

Barn Owl

Tyto alba

Description

The barn owl is a medium-sized bird, measuring 14-20 inches in length with a wingspan of nearly four feet. Its plumage is golden-brown on the uppersides and grayish-white on the chest and belly, marked with dark specks. The owl's most distinctive feature is its heart-shaped white face, encircled by a ring of brown feathers. It has rounded wings, a short tail, and long legs. Unlike other owls, it does not hoot but instead produces a raspy hissing or shrieking sound, earning it the nickname "monkey-faced owl."

Female barn owls lay five to ten eggs at intervals of two to three days, placing them on bare surfaces in buildings, tree hollows, caves, or burrows. The eggs hatch after 32-34 days, and both parents participate in feeding the owlets. The young birds begin hunting independently at around two months old. Females frequently have two broods each year.

If you find an injured or orphaned wild animal, please contact the Calgary Wildlife Rehabilitation Society hotline at 403-214-1312, for tips, instructions and advice.

FUN FACTS

- It roosts in tree cavities, cliff crevices, riverbanks, and buildings such as barns.
- When threatened, a barn owl spreads its wings and sways its head back and forth. Additionally, it may fall onto its back and strike out at the threat with its feet.
- The soft feathers allow for barn owls to silently sneak behind their prey.

