

OWLS OF CONNECTICUT



BARN OWL

Tyto alba

Length: 12.6-15.8 in

Weight: 14.1-24.7 oz

Wingspan: 39.4-49.2 in

The Barn Owl is the most widely distributed species of owl in the world, and one of the most widespread of all birds. It's found almost anywhere in the world barring polar and desert regions and some of the Pacific Islands. It can be found throughout the state, especially in the barns where it gets its namesake from. Like most owls, it's nocturnal over most of its range and specializes in hunting animals on the ground via sound. Barn Owls will mate for life or until the death of one of the pair before searching out a new mate.



EASTERN SCREECH OWL

Megascops asio

Length: 6.3-9.8 in

Weight: 4.3-8.6 oz

Wingspan: 18.9-24.0 in

The Eastern Screech Owl is a small owl that's relatively common throughout Eastern North America, including Connecticut. This small owl prefers to stay in the shadows, and will completely avoid areas that larger owls inhabit. This has led them to move further and further into the cities and other highly developed areas and have done well for themselves in urban areas. They're also strictly nocturnal, choosing to roost during the day and hunt at night, which further allows them to live among humans by reducing interactions between the two.



GREAT HORNED OWL

Bubo virginianus

Length: 18.1-24.8 in

Weight: 32.1-88.2 oz

Wingspan: 39.8-57.1 in

The Great Horned Owl is one of the most widely distributed owls in the Americas. It lives year-round in Connecticut throughout the entire state. It has two tufts called plumicorns on either side of its head, -resembling horns-which is how it gets its name. This large owl is extremely adaptable with a vast range in search of its primary diet of rabbits, hares, mice, and rats. On the hunt, it has been known to go after anything it can overtake, including larger reptiles and other birds. It's said that the Red-Tailed Hawk is its diurnal counterpart, as they share a similar habitat, prey, and nesting habits but at different times of day.



SNOWY OWL

Bubo scandiacus

Length: 20.5-27.9 in

Weight: 56.4-104.1 oz

Wingspan: 49.6-57.1 in

The Snowy Owl is traditionally an owl thought of in the tundra or taiga thanks to its white coloration that blends in perfectly with the snow. However, it's a surprisingly nomadic bird that's been slowly breeding more and more south. Currently, it has a breeding population in the northernmost part of Connecticut that's pushing further south as fluctuations of prey species force them to relocate. This large bird of prey is the largest avian predator of the High Arctic and one of the largest owls in the world. In the New World though, they come out on top as the heaviest and longest winged owl in North America. This owl is unique in that they choose to be active at both night and day, which allows them to be top predators for a wide range of prey no matter the time of day.



BARRED OWL

Strix varia

Length: 16.9-19.7 in

Weight: 16.6-37.0 oz

Wingspan: 39.0-43.3 in

The Barred Owl is native to eastern North America. They're year-round residents in Connecticut, but have slowly been pushing more and more west where they're considered an invasive species. They prefer the dense mature forests in the center of the state, but have been acclimating well to more gradients of open woodlands. This owl is a large opportunistic predator and is well known for preying upon other small birds in their hunting grounds.

LONG-EARED OWL

Asio otus

Length: 13.8-15.8 in

Weight: 7.8-15.3 oz

Wingspan: 35.4-39.4 in



The Long-eared Owl has one of the most extensive breeding ranges of any owl. It stretches across most of the continental United States and far into Canada. Connecticut has both a year-round and a wintering population that will fight one another for territory every year. This owl has adapted well to human deforestation as it prefers semi-open habitats like that at the edge of a woodland. This is because they still prefer to roost and nest within dense stands of wood, but later prefer to hunt over open ground. It's a highly specialized predator with voles composing most of their diet.

SHORT-EARED OWL

Asio flammeus

Length: 13.4-16.9 in

Weight: 7.3-16.8 oz

Wingspan: 33.5-40.5 in



The Short-eared Owl gets its name from how it's much smaller ear tufts may not always be visible, but they're always there. It's a year-round resident of Connecticut. This smaller owl has a very distinctive flight pattern - it's been described as more bat-like with its floppy wings and irregular wing beats. During the breeding season, they make a spectacle of themselves when flying in attempts to attract a female. The smaller male will swoop down over the nest of their desired mate while flapping their ungainly wings in a courtship display. If she accepts, then the two will mate for life.

NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL

Aegolius acadicus

Length: 7.1-8.3 in

Weight: 2.3-5.3 oz

Wingspan: 16.5-18.9 in



The Northern Saw-whet is one of the smallest owl species in North America. Within Connecticut, they can be found state-wide in dense thickets or conifers. These small owls are constantly in danger of being preyed upon by larger owls and raptors, so have adapted by having highly developed hearing that allows them to hunt in pitch black conditions while avoiding being hunted. This tiny owl has an inconsistent migrating pattern, with some maintaining their year-round status while others elect to migrate further south during the winter.

GREAT GRAY OWL

Strix nebulosa

Length: 24.0-33.1 in

Weight: 24.7-60.0 oz

Wingspan: 53.9-60.2 in



Great Gray Owls are rare and have (scarce) range in northern Connecticut. They're very large birds with broad wings and long tails — one of the tallest owls in America. Their eyes appear small and close together on their big facial disks, giving them a unique expression. A white "X" pattern on their faces is another key identifier. Like their name implies, their bodies are covered in fluffy, silvery gray feathers. They reside in dense pine forests and on the edges of meadows, avoiding areas with people. Like most owls, they are most active at night when they hunt, most often in the hours before dusk and dawn.