

Short-eared Owl

(*Asio flammeus*)

- The Short-eared Owl is a medium-sized, buffy white owl with short ear tufts and yellow eyes.
- In flight, they show a distinctive black patch near the 'wrist' on the underside of each wing.
- Although they can sometimes be seen during the day, they are most active at dusk and dawn.
- They prey on small mammals and while foraging they can fly slowly and hover above the ground.



Provincial Distribution



Habitat/ Range

Short-eared Owls in Newfoundland and Labrador have been reported in tundra, coastal barrens, sand dune, field, and bog habitats. These habitats are particularly abundant on the west coast and Great Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland, and on the coastal barrens and above the treeline in Labrador, although virtually all coastal areas and nearshore islands are suitable habitat.

Population Trends

Breeding Bird Surveys suggest that this species has undergone a long-term population decline across Canada, except for in the Atlantic provinces where the population seems stable.

Limiting Factors and Threats

Increased development and recreational use of coastal areas may have caused some habitat loss; however, it is more likely in this Province that Short-eared Owls are limited by prey abundance, predation of eggs and juveniles, competition for resources, and human disturbance of nests.

Special Significance

Short-eared Owls are only one of six owls native to Newfoundland and Labrador. Its diurnal habit and ability to hover make it unique among our owls.

You can help protect the Short-eared Owl:

- Report any sightings to the Wildlife Division.
- Participate in bird surveys and counts.
- Learn something new about a species at risk in Newfoundland and Labrador and tell a friend!

Department of Environment & Conservation

Wildlife Division

Endangered Species & Biodiversity

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