

## Ohio's Owls

Ohio Woodland, Water, and Wildlife Conference  
03/03/2021

Joseph Lautenbach  
Wildlife Biologist



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## Great Horned Owl



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### Great Horned Owl

- Forests
- Abundance increases in diverse landscapes
- Widely distributed throughout Ohio
- Stable populations

T. Daniel/ODOW

OHIO DIVISION OF WILDLIFE

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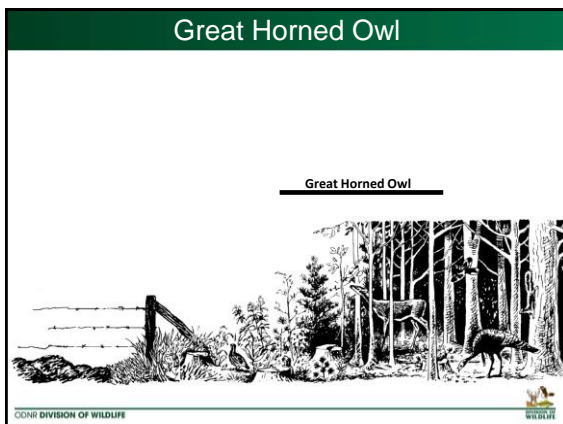
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## Great Horned Owl

- Early nester
- Uses a variety of nests
- Averages 1-2 eggs



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## Great Horned Owl

- Stable to increasing in Ohio
- Can add box/nesting structure if limited in region



ODNR DIVISION OF WILDLIFE



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## Barred Owl



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## Barred Owl



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## Barred Owl



T. Daniel/ODOW

- Resident
- Remains on territory
- Diet: small mammals, birds

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## Barred Owl

- Mature forests
- Upland, wetland, riparian
- Most abundant in eastern Ohio
- Stable to increasing



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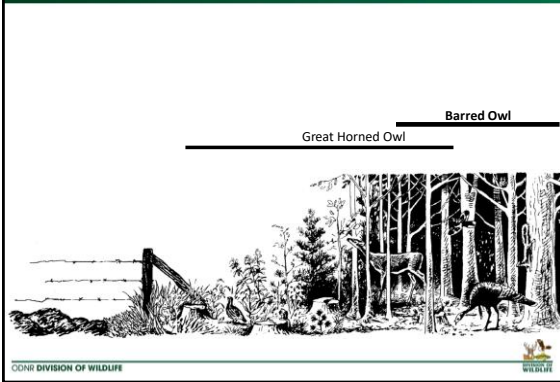
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## Barred Owl



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## Barred Owl

- Nests in cavities
- Lay 2 or 3 eggs on average
- Rapid growth
- Capable of flight by 10 weeks



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## Barred Owl

- Leave snags
- Provide nest box
- Increase timber rotation



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## Eastern Screech-Owl



N. Harfmann/ODOW

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## Eastern Screech-Owl



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## Eastern Screech-Owl

- Most widespread
- 2 color phases
- 50% gray, 50% red in S. Ohio
- 70–90% gray in N. Ohio



N. Harfmann/ODOW

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## Eastern Screech-Owl

- Forests
- Reduced occurrence with large owls
- Increase with human presence
- May increase in riparian areas



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## Eastern Screech-Owl

Eastern Screech-Owl

Barred Owl

Great Horned Owl



ODOW DIVISION OF WILDLIFE



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## Eastern Screech-Owl



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### Eastern Screech-Owl

- Nest in cavities
- Lay 3-4 eggs
- Initiate in April or May
- High nest survival



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### Eastern Screech-Owl

- Stable to increasing
- Add nest boxes



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### Northern Saw-Whet Owl



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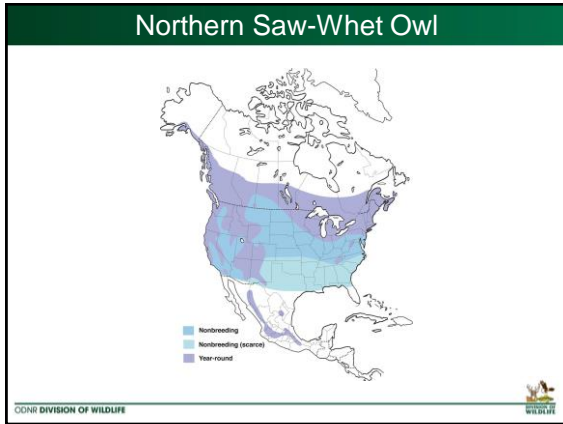
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### Northern Saw-Whet Owl

- Primarily a migrant
- Forests
- Connectivity
- Dense cover

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### Northern Saw-whet Owl

Northern Saw-whet Owl

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Eastern Screech-Owl

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Barred Owl

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Great Horned Owl

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Barn Owl

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### Northern Saw-whet Owl



- Arrive around October
- Adults migrate before immature
- Often irruptive
- Irruptions every 4 years

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### Northern Saw-whet Owl

- Arrives in October
- Departs March or April
- Initiate nests March-May
- Lay 5-6 eggs



