

# Boreal Owl

*Aegolius funereus*

## Description

The Boreal Owl is a secretive owl, found in boreal, subarctic and temperate mixed conifer forests, in North America, Europe and Asia. It is uncommon and is widely distributed in upper elevation and densely forested parts of Alberta south to Bragg Creek and Priddis. In the winter it may move into more settled areas. This is a small to medium sized owl: length 22.9–25.4 cm (9-10"), weight averages 102 g (3.6+ oz), wingspan 51-66 cm (20-26"). It has grey brown colouration and spotted forehead. Upper parts are darker with white spotting; the belly has thick, vertical brown streaks. Short flights are made with rapidly beating wings. These are nocturnal owls. This is a bird of prey. It uses low perches (branch/tree trunk) from which it dives down to grab prey with its talons. It eats small animals such as voles, lemmings, shrews, mice, moles, and sometimes squirrels, small birds, bats, frogs, and large beetles. Breeding areas are found in mixed forests. It avoids large unbroken stands of pine trees. It commonly nests in abandoned larger woodpecker holes, but also in nest boxes.

## FUN FACTS

- *Aegolius* means "a kind of owl" or "goat" while *funereus* means "mournful".
- Its call is only heard during spring courtship and nesting; a soft bell like sound that is repeated in series.
- The female is much larger than the male and show the most sexual dimorphism of any American owl.
- Ear openings are asymmetrical allowing them to triangulate where sounds are coming from.

If you find an injured or orphaned wild animal in distress, please contact the Calgary Wildlife Rehabilitation Society hotline at **403-214-1312** for tips, instructions and advice, or visit the website for more information [www.calgarywildlife.org](http://www.calgarywildlife.org)



## Contact Us

 11555—85th Street NW, Calgary, AB T3R 1J3  
 403-214-1312

 [admin@calgarywildlife.org](mailto:admin@calgarywildlife.org)  
 [calgarywildlife.org](http://calgarywildlife.org)

 @calgarywildlife  
 @calgarywildlife  
 @Calgary\_wildlife