



Short-eared Owl

(Asio flammeus)

Named for its small, rarely visible ear tufts, the Short-Eared Owl usually appears round-headed. The owl only raises its closely spaced tufts when disturbed. The Short-Eared Owl is primarily tawny, streaked with dark brown markings over the entire surface of the body. Its most distinguishing feature is its eye markings, fans of dark feathers in the facial disk, surrounding the eyes.

Habitat & Diet

Especially well adapted for life in the grasslands, the Short-Eared Owl feeds mainly on voles and other small rodents. It will also occasionally take a small bird. It can often be seen hovering with quick, moth-like wing beats, searching for its prey in the tall grass.

Fascinating Facts

The Short-Eared Owl is one of the few owls that are often seen during the day. It hunts at dusk and dawn, coming out to search for food before the sun has begun to set. The Short-Eared Owl lays its eggs on the ground, in a shallow depression. When a predator approaches the hidden nest, the parent will drag its wing, imitating an injured bird, to lure the animal away. The short-eared owl is found on every continent except Australia.

Status

Once a very common raptor on the east coast, the Short-Eared Owl has suffered greatly as a result of habitat destruction. As commercial development has begun to take over many of the marshes and wetland habitats, this owl's population has been diminishing rapidly. It is currently listed as an endangered species in many states east of the Mississippi.



Height: 12 to 16 inches
Weight: 10-15 ounces
Wingspan: 3½ feet
Habitat: Plains and marshy habitat
Range: Throughout the world
Life Expectancy: Up to 13 years
Baby: Owlet
Group: Parliament



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