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### Northern Saw-Whet Owl



- Population status unknown
- Provide conifers
- Dense cover

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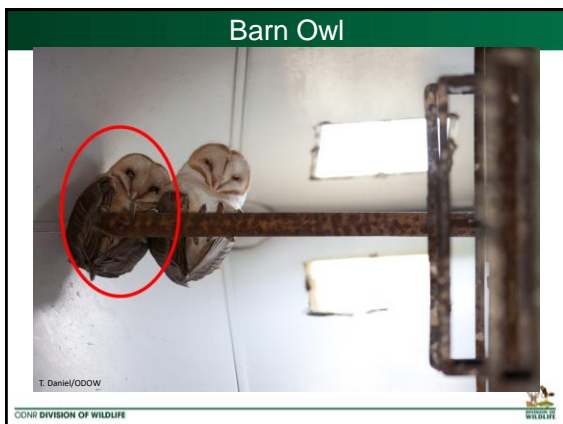
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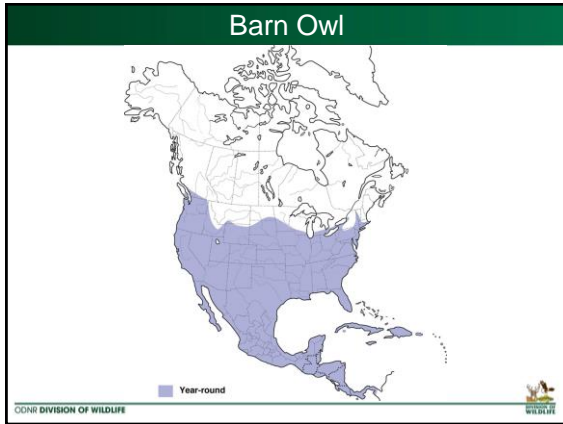
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### Barn Owl

- Threatened in Ohio
- Grasslands or wetlands
- Roosts in dense cover, structures
- Limited by winter
- Partial migrant

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### Barn Owl

Northern Saw-whet Owl

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Eastern Screech-Owl

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Barred Owl

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Great Horned Owl

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**Barn Owl**

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## Barn Owl

- Nests in cavities
- Clutch size varies
- 5-7 eggs on average
- Leave box at 8.5 wks
- Fed until 12-13 wks



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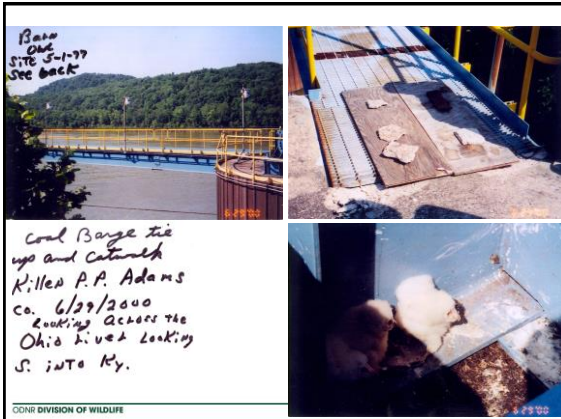
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## Barn Owl



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**Barn Owl**

- Report Barn Owl observations to:  
[wildohio.gov/reportwildlife](http://wildohio.gov/reportwildlife)
- Want barn owl box plans?
- [Joseph.Lautenbach@dnr.ohio.gov](mailto:Joseph.Lautenbach@dnr.ohio.gov)

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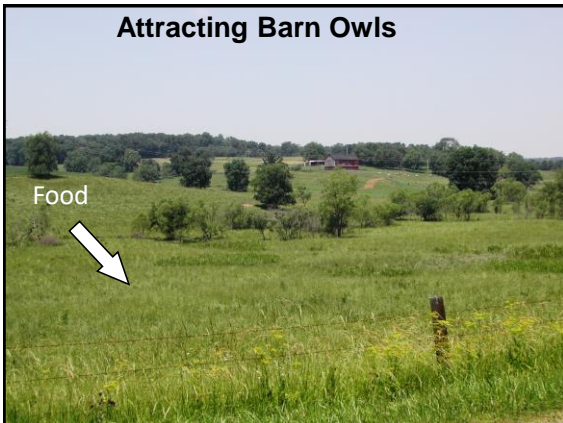
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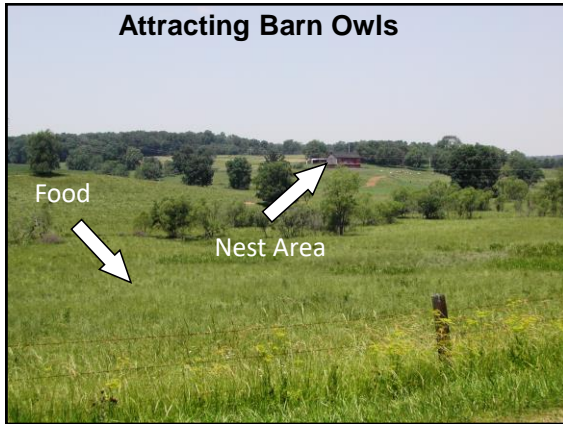
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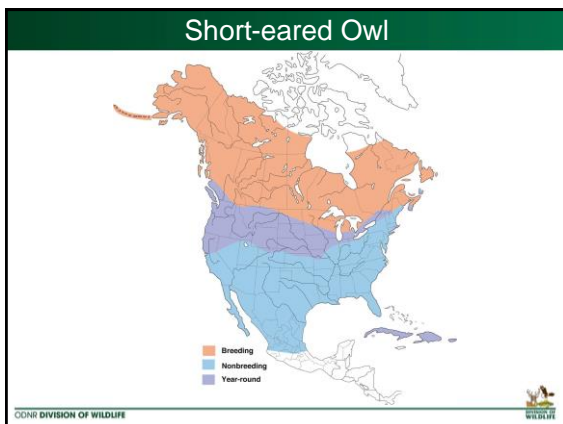
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### Short-eared Owl

