

Long-Eared Owl

(*Asio otus*)

FIELD MARKS: Tufts appear to sit on the middle of the head above the eyes. Eyes yellow, bill black, and throat dark. Facial disk circular and rusty/brown; color intensity varies. Chest and belly are mixed with horizontal and vertical markings. Ventrally, mottled brown. Dorsally, the back is mottled with mixtures of brown. **SIZE:** 13 to 16 inches. **WEIGHT:** eight to 10 ounces. **SIMILAR SPECIES:** Great horned owl is much larger, tufts set wider on the head, and the throat is white. **HABITAT:** Long-eared owls are most often observed in hedgerows, woody draws, and

juniper thickets, although they do occur within the forest edge. They are predominantly open-country hunters; however, they are seldom seen because of their nocturnal habits. **VOICE:** A soft, "Hoo, hoo, hoo...", varying in number and given at two- to three-second intervals. **NATURAL HISTORY:** Begins nesting in March or April; nests in a stick nest built by other raptors, magpies, crows, or ravens. Clutch size three to six. Incubation about 26 days. Young fledge at 30 to 40 days. Migratory in northern latitudes, although some owls may stay throughout the winter. **FOOD HABITS:** Depends heavily on small rodents. **STATUS:** Listed as a species of special concern by the Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks.

