

accipitrinus

SBr 97.41.9 (35)  
Spine. v. 39

Asio accipitrinus

1888

MAR 30

Ipswich. - Shot a ♂ on the sand-dunes at the mouth of Ipswich River. It rose within ten yards from a growth of dark, grayish-oliv, heather-like plant, <sup>(Hydrobia crypsoides)</sup> that covers the sand near the west end of the fresh water pond & within a few paces of the spot where I shot one a few years ago in the autumn. Flight light, erratic, butterfly-like, the bird appearing bewildered. Specimen the whitest I have ever seen except from Middlesex. Stomach empty; testes 0 or about the size of those of several Crows killed the same day.

Flight.  
 Light-colored  
 Specimen  
 Size of testes.

*Asio accipitrinus*

1891 Mass.

April 2 Ipswich. - In an extensive bed of dense, matted beach grass bordering the beach at the mouth of Ipswich River I started three of these Owls. They rose within a few yards of one another, ~~and~~ all at exactly the same moment, and all taking the same direction. I shot one. The other two kept on towards the sand-hills on reaching which one alighted on the side of a sandy knoll in scanty beach grass. The other circled over one the spot, then flew over the hills and dropped in the hollow beyond where three crows at once discovered it (probably having first observed it flying) and began to din down at it with loud cawing. Disturbed either by this or by apprehension of danger from my direction it soon ~~started~~ started again and after flying about in an apparently aimless manner for a minute or two began soaring in circles, precisely like a Buteo, rising higher and higher until it must have attained a height of nearly 1000 feet. The strong S. E. wind, meanwhile, ~~had~~ drifted it far inland and it soon became lost to my sight. While soaring it occasionally flapped its wings three or four times in succession to gain momentum but several successive circles were often performed without any visible movement of the pinions. These circles averaged about 50 feet in diameter. This bird must have returned later in the day for at about 3 P.M. I started it near the place where it was first seen. On this second occasion it was fully 150 yards from me and flew out of sight pursuing a nearly straight course down wind and over the

*Asio accipitrinus*

1891 Mass

April 2 Spowich - marshes.

(No. 2.)

After leaving the third bird unharmed for some time I approached it closely from behind the hill <sup>the side of</sup> on which it had alighted. It had not moved in the interim but rose the moment I showed myself over the crest and I shot it as it was flying off. Both this and the first bird fell broken-winged although, in addition, they were evidently wounded internally. As I approached they made off by a succession of long leaps but finding this unavailing soon turned and faced me snapping their bills and making a blowing hiss as I held out my hand. They did not attempt to bite even when I put my finger within easy reach of their bills but their needle-pointed talons were wide-spread and were darted out at me whenever they thought a favorable chance offered to strike them into my hand. I had no difficulty, however, in scratching their heads, an operation which quickly soothed them and put an end to all hostile demonstrations on their part. Placing them side by side on the sand I withdrew a little way and watched them. They assumed a crouching position very like that of a Whippoorwill but the head was turned slowly at frequent intervals in the automatic manner characteristic of most if not all Owls. The ears were occasionally raised and conspicuously displayed for minutes at a time but as a rule they laid flat and so mingled with the other feathers of the crown as to be indistinguishable from the latter. They were not

1891 Mass.

April 2 Spawick - once shown when the bird was roused  
(No. 3) and on the defensive. The eyes "blinked" at  
rather frequent intervals when the bird was  
undisturbed and had a drowsy, somewhat  
stupid, but on the whole gentle, expression. When  
threatened, however, they were kept wide open  
and fixed and their expression was savage  
and defiant to the last degree.

Later in the day I started and shot a fourth  
Owl of this species on the beach ridge near  
the light-house. It rose from the crest of  
a knoll covered rather sparsely with beach-  
grass. I also found two fresh "pellets" composed  
wholly of the fur and bones of mice which  
had evidently been ejected by an Owl of about  
the size of this species.

The Short-eared Owl usually rises about ten or  
fifteen yards in advance of the person who disturbs  
it. It starts with a vigorous upward spring  
and a few hurried, nervous wing-beats, then  
flaps more easily and smoothly and after it  
goes fifty to one hundred yards reverts into a  
slow, easy, <sup>gliding</sup> flight very like that of the Marsh Hawk  
and usually performed at about the same height  
above the earth. Its movements in the air, although  
light and graceful, are characterized by an  
apparent indecision as if the bird were unable  
to make up its mind how far to go or just what  
direction to take. It usually circles once or twice  
just before alighting but sometimes plunges  
down as abruptly as a Snipe or Woodcock. Its colors  
match those of the dry beach grass very perfectly.

Asio accipitrinus.

Nantucket, Mass.

1878. As we returned in the twilight across the moor I caught  
Aug. 8. sight of a Short-eared Owl, hawking about and occasionally  
poising in one spot for many seconds and then dropping down  
on some prey beneath. We watched him until his form was lost  
in the uncertain <sup>light.</sup> gloom.

Aug. 14. On our way over to Sciasconset we saw a Short-eared Owl  
hunting in broad daylight (4 P.M.). On our return we started  
four out of the road in traversing not over a mile of ground.  
One of these was very white looking as much so as a Snowy Owl.  
They were all very tame permitting a near approach.

Aug. 15. Starting at 4 P.M. we drove nearly over to 'Sconset. I  
took my gun along and shot a fine Short-eared Owl. It was  
sitting on a low dead branch on the edge of one of the blight-  
ed pine tracts, apparently watching for its prey.

Asio accipitrinus.

Concord, Mass.

1878. Near Mr. Derby's a Short-eared Owl started from a solitary  
Oct. 14. pine by the roadside.

1890  
Nov. & Dec.

Mass.  
Lexington

Asio accipitrinus

On Nov. 30 a Huntsman & a companion shot three Owls in  
Lexington in or near an extensive woods of young poplars &  
birches which cover more or less densely and uniformly a large  
flat meadow drained by a net work of brooks and ditches  
and abounding in long dry grass and tussocks. Two of the  
Owls were certainly Saw-whets (I examined one of them) and  
the third, judging by Mr. G's description, must have been a  
Short-eared. Thinking that the place probably harbored more birds  
of this family I went there to-day, <sup>[Dec 12]</sup> and beat it with some  
care. I found no Saw-whets but in a small opening bordered  
on three sides by dense thickets on the fourth by mowing  
land I started a Short-eared Owl. It rose within ten feet  
of me from the top of a mound covered with moss and  
~~tufts~~ clusters of sedge-lantern and made off with the  
usual moth-like flight which is too erratic and vacillating  
to be impressive or graceful yet far too buoyant, easy and  
noiseless to be characteristic as either chimney or labored. At  
my shot the bird fell wing broken. When I took it up it  
struck at me viciously with its talons, the feet spread to their  
widest extent. It did not attempt severely to bite and when  
I put my finger in its way only nuzzled it  
feebly giving me no pain but at every movement that I made  
it opened its mouth threateningly and made a peevish blowing  
sound then brought the mandibles together sharply a number  
of times in succession making a loud but woody clicking  
noise. It did not even seek its cage or make blows there  
in any way. When my dog approached it at once transferred  
its entire attention to him paying no heed whatever to me  
as long as he was near. The stomach of this bird  
contained four skulls & other remains of four  
field mice.

on 2.5. 20 A. Hamilton shot an Owl which from his description  
I concluded must have been a Short eared in <sup>extensive</sup> brush-grown meadow  
near the Bryant farm. On the same occasion he also killed two Saw-whets,  
(one of which he afterwards gave me) among some dense poplar sprouts  
on this meadow. Thinking that the place must have some special  
attractions for Owls and that others were probably to be found there I beat it  
rather carefully to-day. No Saw-whets were



Massachusetts,

.. *Asio accipitrinus*.

1891.

May. 9. Concord And a Short-eared Owl flying about in the usual aimless erratic way over the Great Meadow.

June 20. I had gone only a few rods to the eastward of my house when I saw a large brown bird coming across the river flying low over the water. At first I took it for a female Marsh Hawk, but as it passed within 20 yards of me and skimmed around the eastern base of the hill I saw that it was a Short-eared Owl. A little beyond when I lost sight of it I heard a Song Sparrow chirping anxiously and on reaching the spot started the Owl from a cluster of birches where it must have perched at least 15 ft. above the ground. It was soon lost to sight behind the trees. I saw one of these Owls flying over the Great Meadows in May last.



Asio accipitrinus.

Concord, Mass.

1894. manner of a Marsh Hawk and on the next evening an Owl of similar size and appearance started from a maple opposite this meadow as I was passing.

Oct. 11  
to  
Nov. 21.

(h. 2),

---:~:---

1899.

Beating the meadows.

Oct. 12  
to  
Oct. 31.

The Short-eared Owl seen on the evening of the 21st was beating the meadows in the twilight much as the Marsh Hawk does by day, skimming just over the tops of the taller grasses, moving rather slowly but with infinite ease and grace, now gliding in a nearly straight line for fifty or sixty yards on level, motionless wings, next beating its wings quickly a few times to renew its impetus, frequently inclining slightly to left or right and occasionally mounting upwards for a few feet or turning abruptly to quarter back over the same ground. As it was passing within about one hundred yards crossing the river at the head of the "Holt" I squeaked like a mouse when it wheeled suddenly and flew straight towards me coming within ten or fifteen paces before it discovered the deception.

The other bird, noted on the 25th, may have been a Long-eared Owl for although it started from a tree (one of the maples on the river bank just below Flint's bridge) very near at hand and flew directly over me within a few yards it was nearly dark at the time and I could make out little more than the bird's general size and shape as its shadowy form was outlined for an instant against the sky.

Gainesville Tex June 2/90

Mr Wm Brewster

Cambridge Mass.  
Dear Sir:

I have just read your  
ac of *Asio accipitrinus* killing Terns  
on Muskeget Island. I wish to ask  
if the birds kept up a chattering or  
scratching note while hunting about twilight?  
Last autumn a pair of Owls which I  
thought to be of this species came nightly to  
my Sweet potato patch to get Rats & mice, but  
as I had not noted their chattering in former  
years, I made several attempts to shoot one to  
identify it, but failed. In the winter a  
Colony of *Asio vilsianus* were found quartered  
in timbered bottom land in a mile of my house,  
and I now think it must have been a pair of  
this rare (or seldom seen) owl that did me such  
kindly service, after the noise was much louder  
than ordinary, & I guessed that one had seized  
its quarry, and the other was trying to assist  
in devouring it. On such occasions the notes  
seemed stationary. Resp G H Ragsdale

JOSIAH HOOPES,  
MAPLE AVENUE.

