

LONG-EARED OWL
BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR HABITAT IN BIRD CONSERVATION
REGION 14

Introduction

The Long-eared owl (*Asio otis*) is a rare and local breeder in the southern part of BCR 14. It generally requires dense coniferous forests or plantations for nesting. This owl has been in decline across its range. It is listed as a “Species of Greatest Conservation need” in at least one state’s Wildlife Action Plan in BCR 14

Habitat Needs

Long-eared owls breed in dense coniferous or mixed forests (heavy to conifers) or groves adjacent to openings for hunting. It will use northern hardwoods on occasion but this type is not preferred.

This bird uses communal roosts in the winter and does not appear to have established or defended breeding territories.

Habitat Management Practices

The habitat management objective for this species should focus on providing dense mature coniferous stands adjacent to open areas. The same coniferous stands may serve as winter roosting sites.

When assessing properties for habitat management potential, look for large openings in the southern part of BCR 14 with softwood producing soils adjacent to them. Soils in Important Forest Soils Group IC such as Boscawen, Caesar, Champlain, Croghan, Deerfield, Hinckley, Quonset, Windsor are representatives of similar soils found in southern BCR 14.

Recommended Silvicultural Treatments include:

Retain the closed canopy characteristic in existing softwood stands. Group selection using very small groups may retain enough closed canopy.

Manage mixed wood situations to favor the softwood component and to retain or eventually reach tight crown closure. This could be accomplished through a series of light thinnings with entries spaced ten years or more apart.

Consider establishing coniferous plantations near established openings on appropriate soils.

Maintain the openings using a maintenance schedule that will perpetuate a grass/forb condition. Mowing once every three years (or one-third annually) will usually work.