- Grasslands and wetlands
- Large areas
- Dense roosting cover
- Prey availability



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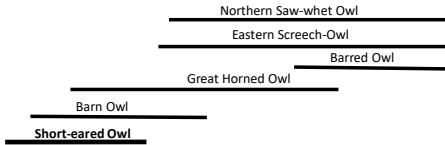

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### Short-eared Owl

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### Short-eared Owl

- Nesting activity dependent on prey
- Will nest in over-wintering areas if prey is abundant
- Clutch size varies
- Nest on ground



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## Short-eared Owl

- Likely declining
- Habitat loss
- Maintain grasslands/wetlands



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## Short-eared Owl

- Will use CRP grasslands
- Advocate for Farm Bill conservation programs



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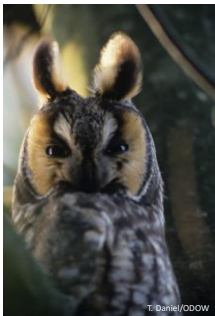
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## Long-eared Owl



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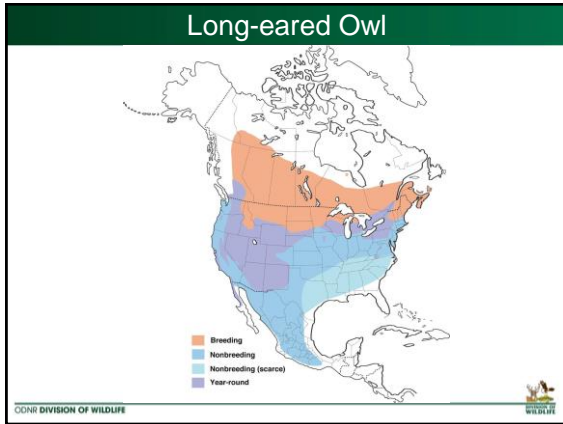
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### Long-eared Owl

- Open areas
- Open forests, savannahs
- Adjacent dense cover
- May be limited by food availability

N. Hartman/Owl

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### Long-eared Owl

Northern Saw-whet Owl

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Eastern Screech-Owl

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Barred Owl

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Great Horned Owl

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Barn Owl

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Short-eared Owl

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Long-eared Owl

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### Long-eared Owl



- Migration or non-breeding in Ohio
- Overwinter roosts often communal
- Roosts in dense cover
- Roosts used for years

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### Long-eared Owl

- Nests in existing nests
- Nests initiated from March – May
- Lays 4 – 5 eggs



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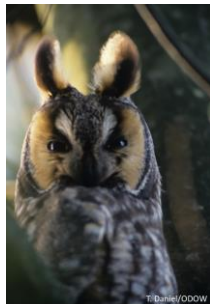
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### Long-eared Owl

- Population status unknown
- Maintain grasslands and wetlands
- Plant/maintain conifer stands and other dense cover



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## Snowy Owl



N. Hoffmann/ODOW

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## Snowy Owl



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## Snowy Owl

- Overwinter in Ohio
- Primarily in open landscapes



T. Daniel/ODOW

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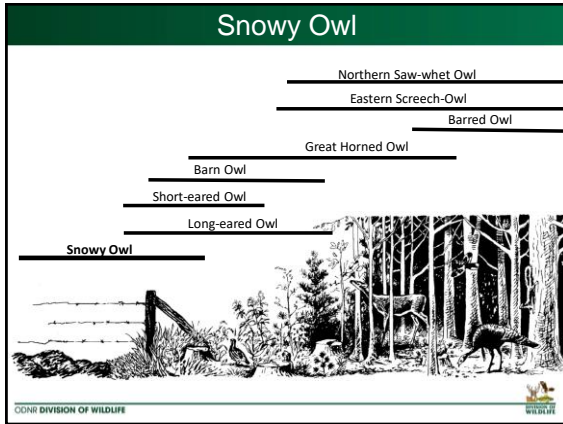
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Thank You!



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