West Chester, Pa.  
Apr. 16th. 1891.

My Dear Mr. Brewster.

We have had during the past winter, the largest flight of "Short-eared Owls" that I remember in a long time.

They seemed to appear in waves, sometimes one flock arriving before the previous one had moved its abiding place.

The 31 skins collected are very largely females, and mostly in beautiful plumage, so that I felt like offering you 3 pairs of Pennsylvania birds as a slight contribution to your valuable collection. These I express you to-day (or possibly tomorrow), and shall feel gratified by your acceptance of the same. I have found it a difficult task to study the habits of this species with any degree of accuracy, owing to their extreme shyness, - so much so that the collector was forced to resort to strategy in approaching their resort. My first record is November 28th, and the last April 4th. They invariably appeared in flocks, and night or day were rarely separated.

The first flock seen numbered 10, and this was lessened by the collector's gun to 4, when a fresh wave of birds reinforced it to 13. Other flocks consisted from 8 to 12. All attempts to observe their habits by moonlight was unavailing, as it was impossible to approach sufficiently near, and the character of their surroundings rendered it still more difficult to find them until they were flushed. Their favorite location was in a piece of low rather swampy land, covered with a growth of coarse grass and sedges, always close together, and arising simultaneously. I feel quite positive they do not feed during the day, although a diurnal bird in a measure.

Their accustomed resort was plentifully sprinkled with the pellets of hair and bones ejected, but out of the entire number of birds collected not one contained fresh food, - those taken in the morning showed partial digestion, and those in the afternoon had the contents almost entirely assimilated or the stomach quite empty. Field-mice appeared to be their entire food, as in no instance was there a trace of any other animal or insect. These little rodents were unusually plentiful during the past winter, and the owls in consequence were exceedingly fat, a sure indication of their great value to the farmer. I am under the impression these birds moult late in the season, as those shot first had a large preponderance of pin-feathers, whilst those collected toward spring were entirely devoid of them, and were in perfect plumage. When flying they occasionally uttered a sharp shrill note, similar to that of the Red-tailed Hawk, but fainter, although silent when not on the wing. With us, the "Short-eared Owl" is always found on the ground, excepting when alighting from being flushed, and then they usually take to a low tree or large shrub, where they may readily watch their enemy: and at such times it is indeed difficult to approach within easy gun-shot range. A female shot March 20th, and a male April 4th, showed the generative organs very largely developed, plainly indicating the near approach of the breeding season, notwithstanding they have never been known to nest in this county. Indeed it is somewhat problematical their breeding in the state, the one instance recorded by Audubon, being an exception.

Cordially yours.

*Josiah Hoopes.*

Birds within Ten Miles of Point  
de Monts, Can. Comeau & Merriam

60. *Asio accipitrinus*. SHORT-EARED OWL. — A rather rare summer resident. Earliest seen May 9, 1882.

Bull. N. O. C. 7, Oct, 1882, p. 237

An Ornithologist's Summer in Labrador  
M. Abbott Frazar.

*Asio accipitrinus*, Short-eared Owl. Although I saw no Owls at all during my stay on the coast, one, probably of this species, was reported to me one night at Cape Whittle as flying by the house. The reason I do not pass the species by altogether without mentioning it, is to bring up a circumstance in connection with the Puffins which I noticed in their colony near by. I had been surprised on every visit I made to the island by seeing numbers of Puffin's skins laying around on the rocks near the shore, and literally turned inside out. They were generally opened upon the back, and a great many skins I noticed were not torn a particle more than was necessary to get the skins over the body; then the legs were picked out, the wings thoroughly cleaned as far as the carpal point, the head was also drawn out and brain and eyes removed and skull cleaned to base of bill. I knew it was not done in the day-time and the Short-eared Owls were the most likely depredators I could call to mind, but it did not take me long to decide after looking at those skins for a few moments that taxidermy was an art long before man ever took it up.

O. & O. XII, Mar. 1887, p. 33-34.

Birds of Magdalen Islands.  
Dr. L. B. Bishop.

27. *Asio accipitrinus*. SHORT-EARED OWL.—I saw an Owl that I am positive was of this species in the marshes between All Right and Grand Entry on June 23, but as I was unable to shoot it the identification remains in doubt.

Auk, VI. April, 1889. p. 147

Birds of N.E. coast of Labrador  
by Henry B. Bigelow.

59. *Asio accipitrinus*. SHORT-EARED OWL. — Rather common at Port Manvers and Nachvak, in September.

Auk, XIX, Jan., 1902, p. 29.

Birds of Toronto, Canada,  
by James H. Fleming,  
Part II, Land Birds,  
Auk, XXIV, Jan. 1907, p. 74.

139. *Asio accipitrinus*. SHORT-EARED OWL.— Regular migrant, March 5 to 15, and probably through April; abundant in the fall, October 3 to December 26, when large flocks sometimes occur. A light phase of plumage occurs very rarely.

Mass. (Northampton)

*Ovis accipitrinus*

W. A. Jeffries has seen six & shot  
them in one day in the beach grass  
at Phillips Beach

*Brachyotus cassini*

Spring occurrence.

Beaver Beach, Mass.  
April 7, 1882

One was shot by Spelman and  
Carub. I think this Owl does not winter  
here.

Mass. (Northampton)

*Otus brachyotus*

1885

Dec. "Some hunters in this vicinity have lately  
shot for me four Short-eared Owls." (E. O.  
Damon in letter of Dec. 11 - 1885.)

25 Brachy. cassini <sup>Ipswich</sup> Nov. 10<sup>1</sup>

E. Mass. 1883.

Sand-hills, Great Id. Mass. 1883.

Nov. 21-23. 20. Asio accipitrinus - 21<sup>1</sup>. beating about one

Mass. (Quincy)

Brachyotus Cassini

1887

Occurrence in August.

Aug. 24

On Aug. 25 a Short-eared Owl was brought in the flesh to Webster's to be mounted. It was shot the day before in Quincy, Mass. I examined it and found it a fully feathered bird in autumnal plumage, apparently a young of this season.

Mass. (Ipswich)

1888

March 30<sup>1</sup>

Asio accipitrinus

Mass. (Ipswich)

MAR 30 1888

Brachyotus Cassini

1888

March 30

Shot a ♂ on the sand dunes at the mouth of Ipswich River. It rose within ten yards from a growth of dark, grayish olive, heather-like plant that covers the sand near the west end of the fresh-water pond & within a few paces of the spot where I shot one in the autumn years ago. Its flight was light, erratic, & butterfly-like & it appeared dumb. It was the whitest specimen I ever saw except the Muskeget Id. birds. Stomach empty; testes 0 or about the size of several Crows killed the same day.



The occurrence of the Short-eared Owl in Massachusetts during the summer seems to be rather unusual of late years. A flight of these birds occurs during early fall and they may be very frequently found on the marshes until cold weather sets in. An extreme advance skirmisher was shot at Quincy, August, 1887.

O. & O. XII. Sept. 1887. P. 142.

Birds of Bristol County, Mass.  
F. W. Andros.

*Asio accipitrinus* (Pall.), Short-eared Owl.  
Resident, rare.

O. & O. XII. Sept. 1887 p. 139

Saw two Short-eared Owls the 12th of February.

Cape Cod --- F. L. Small

O & O, XVI, March, 1891, p. 42.

General Notes.

Stray Notes from vicinity of Muskeget  
Island, Mass. George H. Mackay.

*Asio accipitrinus*.—At Muskeget Island, March 27, 1893, I saw a Short-eared Owl, which appeared to be domiciled.

Auk X, Oct. 1893 p 370.

General Notes.

Summer Birds of Central Berkshire  
Country, Mass. ~~Francis H. Allen~~ Ralph Hoffmann

12. *Asio accipitrinus*. SHORT-EARED OWL.—A specimen in the Pittsfield Athenæum, labelled "Pittsfield, April 17, 1879."

Auk XII. Jan. 1895 p. 88

Auk, XIII, Jan., 1896, p. 88

*Nantucket and Muskeget Island Notes.*

*Asio accipitrinus*.—Muskeget Island, June 2, 1895. Mr. John R. Sand-  
sbury informs me that he discovered the nest of a Short-eared Owl on the  
northeast side of the island containing three young birds in the down.  
The nest was placed at the foot of a bunch of beach-grass (*Ammophila*  
*arundinacea*) and partially concealed. It was raised about four inches  
above the sand; only one old bird was seen, it having been frightened  
off the nest. On July 7 Mr. Sandbury and I saw one adult bird.

*George H. Mackay, Nantucket, Mass.*

Auk, XIII, July, 1896, p. 257

Four Winter Records of the Short-eared Owl on the Massachusetts  
Coast.—I have a female Short-eared Owl (*Asio accipitrinus*) in my collec-  
tion which was taken at Orleans, near Chatham, Mass., on February 23,  
1896, by Mr. Charles J. Paine, Jr.; and I also know of a female (?) taken  
at Ipswich, Mass., on December 31, 1895, by Mr. Ralph W. Gray; and  
a male taken at the same locality by Mr. George C. Shattuck on January  
1, 1896; also a female taken at the same locality on February 12, 1896,  
by Mr. W. S. Townsend.

I also know of a number of specimens taken at Middletown, near New-  
port, R. I., in winter.—REGINALD HEBER HOWE, JR., *Longwood, Mass.*

*Asio accipitrinus*.

The Terns of Muskeget Island, Massachusetts.

Part III.

By George H. Mackay.

Auk, XIV, Oct., 1897, pp. 383-390.

See under *Sterna hirundo*.

*Asio accipitrinus*.

1901

*Belmont, Mass.*

Feb. 16. Near Little Spy Pond, taken by  
Henry C. Wells. Skinned & mounted by  
O. A. Lotthrop. Bird in Mr. Lotthrop's  
possession. Comm. O. A. Lotthrop.

The Birds of Long Point.

I also shot two Short-eared Owls in December 1890, and as long ago as 1876 an egg, presumably of this species, was brought to me by a boy who said he "found it in the grass on Long Point."

