

Great Gray Owl

(*Strix nebulosa*)

FIELD MARKS: Round-headed, eyes yellow, bill yellow. Facial disk large and prominent, gray within and surrounded by a black border. White throat patch is evident. Ventrally, the owl is mottled with varying shades of dark and light grays, browns, and white. Dorsally, colors appear the same, although there is less white. Overall plumage appears gray. The tail is long and extends beyond the folded wings. **SIZE:** 24 to 33 inches. **WEIGHT:** 33 to 46 ounces (two to three pounds). **SIMILAR SPECIES:** Barred owl is smaller, has brown eyes, and the overall color is

brown and white. **HABITAT:** Dense forests, often moist and with openings for hunting. **VOICE:** A loud low and descending, "Wooooo, woooo, wooo, woo, woo, wo...", that fades. **NATURAL HISTORY:** Begins nesting in March or April. Nests on broken-topped snags or old stick nests of other birds. Clutch size four to five. Incubation approximately 30 days. Young fledge at 35 to 40 days. Probably resident year-round with some elevational migration. **FOOD HABITS:** Small rodents such as voles and pocket gophers. **STATUS:** Listed as a species of special concern by the Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks. As recent surveys in western Montana indicate, probably more common than previously thought.

