

The Great Horned Owl (*Bubo Virginianus*) is a huge, dark-colored owl of the primitive forest, two feet in length and four feet in extent of wings, conspicuously marked by two large tufts of feathers which stand erect on its head like great ears. It sometimes comes about farm houses, robbing poultry yards, and making night hideous with its dismal hooting. These great birds lay but two eggs in the naked hollow of a tree.

The Screech Owl is a miniature *Bubo* and not half the size of *Virginianus*. It is strictly nocturnal and unable to stand the light of day. Like other owls in this respect it is a great destroyer of mice, in search of which it comes into barns. The Great Grey Owl is a winter bird of the lonely forest of a larger size even than the Great Horned Owl. The Barred Owl is a smaller bird much resembling the last.

The Hawk Owl (*Surnia funerea*) is a small-sized, trimly-formed bird much resembling a hawk both in its general appearance and diurnal habits.

The smallest of the family is the Acadian, or Saw-whet Owl, a grey and brown-plumed little fellow eight inches in length. Its most peculiar characteristic is its call note of Kook, kook, sounded continuously during the still hours of calm, clear moonlit nights, in March and April. The constant and regular repetition of this single note, echoing through the rigid forest, sounds like the tolling of a bell, ringing out its steady peal on the starlit brilliancy of the crystal scene. This curious little bird nests in the hollow of a tree, laying five or six white eggs. Like most other Owls, it nests in April, having its young well advanced when the summer's struggle begins.

- Francis Bain  
"Birds of Prince Edward Island"  
1891

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EDITORS NOTE

Owls are quite a challenge to observe because of their nocturnal and secretive habits. Bain was a keen observer and would probably have not missed many species especially owls active during the daytime like the Short-eared owl. Hence we can suspect that there have been changes in owl species on P.E.I. over the last 100 years. Probably, we have lost two species, Screech Owls and Great Grey Owls and gained three new ones, Long-eared and Short-eared Owls (both of which have been known to nest here) and the rare Boreal Owl. Some of these changes may be related to changes in habitat.

- Kathy Martin