J. M. H.

Norwich, Conn

O. & C. XVI. Apr. 1891. p. 59-60.

Birds of the Adirondack Region.  
C. H. Merriam

180. *Asio accipitrinus* (Pallas) Newton. SHORT-EARED OWL.—I have seen two specimens of the Short-eared Owl that were taken within the limits of the Adirondack Region, in Lewis County. They were both killed east of the Black River Valley — one in the town of Greig, and the other in Lyonsdale.

Bull. N. O. O., 7, April, 1882, p. 128

Carle.

No specimens of the Short-eared <sup>owl</sup> have come to my notice. One was taken in January, 1884. All the above data are for Ontario County, N. Y.  
—C. H. Wilder, Wayland, N. Y.

O. & O. X. July. 1885, p. 111

Brooklyn, L. I., <sup>Dec.</sup> ~~Jan.~~ 26, 1887.

We had gone about a hundred yards when I heard Ted whistle, and looking his way I saw a large bird which I was not familiar with rise out of range of him, and after circling around two or three times settle a short distance away on the meadows. Thinking we would not get near it again I slipped in two heavy shells and we went off again after our new game.

We advanced cautiously until we were within about ten feet of the place where the bird lit, when without a bit of warning or noise eight pair of wings beat the air, as a flock of Short-eared Owls arose.

Of course I was frightened and fired both barrels at short range without touching a feather; however I had time to drop another shell in my gun and make a fine shot on one as it was circling away to the left.

Ted was much cooler, he picked out the finest bird of the lot, and bagged it without any trouble. After fixing up the birds we hid them where we could pick them up on our return, and then went after the rest of the flock, which had scattered; but we did not get any more as they were on the lookout for us, so after flushing them several times out of gunshot we gave them up, and started for a patch of woods on the other side of the meadows and near the shore.

Signed "Velox".

O + O. XIV. July, 1889. p. 106

General Notes.

Short-eared Owl Nesting on Plum Island, New York.—While on a visit to Plum Island, on May 7, 1891, I noticed a Short-eared Owl circling over the beach grass on the southwest plain and, on my approach, showing unmistakable signs of anxiety. With the aid of my setter 'Jack' I soon flushed the female, and discovered the nest, which consisted of a slight hollow in the bare sand in a rather scattering growth of beach grass, with no attempt at concealment. It contained one young bird which, as near as I could judge, was about two weeks old, one rotten egg, and three meadow mice (*Arvicola*), minus their heads.

The old male circled around about fifty yards off, uttering cries which sounded very much like the squealing of young pigs. The female came much closer, and her cries reminded me of the barking of a young puppy. I searched the vicinity for more young, but failed to find any.—W. W. WORTHINGTON, Shelter Island Heights, New York.

Auk X, July. 1893 p. 301

Distribution of New England Birds.-  
A Reply to Dr. Brewer. H. A. Purdie.

The Short-Eared Owl (*Brachyotus cassini*) classed by  
Dr. B. as a summer resident, must on the authority  
of various local lists, be deemed a constant resident.

Bull. N.O.C. 2, Jan., 1877. p. 14.

### Short-eared Owl.

In the August number of the O. and O. you give Mr. H. A. Kline the credit of giving the most interesting information respecting the Short-eared Owl so far placed on record. You would not have made that assertion if *Familiar Science* had not died out when it changed hands. I had completed an exhaustive history of all the birds of prey of N. E., a part only of which was published in that magazine.

O. & O. IX. Jan. 1884. p. 70-71

My article (unpublished) on that Owl is full and complete. Some thirty years ago a nest was found some half mile from my office among the bogs in our meadows. The nest was on the top of the bog and composed of fine grass. It was within a few rods of the cart path and the bird could easily be seen as we passed. She would allow us to approach very near before rising from her nest, would fly a few rods and then hop along in the grass snapping her mandibles. There were four eggs in the nest. She was captured by placing a snare over the nest attached to a long cord. When she returned a sudden twitch on the line secured the bird. I took her some half mile from the nest and let her go. She flew directly back to her nest. I suppose on her passage north to breed she was wounded and laid her clutch of eggs here. She had no mate and the eggs never hatched. I could not discover any signs of injury from examining her, or in her flight.—*Wm. Wood.*

The Short-eared Owl played the same game as the Barred. For years past they have bred in a small patch of rank "hassock grass" in a corner of a salt meadow. This year a friend desiring their eggs I directed him to the locality. As the result of several hours' patient search he reported nothing. A few weeks later a gunner, spring shooting for Plover, found their nest and young at the side of the marsh. There must be some reason for such a general change of breeding resorts which remains to be determined.

*Rehoboth, Mass F. H. C.*

*O. & O. IX. Aug. 1884. p. 99.*

### Raptors, Bristol County, Mass. Hilton B. Read.

Short-eared Owl (*Asio accipitrinus*). With the exception of a few, sometimes shot on the salt marshes in the southern section of the county, in the autumn, I can note no occurrence of this species within our limits. They have been found breeding in a salt meadow in an adjoining and similar named county in Rhode Island. Their nests having been found by Mr. F. H. Carpenter and as I had the pleasure of accompanying him to the locality, perhaps a description would be of interest.

In a corner of a salt marsh, of large extent, was a patch of rank grass and low bushes. In this place, after diligent tramping, on the morning of April 28, 1879, we flushed a Short-eared Owl from her nest on a "hummock", where by gathering together old reeds, she had "raised" her dwelling above the flow of the tide, which sometimes flooded the meadow to a depth of a few inches. The nest contained five eggs of same shape as those of *Americanus*, but somewhat smaller.

O. & O. XII. Aug. 1887 p. 117

New Eng. Raptors. Number Eggs in  
a set. F. H. Carpenter.

Short-eared Owl, (*Asio accipitrinus*).  
4 sets of 5

O. & O. XII. Oct. 1887 p. 168

Collection of Raptors Eggs. J. P. N.

Short-eared Owl. 1-4, 1 4

O. & O. XV. Apr. 1890. p. 56

## Nest and Eggs of the Short-eared Owl.

BY G. F. BRENNINGER, BEATTIE, KANSAS.

During the spring of 1884 it was my good fortune to find the Short-eared Owl (*Asio accipitrinus*) breeding. Like most of the owls, they are residents, but are found most plentifully during the colder months. In the middle of April nesting is first begun. Their nest is a mere depression in a bunch of old grass. The owls inhabit the vast uninhabited prairies along sloughs, where the banks shelter them from the cold winds of winter and the burning rays of the sun in summer. A great number of their nests are burnt every spring by the prairie fires, and after the first set has been destroyed a second set are laid. This I think was the case with my sets.

My first set was taken on May 1st, and contained seven eggs of the pure white surface and spherical form so common with owls. The second set, of six eggs, was taken May 4th, and incubation was slight in both.

The ears or tufts of this species are only seen when the birds are looking at any object, as at other times they are hidden. For the past two seasons I have been requested to try and obtain some sets of their eggs, by some of our most advanced oölogists, and many weary searches and tramping over prairies have only proved to be repeated failures, and I have not found nor seen any of their nests since.

The food of this species consists chiefly of mice, insects, and ground squirrels. Seldom, if ever, do they deprive the farmer of his chickens, and only in one instance have I known them to eat pigeons. This was while they were sitting on the outside of their coops during a severe snow storm, and the owls were probably driven to do this by hunger. The farmer is ignorant of this fact, however, and shoots them whenever opportunity occurs. I have personally known boys to place an open steel trap upon a high pole. This seldom fails to catch an owl, as they perch on the pole at night. In the warmer part of the year these owls are rarely seen, and perhaps they seek remote places, in the shade of dark gullies, where they can live in peaceful solitude.

O. & O. XI. Nov. 1886. p. 167.

---

### Nesting of the Short-eared Owl.

(*Asio Accipitrinus*).

BY DR. W. S. STRODE, BERNADOTTE, ILL.

On April 19th, 1887, I had occasion to go to Spoon River and three miles above town, so I thought I would improve the occasion by making the run in my boat and on the return to take a look for nests of the *Raptors*. So taking my climbers, a hatchet and a ball of string, I considered myself equipped for a climb to any kind of a nest that might turn up.

Throwing off my coat and vest and there not being much current in the river — the mill dam backing the water for five miles — I took the shady side of the stream and made my boat fairly flash through the clear water, arriving at the spot where I wished to land in forty min-

utes from starting. In returning to the boat after attending to my business, I noticed a single crow away down the river a quarter of a mile, that appeared to be having a camp meeting all by himself. The location was a swampy marsh, with a dense growth of scrub or swamp oak, with an undergrowth of hazel so thick that to go through it a person at times would have to go down on all fours. Suspecting an owl or a hawk to be the cause of all this fuss from the crow I at once started for the locality. Making my way for a hundred yards or so, I was electrified to see a Short-eared Owl, (*Asio Accipitrinus*) fly from a skeleton nest twelve feet up in an oak. Going up I found nothing in it and after thinking the matter over a while I concluded that this might not be the nest of the owl at all. After searching about for a short time, I came to a tree containing a nest at the height of about fifteen feet, and presently the ear tufts followed by the yellow eyes came up over the edge of the nest and proceeded to size me up.

Now, I thought, there can be no doubt about this being the right nest, and going to the tree I commenced the ascent. At the first step the *Asio* left the nest and disappeared in the thick brush, and I did not see either of them again until I had got within four feet of the nest, when suddenly they appeared, growling and caterwauling like angry Tom cats. After watching their strange actions for a short time I went on to the nest, and was almost struck dumb to find it entirely empty. This I could not understand, as the nest had every appearance of having been occupied for a considerable time. It was composed of twigs with an inner lining of grape vine bark and feathers.

Not being able to solve the problem, I turned to look at one of the owls that sat on a limb about eight feet from the ground and about thirty feet from me. This one, which I took to be the male from his coarse voice, finding himself observed proceeded to treat me to a tumbling feat and to play the cripple act to perfection. Throwing himself backward he fell off the twig down to the ground where he rolled about in apparent great distress. But on my starting down from the nest, a transformation immediately came over them and they disappeared quickly in the brush and I saw them no more.

Sadly I returned to my boat, and during the trip home and for the rest of that day the query was constantly in my mind, why was there not eggs in that nest? Or if there had been what had become of them?



This was all made plain the day following, when in passing the house of a young farmer in this neighborhood, he saluted me with "Hello Doe., don't you want some little hawk's eggs?" And he immediately brought out to me four white elliptical beauties. Upon asking him where he obtained them, he pointed to the swamp oak thicket where my Short-eared Owl's nest was located; and so the mystery was solved and all was well.

