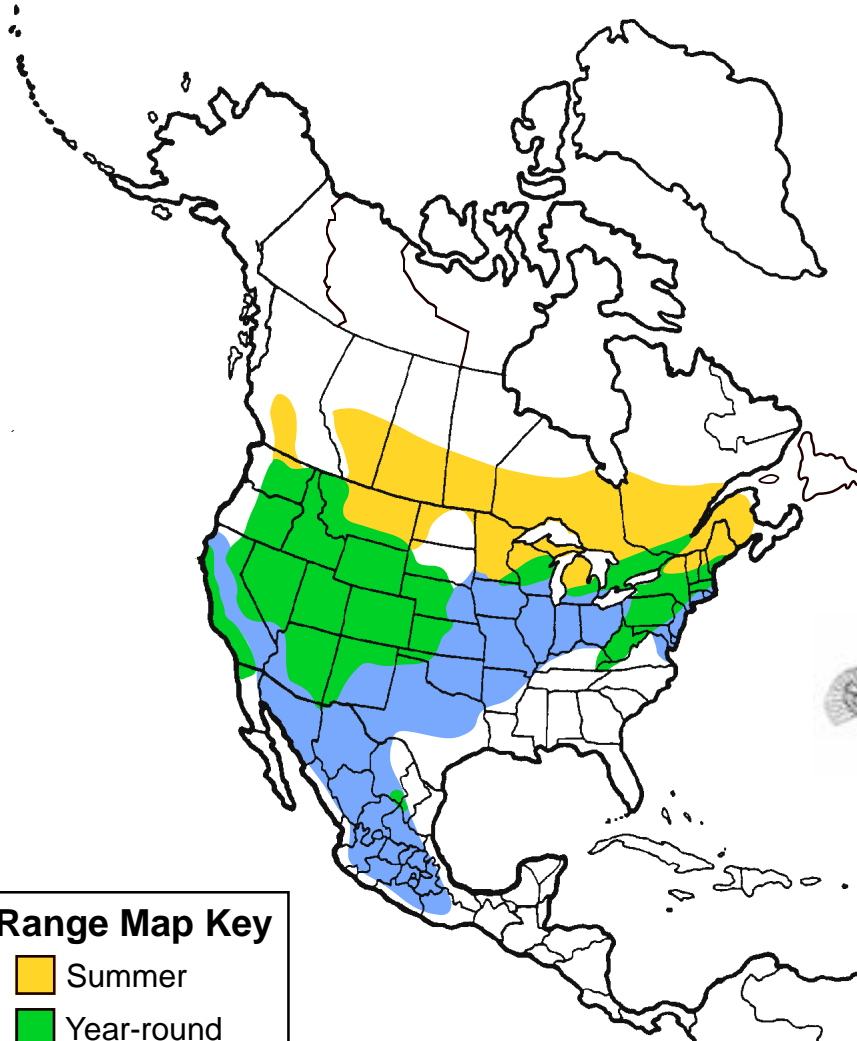
Movement:

Migratory in northern regions and very nomadic in areas where cyclic voles are main prey item.

Interesting Fact:

May roost communally in winter in shelterbelts and trees. Winter roosts have been found containing as many as 80 birds in small area. Birds breeding in northern U.S. and southern Canada have been recovered in winter in central Mexico, more than 2000 miles south of banding sites.

Range Map: Long-eared Owl



Long-eared Owl, Copyright © Kate Davis

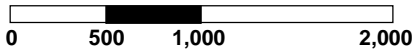


These maps are designed to show the general limits of occurrence. Within those limits, each species will likely be found only in appropriate habitat.

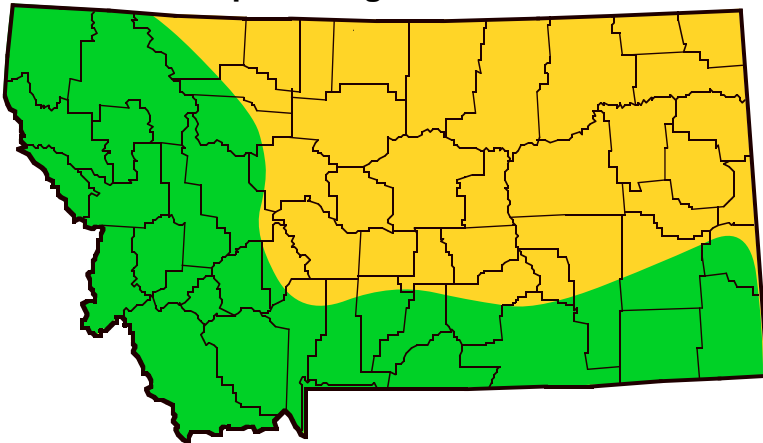
Range Map Key

-  Summer
-  Year-round
-  Winter

scale: 1 inch = 1,000 miles



Raptor Range in Montana



Montana range maps are based on the Montana Bird Distribution data.