

# River Bend Naturalists Notebook

Presented by: RIVER BEND NATURE CENTER, Faribault, MN 55021

## BARRED OWL

*Strix varia*

A large gray-brown woodland owl, without tufts or horns, and a puffy shaped head. It is smaller than the Great Horned owl, measuring about 18-20" in length, with a 4 foot wing span.

Named for the rust-colored streaks or "bars" on its chest, the Barred owl's belly is streaked lengthwise, and the back has white spots. Its brown eyes are very distinctive among owls.

With a little experience, the hooting of the Barred Owl is easily distinguished from that of the Great Horned Owl. The "AW" at the close of its call is characteristic. The hooting is more emphatic than that of the Great Horned Owl, but not as deep. It might sound like the barking of a dog.  
Call: HooHoo - Hoo Hoo Hoo.



In Spring you may hear its big voice booming through the forest, calling mainly in the early part of the night and then again before sunrise.

Other names for this owl are the Hoot Owl, Rain Owl, Wood Owl, Round-headed owl, Swamp owl.

The Barred owl is a bird of the deep forest: look for it along low grounds by rivers or on lake shores where there is a dense

growth of forest trees.

Fifty percent of the food of Barred owls consists of mice, although they also eat frogs, crayfish, spiders and various insects.

Barred owls begin nesting as early as March or April. They rarely build a nest of their own, often using a hollow of a tree or a deserted Crow or Hawk nest to lay their 2 to 3 spotted eggs.