The eggs on blowing, I found to be fresh and averaging in size about one and one-half by one and one-fourth inches.

The young farmer mistaking the owls for hawks is about a fair sample of the knowledge the people in general have of the birds. Not knowing the names even of many of the most common birds and having still less knowledge of their habits.

O. & O. XII. Oct. 1887 p 161-162

### Nesting of the Maryland Yellow-throat.

BY WILLARD L. MARIS, WEST CHESTER, PA.

A very interesting and quite common little bird of this locality, the Maryland Yellowthroat, (*Geothlypis trichas*) has for some time baffled my efforts to find its nest. However, this spring, I found the long looked for treasure, a beautiful set of five eggs.

This well-known bird arrives in this locality about the tenth of May, and after a few days spent in selecting a suitable nesting ground, at once commences building. During the incubating period, the female is seldom seen, unless a close approach to the nest, where almost her whole time is occupied, is made; and even then as soon as the nest is touched she will vanish in the woods. The males may be seen frequently and quite often not in the locality of the nest, which, together with the fact of its being placed on the ground in the woods at the foot of a bush, and being sometimes domed over, renders it no easy matter to find it.

On the 28th of May, of the present year, when on a collecting tour a few miles from home, I chanced to see a male Yellowthroat fly from the edge of a woods. It being a favorable place for this bird of course I immediately began a search, but for fully fifteen minutes no trace of a nest could be found, and I nearly trod on it before the female flew away, thus showing me her hiding place. The nest was made chiefly of bark, and lined with a little

Brachyotus cassini

Habits in summer.

Nantucket, Mass.

August 14, 1878

While driving to Disconssett I saw a Short-scaled Owl beating the moors like a Hawk Hawk. Every now and then it would stop abruptly and poise, maintaining its position over one spot for a minute or more by nearly incessant flapping with occasional brief intervals where the wings were held extended and motionless. Then it would drop <sup>to the ground</sup> with closed wings and surprising quickness from a height of 12 or 15 feet then skimming off for a short distance close to the ground would resume its Hawk-like flight. All these pounces (at least six or eight) which

Brachyotus palustris

Concord, Mass.

October 14, 1878

While driving in Concord I started a Short-scaled Owl from a pine by the roadside. It flew in an uncertain zigzag way and alighted in an apple tree near a house. Altho the road had no fence and fewer than one hundred yards the bird again started at my approach and after a short flight came back overhead, apparently to have a look at me. Finally it scaled off and dipping its wings swept down on set wings and again alighted in an apple tree on a bare hill-top that commands

I watched in suspense, by a bright  
this was about 2 P.M. of a bright  
afternoon, returning by the same  
spot in the twilight we saw one  
of these birds in the space of a mile.  
I was from the sandy road & saw  
it in the gloom, two hours & some  
quicker than I could see it. It  
was as we passed and alighted  
on the spot where they had  
been when it was seen after a  
few minutes in the air it only  
described a circle in the air & only  
a few yards further on, dropping like a  
stone it came to rest on the ground.  
I was in the garden at  
night & heard that bird in the garden at  
night in June evenings, & the then it  
was in the garden when on the ground  
I had seen it. A few weeks later I saw another  
of these birds when returning from South Wood.  
It was perched against the fence in front  
of the house in the west & began strongly  
to sing against the sky but when it  
dropped it was instantly lost in the gloom.  
It appeared and disappeared several times  
at intervals.  
August 15. Shortly with thick mist  
over the island, went out after breakfast  
on the island, but on the distance  
of a few miles east of the bay found a dead  
bird lying on the ground. It was  
found about two feet above the ground, & was  
found on the edge of a dead plant. As we  
went on the ground it turned its head and showed  
at us but when the others saw it they  
gave on the ground again & after walking

and approached I attempted to approach it  
but at the first moment I showed myself  
on the edge of the hill  
I have only once before known of this one  
sighting in a tree (about 1867) when a boy brought  
me one which he said he shot in an apple tree  
in Belmont, and I never saw one which was  
so shy. It was undoubtedly a Short-  
Tailed Owl. The time was about noon the day  
then and clear.

1886

Nov. 10

Started out in the sand-hills. It rose from the crest of a knoll at least 40 yds. away and flying in the usual easy yet unsteady manner, not unlike a Marsh Hawk, followed the shore for nearly half-a-mile

Short-eared Owl.

This little owl, so far as my observation has extended, seems peculiar to the coast, where among the reeds and thick marshes of the shores and neighboring islands it finds a covert from the noisy world. Having found such a place they, unlike all other New England owls, build in colonies. A locality not far from here has been from my earliest recollection a breeding place for these owls. The situation is most desirable, being a meadow or flat level with the coast, over which the tide completely flows, but leaves it entirely dry when it recedes. This meadow is covered with a coarse grass and surrounded by tall brakes and reeds. In these latter they gather together the remains of last year's frost-bitten reeds and place them in a promiscuous heap on a tussock. This is afterward hollowed out and the set of eggs is then laid. Six is the largest number I ever found, with the exception of one nest, in which I found ten; but these were

a gravelly gully near  
large grassy hill. Here  
I saw it a second time.  
A few yds. from him and flew  
to sea passing just  
the waves.

laid by two females who sat together on the same nest in perfect harmony. Incubation was difficult to determine, but I cannot make it out to be more than twenty-one days. If any of your readers would be kind enough to give me the exact time it would be gratefully received. No owl is more interesting to watch. Take some dark, cloudy day in May or June, repair to their haunts and they will be found lightly skimming over the surface of the ground seeking for food left by the receding tide, or again diligently searching the immediate upland for any unwary mouse. Or watch them again in the deepening twilight, as silently, without a single note, they flit past, seeming but a passing thought or fanciful vision, until you hear from the shore the shrill cry of a Tern or Sandpiper in his talons; then you awaken to the fact that it is a rapacious bird acting well its part in nature's great drama, "The Survival of the Fittest."—*F. H. Carpenter, Rehobeth, Mass. O. & O. VIII, Nov. 1883. p. 87*

1886

Nov. 10

Started out in the sand-hills. It rose from the crest of a knoll at least 40 yds. away and flying in the usual easy yet unsteady manner, not unlike a Marsh Hawk, followed the shore for nearly half-a-mile finally alighting in a gravelly gully near the summit of a large grassy hill. Here my boatman flushed it a second time. It rose within 80 yds. of him and flew out of sight over the sea passing just over the crests of the waves.

Yellow-crowned Kinglets anywhere near positive of ever seeing but one pair of takes in the February O. and O. I am not me make a correction to my mass of mis- time for so tiny a creature. Right here let seemed to be of too much force and vol- loud chirp, chirp, chirp, chirp, that rents were hopping about, uttering their I was packing the nest and eggs the pa- face close to the parent on the nest. While its identity, as I stood some time with my 2½ inches, diameter 1½ inches. Am sure of ber I ever found, with the exception of one nest, in which I found ten; but these were

laid by two females who sat together on the same nest in perfect harmony. Incu- bation was difficult to determine, but I cannot make it out to be more than twenty- one days. If any of your readers would be kind enough to give me the exact time it would be gratefully received. No owl is more interesting to watch. Take some dark, cloudy day in May or June, repair to their haunts and they will be found lightly skimming over the surface of the ground seeking for food left by the receding tide, or again diligently searching the immediate upland for any unwary mouse. Or watch them again in the deepening twilight, as silently, without a single note, they flit past, seeming but a passing thought or fanciful vision, until you hear from the shore the shrill cry of a Tern or Sandpiper in his talons; then you awaken to the fact that it is a rapacious bird acting well its part in nature's great drama, "The Survival of the Fittest."—*F. H. Carpenter, Rehobeth, Mass. O. & O. VIII, Nov. 1883. p. 84*

### Short-eared Owl.

It is surprising that at this late day we should know so little of this owl as we do. We have examined the works of the older authorities and find but little information, Audubon throwing the most light on the subject. Everywhere we find indefinite quotations from unsatisfactory sources, and much too often the expressions of "said to be," "supposed to be" and "thought to be," which is, to say the least, very unsatisfactory.

Richardson, in *Fauna Boreali Americana*, (1831), states:

"We observed it as far north as latitude sixty-seven degrees; and a female, killed at Fort Franklin, on the 20th of May, contained several pretty large eggs nearly ready for exclusion. . . . according to Mr. Hutchins it lays ten or twelve white eggs."

Wilson knew nothing of the breeding habits of this bird, believing it to be simply a winter visitant to the United States, and breeding in the far north. He says:

"In the United States it is also a bird of passage, coming to us from the north in November, and departing in April." . . . . "The bird represented in the plate was shot in New Jersey, a few miles below Philadelphia, in a thicket of pines." . . . . "It flies frequently by day, and particularly in dark, cloudy weather; takes short flights, and, when sitting and looking sharply around, erects the two slight feathers that constitute its horns, which are at such times very noticeable; but, otherwise not perceivable. No person on slightly examining this bird after being shot, would suspect it to be furnished with horns; nor are they discovered but by careful search, or previous observation, on the living bird."

Nuttall in his last edition simply gives a rehash of Wilson, Richardson and Bewick and says:

"We have observed it at Atovi, one of the Sandwich Islands in the Pacific, as well as in the Territory of Oregon."

This edition was published after Nuttall's journey across the continent to the Columbia river and return home *via* Sandwich Islands and Cape Horn back to Boston, and yet Townsend, who was Nuttall's companion, shot specimens on the Columbia river and afterwards gave them to Audubon. From the correspondence and material in our possession referring to this expedition we are inclined to the belief that Townsend did not allow Nuttall to know the extent of the ornithological

knowledge gained by him on this trip, or the number of birds shot, as he fully intended to publish a work on North American Birds, and did get out one number in 1839, but surrendered to Audubon when he commenced his seven vol. octavo edition.

