

Sam

Barred Owl (*Strix varia*)

Sex: Female



Why is Sam in Captivity?

Sam (short for Samantha) was found in April of 2010 in Alabama as an orphaned nestling with injuries to her right wing and wounds on her lower back. It is believed that she fell out of her nest and was attacked by a dog. She began her rehabilitation journey at the Alabama Wildlife Center for a short time until she was transferred to the Southeastern Raptor Center at Auburn University. Sam had surgery to place pins in her wing to align the fracture. After removing the pins and going through physical therapy, it was determined that she was unable to move her right wing well enough to fly and could not be released back to the wild. She was transferred to the Organization for Bat Conservation on July 10, 2010, and then to the Stage Nature Center in February 2018. Because Sam was raised by people from a very young age, she is considered an "imprint". Imprints like her often identify with people more than they do other members of their species, which is why she will sometimes greet people by calling out when she hears or sees them.

Typical Barred Owl Species Behavior:

- Barred owls roost quietly in forest trees during the day; however, you may hear an occasional call in daylight hours. At night, they hunt small animals like rodents and give the typical Barred Owl call which sounds like "Who cooks for you? Who cooks for you-all?"
- **Habitat:** Heavily wooded areas near water and wooded swamps. They require dense foliage for daytime roosting and large trees with cavities for nesting.
- **Diet:** Barred owls prefer mice, but will also eat other small mammals, birds, reptiles, fish, and insects. Primarily active at night, hunting during the day can be seen on dark cloudy days or in mating season. They may perch over water and drop down to catch fish, or even wade in shallow water in pursuit of fish and crayfish.
- **Lifespan:** Typical lifespan in the wild is 10 years or more. They can live to be 23 years old in captivity.

Fun Facts About Barred Owls:

- The most serious predatory threat to Barred Owls are Great Horned Owls. Though the two species often live in the same areas, a Barred Owl will move to another part of its territory if a Great Horned Owl is nearby.
- Fossils of Barred Owls that are at least 11,000 years old have been found in Florida, Tennessee, and Ontario.
- Barred Owls don't migrate and typically stay within a six mile radius of their home.