



Barred Owl Boxes



barred owl by J. Dingel

Barred Owl

The barred owl is one of Pennsylvania's more common owls in hardwood forests. Its call is a distinctive *Who-cooks-for-you*. The barred owl nest box is made of 3/4-inch exterior-grade plywood. Do not paint, stain or treat the box with creosote. Put a 2- to 3-inch layer of small wood chips or pine needles in the bottom of the box. The entrance hole is 7 inches wide and 7 inches high with a rounded top and rounded corners at the bottom. The hole can be either on the front or on a side, but if it is on the side of the box it is easier to clean. This box can be cleaned out through the hole, so the roof does not need to be hinged. Clean the box out in January by removing leaves and other litter from the box.

The box should be placed in January. Locate it 15 to 30 feet high in a mature, lowland, hardwood area, and preferably within 200 feet of water. Do not place the box on the edge of a clearing or within 150 feet of a residence. The entrance hole should not be obscured by branches or leaves, but a perch near the nest box is desirable. This perch should be near enough to the box so that the young can "branch" out onto it as they leave the nest. Otherwise they may fall to the ground and be eaten by predators. The box should be placed on a living tree at least 12 inches in diameter.

The large entrance hole may predispose barred owlets to raccoon predation, so it is important to not leave a scent trail on the tree. Nest box checks should be infrequent or made with a ladder.