Audubon besides quoting previous authors, gives us considerable original information from his own observations. He also gives an excellent portrait of the bird. We quote from him. Vol. I, page 141:

"The only nest of this bird that I have found was placed on one of the high mountain ridges of the great pine forest. [Pa.] It contained four eggs, nearly ready to be hatched. They were of a dull bluish white, covered with excrement, of a somewhat elongated or elliptical form, measuring an inch and a half in length, and an inch and an eighth in breadth. The nest which I met with on the 17th of June, was placed under a low bush and covered over by tall grass, through which a path had been made by the bird. It was formed of dry grass, raked together in a slovenly manner, and quite flat, but covering a large space, on one side of which was found many pellets, and two field mice, which must have been brought there in course of the preceding night, as they were quite fresh. I should never have discovered the nest had not the sitting bird made a noise by clicking its bill as I was passing close by. The poor thing was so intent on her task that I almost put my hand on her before she moved; and then, instead of flying off, she hopped with great leaps until about ten rods from me, keeping up a constant clinking of her mandibles. Having satisfied myself as to the species, made an outline of two of the eggs, and measured them, I proceeded slowly to a short distance and watched her movements. Having remained silent and still for about ten minutes, I saw her hop toward the nest, and soon felt assured that she had resumed her task. It was my intention to revisit the spot and take note of the growth of the young, but letters which came to me from Philadelphia a few days after, induced me to return thither; and since then I have had no opportunity of examining either the eggs or the young of the Short-eared Owl."

Dr. Coues adds but little that is new to the above. He says:

"I procured one specimen at Fort Randall in the winter of 1872-73"

He further says:

"It is decidedly the commonest owl about Washington, D. C., especially in Winter." . . . . "On one occasion I observed a gathering of twenty or thirty individuals on the Colorado river, below Fort Mojave;" . . . . "The birds were sitting quite closely together in the rank herbage bordering the river; some flopped hurriedly off as the steamboat came abreast of them, while others stood to their perches as we passed."

In the Bull. of the Nutt. Orn. Club, Vol. IV, page 223, W. E. D. Scott, writing from Long Beach, N. J., says:

"Rather common; resident; breeds. Took a nest and seven partly incubated eggs, June 28, 1878.

The following, which is decidedly the most interesting information so far placed on record, was furnished by Mr. H. A. Kline at our request, after purchasing from him a set of eight eggs. Mr. Kline makes no vague statements, but gives us interesting facts as he observed them, and in a straightforward manner:

"My first acquaintance with this bird was in the Spring of 1880, while on a ducking expedition in the Winnebago swamps of Illinois. As I was tramping through the dry grass along the edge of a marsh, and on the look-out for more edible game, a pair of these birds was flushed from the tall grass, I succeeded in winging one with the right barrel, and after sending 1½ oz. of No. 5 shot after the other in vain, I proceeded to examine my prize, which proved to be a male in fine plumage. I afterward learned of several being killed in the same locality. I found these birds very common in Johnson and Gage counties, Nebraska. On one occasion while out shooting prairie chickens in the winter of '81-82 I noticed one of these birds rise from the grass about fifty yards in front of me. A load of shot soon brought it to the ground, when at the report of the gun four others raised from the grass, all of which were within fifty yards of me, but they were all very shy and kept well out of range. They seemed very loth to leave the place, as I found them in the same locality every day for a fortnight. They were very wild, but I succeeded in taking two more good specimens. The site where these birds were killed was along an old ravine, which was covered with a heavy growth of prairie grass. I could notice no variation in the markings of any of these birds. I did not disturb the birds at that place after securing the three, as I thought they would breed there, and I often noticed four or five of them flying about after sundown in search of mice, etc. They appeared to be common anywhere on the prairies, although I always met with best success along the ravines. On the 17th of May I took my dog (a pointer) and went to the same place where I got my specimens, to look for their nest, which I found without much trouble. The dog was ranging a short distance in front of me when he was suddenly attacked by one of the Owls. It was soon joined by the other (the male) and together they succeeded in driving him from the field. They would swoop from the right and left and strike him on the back with their wings. Not being used to such treatment by any members of the feathered tribe he beat a hasty retreat, followed by both birds. After chasing him some distance they returned to me and manifested great displeasure by swooping very close to me and snapping their bills as many Owls do when angry. I soon came upon the nest, which was placed upon the ground, and contained eight white eggs. They were of an oblong oval shape, and the shell closely resembled that of the Long-eared Owl. Though the eggs are not near as round as the Long-eared Owl's, being much less through the lesser axis. The nest consisted of a mass of dry prairie grass placed on the ground, and was hollowed out two inches deep. The interior was lined with fine grass, and the whole displayed a good bit of skill in nest making for an owl. The eggs of this nest are now in the possession of Jos. M. Wade, Boston, Mass. The same week I found two more nests, both of which were destroyed by fire before the set of eggs was completed. One of these nests was on a high knoll, and the other in a ravine. A gentleman who had been watching these birds for several years told me he found a nest in 1880 which contained six young birds and

one egg. The young varied much in size and must have been hatched at different times. The eggs of the first set I found showed the same variation in the size of the embryos. I don't think these birds ever prey upon anything but small animals, and I have never found them in the vicinity of timber. I have tried trapping them by placing a steel trap on the top of a pole, but never succeeded in catching a bird."

The following received from G. A. McCallum, Dunville, Ont., is also a valuable addition to the life history of this bird:

A flock of Short-eared owls, that is if six may be called a flock, have taken up their residence in the outskirts of our town this winter (1882-3), and as many as four have been seen together flitting about the fields as if in play, dipping down to the ground, then soaring up again, chasing one another, etc. Is this conduct not odd? I have secured two of them, and hope to bag the rest, although they are very wary. A friend of mine while shooting in the marsh last fall had just shot a snipe when one of this genus darted at the falling bird and had secured it, when the other barrel dropped him and he now sits in my collection."

O. & O. Vol. VIII, Aug. 1883, p. 60-61

### Something about Owls. C. O. Ormsbee, Montpelier, Vt.

Of the Short-eared Owl, distributed over the entire country, one hundred and one stomachs were examined. Eleven contained small birds, one contained part of a Rabbit and seventy-seven contained Mice.

O. & O. Vol. 13, Oct. 1893 p. 133

EDITORS OF 'THE AUK':—

Dear Sirs:—In a recent paper on the Terns of Muskeget Island,<sup>2</sup> Mr. George H. Mackay records the extermination of a family of Short-eared Owls that had established themselves on the island during the summer

<sup>2</sup> Auk, XIV, pp. 380-390. October, 1897.

The vertebrate fauna of Muskeget may be roughly divided into two groups: 1st, animals which there find conditions essentially normal and similar to those to which they are subjected throughout their range; and 2nd, animals which there find essentially abnormal conditions, that is, conditions which distinctly differ from those to which they are elsewhere exposed.<sup>1</sup> To the first class belong most of the breeding birds, among which may be mentioned: *Sterna hirundo*, *S. dougalli*, *S. paradisæa*, *Larus atricilla*, *Ægialitis meloda*, *Actitis macularia*, *Agelaius phœniceus*, *Sturnella magna*, *Ammodramus caudacutus*, *A. sandwichensis savanna*, and *Melospiza fasciata*.<sup>2</sup> The coast form of the common toad probably belongs also in this category. In the second class we find the two mammals of the island, a Vole and White-footed Mouse, and only one bird, the Short-eared Owl. It is to the members of the second class that the chief interest attaches, because they are rapidly undergoing modification to fit them to the needs of their peculiar environment, while no such process is taking place among the inhabitants of the island that find there their normal surroundings. The process of change has progressed furthest with the Vole, *Microtus breweri* (Baird), which is now so much differentiated as to be readily separable from the wide-ranging *Microtus pennsylvanicus* of Nantucket, Martha's Vineyard and the adjacent mainland. The White-footed Mouse, *Peromyscus leucopus* (Rafinesque), is beginning to undergo a series of changes which if not interrupted will doubtless eventually result in the formation of a new species.<sup>3</sup> A similar process would doubtless take place in the Owls if they were strictly protected and allowed to become firmly established on the island, for the bare glaring sand and scant vegetation among which

<sup>1</sup> A similar classification could probably be made with the plants, but here the preponderance of the first class would be even greater than in the case of the land Vertebrates.

<sup>2</sup> This list is taken from a summary of the Muskeget fauna published in 1896. Miller, Proc. Bost. Soc. Nat. Hist., XXVII, pp. 79-83.

<sup>3</sup> See Miller, Proc. Bost. Soc. Nat. Hist., XXVII, p. 80.

EDITORS OF 'THE AUK':—

*Dear Sirs:*—I quite agree with Mr. Miller (*cf.* Auk, XV, No. 1, January, 1898, pp. 75-77) that the killing of the family of Muskeget Owls in 1896, merely because they were preying on the Terns, was ill-judged. If Muskeget were my private property I should encourage and protect the Owls, and they would be made welcome to as many Terns as they chose to eat, for I should feel confident that however fast they might increase the Terns would outstrip them in the race. As Mr. Miller says, bird protection should not be made one sided for if it be so it is certain to lose not only its scientific but much of its aesthetic value, as well as something, even, of its practical usefulness. Bird protectors, whether they be sportsmen or pure bird lovers, would do well to study more closely the balance of nature, for it concerns the success of their enterprises far more closely than they seem to realize. Even the naturalists do not as yet fully understand the complex workings and delicate adjustments of a system which, when not interfered with by man, seems invariably to result in the production and maintenance of the richest possible fauna, of which the predatory and non-predatory forms increase together to the full limits of the capacity for food and shelter which the country furnishes. No one who has ever visited a primitive region, well timbered, well watered and not too cold, can deny the truth of this, but it is certainly difficult to understand or explain how Hawks, Owls, Herons, and other birds of prey, some of them are worn away almost to the shaft. But even the lighter two birds have a number of scapulars and interscapulars which are perfect in outline and which are not only much darker than the worn portions of the plumage, but nearly or quite as dark as corresponding feathers of birds taken in autumn or winter at places hundreds or even thousands of miles distant from Muskeget. These feathers may have been of recent growth at the time when the birds were killed but it is more probable that they were old feathers which had been protected by the overlapping plumage from the bleaching and disintegrating effects of the air and sunlight, for the inner quills, as well as the inner webs of the outer primaries and tail-feathers, are almost equally fresh and perfect, in striking contrast with the frayed and bleached outer portions of some of the wing and tail-feathers.

