

Common Barn-Owl

(*Tyto alba*)

FIELD MARKS: Round-headed, eyes brown, bill long and white. Facial disk white, somewhat heart-shaped, and bordered by white, dark brown, or tan trim. Ventrally, ranging from white to light rust with brown spotting. Dorsally, light rust with scattered grayish mottling. Plumage varies according to geographic location. **SIZE:** 15 to 18 inches. **WEIGHT:** 15 to 18 ounces (one pound). **SIMILAR SPECIES:** Possibly snowy owl; however, the snowy owl has yellow eyes and black bill, and contrasting black and white color. The short-eared owl has yellow eyes and black bill and is more golden/brown. **HABITAT:** Most often

associated with rural areas, near agricultural fields and grasslands. **VOICE:** A variety of vocalizations; however, the typical call is a screech, "Shrreeeee, shrreeeee..." lasting about two seconds per call. **NATURAL HISTORY:** Begins nesting in March or April. Frequently brings off two broods per nesting season. Nests in many manmade structures (buildings, bridges, nest boxes) as well as natural sites (hollow trees, holes in cliffs or banks). Clutch size two to 11. Incubation approximately 33 days. Young fledge at 50 to 60 days. Migratory in colder parts of its range. **FOOD HABITS:** Small to medium-sized rodents. **STATUS:** A rare stray or accidental species in Montana, with fewer than 15 records in the state.