It is, of course, quite safe to assert that at some time earlier in the season the general coloring of these birds must have been not unlike that which the unworn parts of the plumage now exhibit, and it seems not unreasonable to assume that even these unworn feathers must have lost something of their original depth and richness of tint. If this be granted, and a very slight allowance made for fading, I do not see how it can be maintained that the Short-eared Owls taken by Mr. Maynard and myself on Muskeget Island in 1870 were in any respects peculiar. Even if the allowance for fading be not conceded it is quite possible, as I have already stated, to match the unworn feathers by corresponding feathers



EDITORS OF 'THE AUK':—

*Dear Sirs:*—I take it for granted that I shall be allowed, with your accustomed courtesy, a little space in your Journal for the purpose of replying to the author of a letter entitled, 'The Fauna of Muskeget Island—A Protest,' which appeared in the number for January, 1898. This letter, I am free to confess, has given me a genuine surprise. It is only after some hesitation that I have decided to reply to it. I can but regard this 'Protest,' with its accompanying inferences, as uncalled for by the facts in the case. I therefore beg your indulgence to take up some of the points in the order that they are presented in Mr. Miller's letter.

I have shot but one Short-eared Owl for a number of years. I have had, however, in the Legislature for two years past, and again this winter, a bill in which there is a clause giving this Owl full protection. The above mentioned bird is now in Mr. William Brewster's collection, and is in the dark phase of plumage. It was one of a brood hatched on Muskeget during the summer of 1896. I would have shot the entire family had I been able to accomplish it *at the time*, for the reason that I had the interests of the Terns in view; hence all antagonistic elements, whether developed in man, mammals, or birds, were regarded as enemies and so treated. Bird protection is a complicated and difficult problem at best. I see no occasion for making it harder for those engaged in it. When a gentleman of Mr. Miller's ornithological knowledge expresses such sentiments in print as the following: "But when bird protection results in the destruction of a family of Owls, which, notwithstanding its numerical insignificance, far outweighs in biological interest the largest Tern colony on the entire Atlantic coast," I think that lovers of bird life have a right to 'protest' with more reason than he. When bird protection embraces a remnant of Terns raised from a low ebb through years of tireless protection, as it does in the present case, to colonies, the numbers of which are beyond estimate, I am of the opinion that such a condition outweighs any problematical biological interest likely to arise from Muskeget Island ever becoming a habitat of Short-eared Owls. Mr. Miller states that the vertebrate fauna of Muskeget may be roughly divided into two groups, viz., normal and abnormal. In the latter class he places the Short-eared Owl. From an ornithological standpoint this is surprising, for as far as I know it has no foundation in fact. I was not aware that Muskeget Island had *ever* produced any form of the Short-eared Owl that is different from what is found elsewhere; neither is there much likelihood of such a race occurring in the future on Muskeget. The conditions

of environment, as they at present exist, are against such abnormal development. If, during the past, no such *recognizable* pale race has been produced by the conditions as claimed and presented, what ground or promise is there of *now* establishing such a race amidst a shooting club, a life saving station, and fishermen who have numbers of cats to hold in check the vermin. These vermin are the direct result of those reintroduced on the island by Mr. Miller and associates several years ago.

I fail to appreciate and dissent from the statement near the foot of page 77 that, "by helping to offer direct historical proof of the rapidity at which modification may progress under natural conditions the Terns would be fulfilling a more important end than in gladdening the eye of the visitor to Muskeget, and the heart of the reader of Mr. Mackay's progress report." These beautiful birds are fulfilling at the present time a much more important end than the one suggested, by delighting the eye of every lover of bird life to whom the privilege of enjoying their companionship is given. Refining in their influences, what higher or better end can they serve?

GEORGE H. MACKAY.

*Boston, January 17, 1898.*

Boston March 30, 1895

My Dear Brewster -

In looking over the "Land Birds & Game Birds", last evening, I noticed in your remarks on the Short-eared Owl the following, "but Mr Geo He Mackay tells me that it is no longer seen in summer on these islands". I think I may safely say that during the past fifteen years I have seen every summer, from one pair to three pair of these birds, the smaller number the summer of 1894. and I think it possible that in some years, although I know of no data to substantiate it, that they occasionally breed on Nantucket - On March 27, 1893 I saw a Short-eared owl on Muskeget, and Mr Marcus Denham told me he had shot one there, the previous week, probably the mate to the one I saw. With these facts before me, I am at a loss to understand how I could possibly convey what you have attributed to me in your foot note quoted above.

Yours truly  
Geo A Mackay

25 Congress St

Boston March 30, 1895

A PARTIAL ALBINO SHORT-EARED OWL (*Asio accipitrinus*).—I have a female of this species taken here April 29, 1883, in which the entire plumage is suffused with white, the ruff, upper part of neck, the median and lesser coverts, ends of primaries, secondaries, and tail being strongly so.—JNO. H. SAGE, *Portland, Conn.* **Bull. N. O. C.**, 8, July, 1883, p. 183

728. *Short-eared Owl*. Editorial. *Ibid.*, pp. 60, 61.—On its habits and distribution, with quotations from authors and interesting new matter furnished by H. A. Kline and G. A. McCallum. **O. & O. Vol. VIII**
1298. *Short-eared Owls in Illinois*. By J. G. Henderson. **O. & O. Vol. VIII**
- 4, Feb. 17, p. 66.—“Quite plentiful . . . this winter” [1886-87] at Carrolton. **For. & Stream, Vol. XXVIII**
1006. *Short-Eared Owl's Nest*. [By F. T. Jencks.] *Ibid.*, p. 8. **Hand. Notes Nat. His, I, No. I.**

757. *Short-eared Owl*. By F. H. Carpenter. *Ibid.*, p. 84.—Its breeding habits at Rehoboth, Mass. **O. & O. Vol. VIII**

*Asio accipitrinus meilhungi*

Stamm, Proc. Acad. N. S. Sweden 1899, 478.

= type, Aug. 7, 1901.

*Syrnium*  
*nebulosum*

*Syrnium nebulosum.*

1890-91 Mass.

Snowy and Acadian Owls have been exceptionally numerous this winter and four Great Grays were taken near Boston in February and March but there has been "no flight" whatever of Barred Owls. The winter has been cold with the ground covered with snow most of the time from December 1 to March 1. In northern New England the snow is said to be six or seven feet deep in many localities.

No flight in  
1890-91  
although  
winter severe  
with deep  
snows.

1891-92 I did not hear of the capture of any Barred Owls in Middlesex County this winter. November & December were mild and open months. Cold weather & deep snows came early in January & lasted until the middle of March.

No flight  
in 1891-92

1892-93

<sup>1892</sup>  
Dec. 16

Mr. Jas. J. Clark tells me that he has had 14 Barred Owls sent in from localities near Boston ~~there~~ within the last three or four weeks and that one appeared on Boston Common to-day and was chased about for hours by a mob armed with sticks & stones. A good many Saw-whet Owls have also been seen and Pine Grosbeaks are numerous. I have not heard of any Snowy Owls.

A flight year.  
Bird seen on  
Boston Common.

" 29 Concord. - At 3 P.M. (the sun shining brightly & the light reflected from the snow ~~very~~ strong) saw a Barred Owl perched in the top of an isolated elm in a meadow near Ball's Hill evidently watching for mice. This bird was nearly as alert and wary as an average Pouter & I failed to get nearer than about 50 yards when he flew to a wooded swamp. His greenish yellow bill was conspicuous when he turned his face towards me. (Fuller notes in journal of this date)

1892 Mass.

*Syrnium nebulosum.*

Dec. 29 Concord.- As we were returning past Bensen's house my attention Barred  
was attracted by a large, ragged-looking grayish object in the Owl.  
top of an isolated elm which stands in the meadow on the edge of  
the Davis swamp -about 60 yards from the road. At first glance  
I took it for a paper Wasp's nest but before I could extract my  
field glasses from my pocket and bring them to bear it moved  
slightly and I saw that it was a Barred Owl. Its head was bent  
forward and its gaze fixed on the ground beneath. Evidently it  
was on the watch for mice although the sun was more than an hour  
high (it was about 3 P.M.) and the light reflected from the snow  
(which covered most of the meadow) bright if not actually dazzl-  
ing to human eyes. Peter, who came from the house to speak with  
us, told me that the Owl had been flying about over the meadow,  
alighting on humps of frozen earth, and had settled in the elm  
only a few minutes before we emerged from the woods. I now climb  
over the wall and advanced slowly down the slope towards the elm.  
At first the Owl did not seem to notice me but when I came to  
some snow and my foot-steps produced a slight crunching sound the  
bird instantly turned its head towards me and half opened its  
wings. I stopped and we stared at each other for a minute or more  
the Owl without blinking, his eyes appearing perfectly round and  
black, his beak of a bright greenish yellow, his plumage every-  
where of a faded or grayish brown with profuse and very conspicu-  
ous whitish bars and spots. When he turned to face me a twig  
penetrated the plumage of his back and springing upward raised a  
bunch of scapulars considerably above the surrounding feathers,

1892 Mass.

*Syrnium nebulosum.*

Dec.29 Concord.- giving him a ludicrously ragged appearance. Indeed Barred  
(NO.2) there was nothing firm nor graceful in either his pose or out- Owl.  
lines. The facial disc, as with most Owls, was very conspicuous.

After a little I tried to creep nearer but at the very first step the bird spread his broad wings and flapping them quickly and continuously ten or a dozen times just after leaving his Perch gained sufficient impetus to glide a hundred yards or more further before alighting again. His course, during his flight, was at first directly towards the woods but on entering them he turned to the right and, scaling only a few feet above the ground passed through a wide belt of densely growing maples and coming out into an opening beyond pitched sharply upward and alighted on an isolated tree. We traced him easily enough during the entire flight for we stood well above him and the ground in the swamp was covered with snow over which he glided slowly like a great shadow. I have never before seen a Barred Owl abroad and hunting at midday in this latitude although such an experience is not uncommon in the South. This bird was quite as alert as a Hawk. He flew from the elm when I was fully 50 yards away. I did not follow him into the swamp. I afterwards learned that Mr. Bensen saw this Owl in the same place nearly every day up to February 1.-193.

Syrnium nebulosum.

North Middleboro', Mass.

1897.

" 1897, Mar.9. Found by me sitting on nest, robbed later,  
Mar.21, by a friend. Three eggs, white.

" Apr.3. Three eggs, incubated, laid about Mar.20.  
Hollow oak, 12 ft. up.

" May 4. Two eggs, second set of pair robbed Apr.3.  
This time took old squirrel's nest in white  
pine, <sup>30</sup>~~45~~ ft. "

Extract from letter from H.K.Job, July 22, 1897,

North Middleboro', Mass.



*Syrnium nebulosum*

Englewood, New York.

An incident in to-day's outing at Englewood was so in keeping with some of our Suwanee experiences, I feel that even at the risk of tiring you, I must write you of it. I went out to hunt for my leucobronchialis. Once I thought I recognized his voice, but three hour's search revealed only pinus, and it is more than probable it was this species I heard. It was rather thick in some places, and I tried various calls to bring birds to me. The crow notes seemed the most effective, and after collecting a little group I thought I would amuse them by varying the performance and gave one or two Owl hoots. At least five minutes later I was startled by an answering too-who from a neighboring wood, and in a very short time that owl got into serious difficulty with three Crows, which had probably inspected my vicinity, but seeing me through the bushes, had withdrawn. At any rate, they made up for lost time now, and although I could not see, I could hear the battle going on. A clashing of wings, guttural, rolling squaks, the indignant notes of protest from poor Syrnium. In the intervals of quiet we continued our conversation, when suddenly the outcry was renewed with increased violence, and looking up, I saw the old fellow coming towards me, the crows in full pursuit. It was bright sunlight but he lit on the topmost branch of a young elm about fifty yards away. Here the crows had an excellent chance, and they took advantage of it, making at least one feather fly, until probably seeing me, for I was only concealed by the branches above, they left old Hooty and I alone to have a nice little chat together. And we did have. For one owl conversation, the Suwanee experiences were fairly discounted. Furthermore, it was broad daylight, and I could see as well as hear all that occurred. Tree by tree he drew nearer, until, reaching a maple ~~not~~ distant not more than twenty feet, he seemed to think he was near enough for an interchange of confidences, and addressed me in a low whoo-who---soft, very pleasing and unlike anything I have ever heard from this species. The attitude was one of eager inquiry, the body bending forward, the head well down between the shoulders, reaching farther forward still; the wings slightly dropped, the whole plumage loose and fluffy. At each low questioning note the throat swelled and there was a slight forward movement of the body.. Perched thus, he regarded me so intently, and there was such a grotesquely human appearance in his countenance that it became at last really unpleasant, and I was not very sorry when he, probably disgusted, took flight. I could not, however, resist just one more call, which brought him to a stand on the top of a yielding white birch which bent and swayed beneath his weight. Here his black enemies at once pounced upon him and he was forced to continue his flight to better cover. My fiendish nature now fully satisfied, I left him to think it over-- a sadly puzzled Owl.--(Letter of F.M. Chapman.)

May 25, 1890)

Birds of Upper St. John.  
Batchelder.

79. *Strix nebulosa* Forst. BARRED OWL.—“Very common” at Houlton. We were shown a mounted specimen by Mr. Frank P. Orcutt at Fort Fairfield. He considered it the commonest Owl.

Bull. N. O. C., 7, July, 1882, p. 150

Birds within Ten Miles of Fair-  
de Monts, Can. Comeau & Merriam.

61. *Strix nebulosa*. BARRED OWL.—A tolerably common resident.

Bull. N. O. C., 7, Oct, 1882, p. 237

*Birds of Toronto, Canada,*  
*by James H. Fleming,*  
*Part II, Land Birds,*  
*Auk, XXIV, Jan., 1907, p. 74*

140. *Syrnium varium*. BARRED OWL.—Regular winter resident, October 10 to March 19; sometimes abundant (October 1-10, 1902).

Birds of Dead River Region, Me. F. H. C.

78. *Strix nebulosa*, (Barred Owl). Common about Kingfield, where it often resorts to barns during the day time, and has thus earned the soubriquet of "Barn Owl." It was also heard about New Portland and at various parts of the southern part of Somerset county. Mr. Freeborn has a pair near Farmington, from which he has taken two sets annually for the past four years. The nest is in a cavity in a decayed oak stub, about fifteen feet from the ground.

O. & O. XI. Dec. 1886. p. 177

Fall Birds of Northern Maine.  
F. H. Carpenter.

Barred Owl (*Strix nebulosa*), One seen.

O. & O. XII. Nov. 1887 p. 188



Owls - The number of Owls shot in Greenfield and vicinity since May 1st 1884 are

five Barred, Owls

S. W. Comstocks,  
Greenfield, Mass.  
O. & O. X. Nov. 1885. p. 47.

Boston "Review for January"  
F. B. W.

Barred Owls  
have been a drug in the market, at 25c. White,  
Short, Long Eared and Great Horned are scarce.

O. & O. IX. Feb. 1886. p. 32.

Boston Notes by F. B. W.

During August ~~are~~ the first Owls of the  
season, a pair of Barred in the down, we should  
judge citizens of this State.

O. & O. X. Dec. 1885. p. 192

Birds of Bristol County, Mass.  
F. W. Andros.

*Syrnium nebulosum* (Forst). Barred Owl.  
Resident, tolerably common. Breeds.

O. & O. XII. Sept. 1887. p. 129

Birds Known to Pass Breeding Season  
nr. Winchendon, Mass. Wm. Brewster

11. *Syrnium nebulosum*.

Ank, V, Oct., 1888. p. 389

#### Brief Notes.

Birds of all kinds that usually visit this  
locality during the winter have been very  
scarce. A few flocks of Snow Buntings were  
seen. Hardly an Owl reported as being seen.  
Last winter five Barred Owls were taken in  
this town. But one Screech Owl has been  
taken in three years. There are a number of  
small flocks of Quail wintering here. J. W.  
Jackson, Belchertown, Mass.

O. & O. Vol. 17, April 1892 p. 64

A Barred Owl was shot within about  
five minutes walk of our place, December  
1. A dangerous locality for such visitors.

H. P. T. Wakefield, Mass.

O. & O Vol. 17, Nov. 1892 p. 175

Notes from Belchertown, Mass.  
J. W. Jackson

Barred Owls were noted early in Fall.

O. & O. Vol. 18, Mar. 1893 p. 45

Mass (Winchendon)

Not common but breeds (Bailey)

*Syrnium nebulosum*.

1883

*Syrnium nebulosum*

Cambridge  
Mass.

January 8 a ♀ shot by  
"Tony" in Cambridge  
& given by him to Lamb.  
(Note book C. R. Lamb)

Owls.—Messrs. Southwick & Jencks report about 150 Owls this season—about seventy-five Barred Owls, and including all the varieties but Great Gray and Hawk Owls.

*Providence, R. I.*

*O. & O. VIII. Mar. 1883. p. 24.*

BARRED OWLS.—What is the matter with the Barred Owls? Sage and I have had more brought in than we could attend to this Fall, and Sage tells of a taxidermist in Hartford who has had ten. I guess the crop was good last season.—W. W. Coe.

Portland,  
Conn.

O. & O. VIII. Jan. 1883. p. 3

Winter Birds.

Owls were unusually abundant last winter and I mounted

two Barred Owls.

J. N. Colwell, Saybrook, Conn.

O. & O. VIII. Oct. 1883. p. 80.

An 1884 Hawk List.

SYRNIUM NEBULOSUM: Tuesday April 1, set of three, Whippoorwill Ledge. April 5, first set of two, May 9, second set of two, Hell Gate.

J. W. W. Norwich, Conn.

O. & O. X. Feb. 1885. p. 25

Birds observed in Naval Hospital  
Grounds, Brooklyn. G. H. Coues

4. *Syrnium nebulosum*. BARRED OWL. — One seen in the immediate vicinity.

**Bull. N. O. C. 4, Jan., 1879, p. 31**

Birds of the Adirondack Region.  
C. H. Merriam.

114. *Strix nebulosa*, Forster. BARRED OWL. — A common resident, usually breeding in holes in trees.

**Bull. N. O. C. 6, Oct, 1881, p. 232**

Oneida County, New York,  
William L. Ralph & Egbert Bagr

*Syrnium nebulosum*. — Breeds. A nest containing two eggs was taken at Holland Patent April 18, 1889.

**Auk, VII. July, 1890, p. 231.**

Birds Tioga Co, N. Y. Alden Loring

397. Barred Owl. Not common.

**O. & O. XV, June, 1890, p. 85**

*Notes on Birds of Long Island.*

*Auk, XVII, Jan., 1900, pp. 70-71.*

*Syrnium nebulosum*. — The Barred Owl is rather rare on Long Island. The present record has to do with its occurrence as a bird of the city, my attention having been attracted to it by a crowd which gathered to observe the unfamiliar sight of a large bird in the heart of the city, sitting with every appearance of contentment in the bare branches of a tree. The small boys, however, soon began to pelt it with stones, though it was with difficulty that the bird could be made to fly, and even the presence of a policeman had little effect in restraining them.

In spite of much persecution the bird remained in the vicinity for several days more, but the commotion and excitement produced by his presence led to his premature end. Various missiles aimed at the Owl by the crowd during the day became a menace to the windows and heads and led the householders to consider the bird a rather unwelcome visitor. The bird was accordingly shot and afterward fell into my possession. The contents of the stomach, as well as beak and claws, bore testimony to the havoc which he had made the preceding night among the English Sparrows. — WILLIAM C. BRAISLIN, M. D., *Brooklyn, N. Y.*



warblers were dwelt upon. The bad side of the English Sparrows being so often a subject of comment by citizens, Mr. Park defended the birds by showing their excellent capacity as scavengers, and that the nuisance of their lodgment in vines, trees and window blinds can be avoided by routing them out once or twice in the night time, when they will leave their lodging place and seek other and more peaceful lodgings. This clearing-out process can be effected by the use of poles or fireworks or a stream of water directed from the hydrants. Their war upon insects is unremitting for a large part of the year, and when driven from town they seek the suburbs, and assist the farmer to destroy his grasshoppers, and sometimes, but only after the grasshoppers are gone, to dispose of his surplus grain.

Mr. Park showed a specimen of the Barred Owl, which was shot in Harrison Place a few years ago, which had in its stomach the foot and leg of a Screech-owl. A series of six Sparrow Hawks was exhibited, ranging from the white downy nestling to the adult. He also showed the Goshawks, Chicken Hawks and Sharp-shinned Hawks, of which the females are greatly the largest, and which live mainly on other birds. The White Gulls Mr. Park denominated the "white winged angels of the Arctic seas," which are rarely found here even in Arctic weather. The "Kumlien's Gull" is a species lately discovered. It breeds in Cumberland Gulf, in the region of Greenland. The one shown by the lecturer is the first recorded specimen found in this State. It is white, with a pearly blue back, and beautifully shaped. The speaker observed, concerning the intelligence of birds as indicated by the quantity of brains, that the amount of brains in proportion to the weight of the body is vastly greater in the active birds, as the Thrushes, Warblers and Sparrows, than in the Ducks and Geese, and that some birds have a larger brain in proportion to the weight of the body than is possessed by the average man. These facts indicate a higher degree of intuitive intelligence in the higher and more active grades of birds. The cerebrum of a Song Sparrow's brain has a greater weight, in proportion to its body, than the whole brain of the average man in proportion to his total weight. The birds made a beautiful and striking appearance. They constitute only a part of the very large collection of Mr. Park, which he is in hopes may some day be a nucleus for a public museum in this branch of natural history. The address was replete with interest, and was very instructive and entertaining to all who were so fortunate as to be present.

#### The Birds of the Vicinity of Troy, New York.

Mr. Austin F. Park, of Troy, recently delivered an interesting lecture under this title before the Troy Scientific Association. He exhibited a collection of about 230 specimens, representing 175 species of local birds. The lecturer gave a characteristic description of each bird family, and interested his audience with many important details. The songs of the thrushes peculiarly resembling the human style of expression and the beauty and intense activity of the insectivorous

Albinism and Melanism in North  
American Birds, Ruthven Deane.

Among the *Strigidae* a fine specimen of *S. nebulosum* is in the  
natural history museum at Niagara Falls.

Bull. N. O. C. 1, April, 1876, p. 22

*Strix nebulosa*

Francis knows of only one nest we found in E. Mass. This was in some nest taken two years since in same place. He considers it one of our rarest Owls in breeding season. It is a very abundant bird in New Brunswick (Canada).

Raptors, Bristol County, Mass.  
Hilton B. Read.

Barred Owl (*Strix nebulosa*). This species is quite common in our county and breeds sparingly, although more frequently than formerly.

I quote two instances of capture and two nests to which they yearly resort, in Rehoboth, (Carpenter). One specimen from Seekonk, (Miller) and three from Dartmouth, (Dexter), besides numerous observations. One was captured alive and is now in confinement in the

house of a friend in Attleboro. One of their nests was simply a decayed cavity in an old walnut tree, in a grove not far from a house.

Two sets of two eggs each were taken April 7th and 25th, when the Owl resorted to an old nest of the Red-shouldered Hawk, and laid a third "set" of one egg, which was taken, together with the old bird, May 7th. This nest has been occupied by the owls for a number of years, and it will be interesting to observe whether the male will return with a mate, to again establish a home. The set of eggs is usually complete with two, but three has been taken several times by both Mr. Carpenter and myself. The eggs are globular—as all Owl's eggs are—and when first taken from the nest are generally very dirty, owing to no lining being used to protect the eggs from the rotten punk on the bottom of the nest, but water soon brings out their true color, a creamy white.

O. & O. XII, Aug. 1887 p 117-118

Nesting of the Barred Owl in Mass.

BY C. L. PHILLIPS, TAUNTON, MASS.

April 28, 1888, while exploring a large, dense swamp in South Dighton, Mass., I was so fortunate as to find the Barred Owl (*Strix nebulosa*) breeding. The nest was placed about thirty feet high, in the fork of a swamp maple. The owl had evidently utilized an old Red-shouldered Hawk's nest, simply adding a few pine twigs and lining it with downy feathers and moss. The nest contained two white, translucent eggs, measuring 56 x 44 mm. and 57 x 46 mm. respectively.

I sat down and watched for the owl's return; she soon made her appearance, approaching

slowly and cautiously from tree to tree. She had got within two rods of her nest when a crow came diving down on her back; taken by surprise she took to flight and soon disappeared in the dark recesses of the swamp with *corvus* in hot pursuit.

O. & O. XIII, Aug. 1888 p. 119

Notes from Rehoboth, Mass.

PART I.—RAPTORES. "F. H. C."

In lieu of my departed "strain" of Great-horned Owls I was obliged to wait until the blustering winds of March had given place to the showers of April, ere I could venture forth with confidence to reap the harvest of the next breeder, the Barred Owl.

April 7th I took my trip to the usual haunts of these "Hooters" and first inspected Long Hill Woods, where, since the spring of 1878, I had annually secured a set of their eggs from one of the old Hawk's nests. A pair of screaming "Red Shoulders" prospecting for a situation for their domicile, greeted me with assurances of success for a future visit. I diligently thumped every tree that contained a nest and ascended to the most likely looking ones but no Barred Owl or eggs were found.

I next went to the pine woods some two miles distant, where I also annually secured sets. Here I carefully searched for *Strix* but found nothing.

Matters were growing serious. My disappointment was about all that I could bear. My last resource was Oak Swamp. Surely in that secluded retreat they must be found.

I secured the services of a friend and we thoroughly hunted the swamp, looking in every hollow stump until we found the object of our search.

In a decayed open cavity in a walnut tree was a Barred Owl sitting in full view. The nest was not more than ten feet up in the tree. The Owl did not leave until the tree was thumped; then only flew into the next tree. The set of these eggs was secured without trouble; incubation slight. Whether the Owls in the other localities will return next season is a question of much anxiety with me, for I had promised several friends sets of their eggs, and it was a matter of much chagrin to only record one chick.

O + O. IX. Aug. 1884. p. 99.

Barred Owl.

The Barred Owl is the most common with me with the exception of the Screech Owl. As a winter resident it becomes quite bold and will often approach the house in search of food. This leads me to mention the capture of my confined bird under the following peculiar circumstances: In my museum I have an open coal grate. One morning while building the fire I was surprised by a Barred Owl tumbling down the chimney with considerable fuss and lack of dignity. Recovering himself he perched on a chair as calmly as though in his native wilds. Of course his capture speedily followed and for two years he has remained in confinement, as stoical as an Athens judge. Nothing moves him except the food, which he seizes with avidity, and swallows with equal haste. Although rather ludicrous to watch as he sits wrapped in the consciousness of his own moral dignity, yet he is less interesting to my mind than any of my other feathered friends. This being my opinion I am not quite as lenient with him as with the Long-eared Owl, and woe to the nest which comes in my circuit of collecting.

My first Barred Owl's nest well do I remember. It was the first nest of any Owl's or Hawk's I had ever found, and it being in the beginning of my oological aspirations, the next question to be solved was how to get it, for it was most provokingly placed in an old Fisk Hawk's nest at the top of an old dead tree, smooth for forty feet without a limb. Climbing irons I had never heard of. To "shin" it was out of the question. My only resource was to let them hatch, which I did. Three pair now breed in this vicinity. One nest is in the hollow of an old pine stub fifteen feet or so from the ground. Number two is in a heavy wood, where they have the choice of several old Hawk's nests, seeming not to remain only for one year in the same nest. Number three was placed last year in an old Crow's nest, at the top of a

*Orin.*

Notes from

PART

very tall pine. These Owls have bred in the forementioned places for at least seven or eight years. I have seven sets from pair number one taken annually. My earliest date March 27; latest April 18—at both dates eggs being fresh. Incubation has been noted for one pair twenty-six days from date of finding complete set; the other occupied twenty four days from same time. For the latter nest I would say the eggs might have been sat upon for a day or two previous to my finding the nest. Eggs number three and four to a complete set and measure on an average about  $2.00 \times 1.80$ .—*F. H. C. Rehoboth,*

In lieu of m Great-horned O until the blust given place to I could venture reap the harvest Barred Owl.

April 7th I to haunts of these spected Long E spring of 187 set of their Hawk's nests.

Notes from California.

Shoulders" pr their domicile, of success for thumped every and ascended ones but no Ba

While sitting down beside a little creek sketching, I saw the fol about me, some in the creek, others in the tall California Woodpecker pecker, Lewis' Wood

I next went miles distant, cured sets. I Strix but four

Woodpecker, Sparrow Jay, California Song Brown Towee, Steller California Chickadee,

Matters we appointment bear. My la Surely in tha be found.

(of the chestnut-bac rather of a funny plac had taken up her quar Swallow's nest on a raf ridge, in under the roo

I secured thoroughly every hollow ject of our s

right over the logging rolling and booming ov to chew up into lumbe take no notice of man.

In a dec tree was a B The nest wa the tree. T tree was th next tree.

from the California Br formia Song Sparrow, B backed Goldfinch, Russ Western Chipping Spar twenty-one California Q of five from the Black-c

cured witho Whether th will return much anxie several fri was a matt cord one cl

bler, last year, and the Western Yellow-bellied Flycatcher. Found a nest of the California Brown Towhee in an old coal oil can this season. I found my first W. Meadow Lark nest this season, with six fine eggs as I ever saw; a large set I think.

U + O. IX. Aug. 1884. p. 99.

BARRED OWL'S NESTS.—We have seen four nests since our residence in Norwich, and as they all vary we will try and describe them. No. 1 was in a very large, healthy, chestnut. The nest was in a rent or slit in the side of the tree, about thirty feet from the ground. This hole was about three feet high by not over six inches wide. The nest was level with the entrance. When we visited it in company with Mr. Brand, the old bird was on the nest, which contained two fresh eggs. There was snow at the nest's entrance as well as on the ground. Mr. Brand has taken eggs from this nest for seventeen years. No. 2 was entirely different. It was also in a hollow in the top of a chestnut tree, not over twenty feet high and easy to get at. The hollow place has evidently been burned at some time to drive out squirrels. This nest was in the stub or top of the tree, which had been blown off and was open and the nest or cavity was about the size

of half a flour barrel. The female was on the nest and left at our approach. She was remarkably large and a beautiful specimen. The nest at this time contained a hen's egg, which had been placed there when the owl's egg had been removed. This nest has been taken for many years by "J. M. W." No. 3 was in a large chestnut about fifty feet high and was the nest of a Red-tail or Red-shouldered Hawk, and in nowise different from what a Hawk usually builds. This pair has been robbed for years by "J. M. W.," but not in the same nest or even same piece of wood. No. 4 was in the crotch of a butternut tree, about twenty-five feet high. This cavity was half hole and half shelf, so that when the bird was on the nest she could be seen from the ground. This was not occupied the season we saw it, but "J. M. W." has taken many sets from this pair.

O. & O. VII. Sept. 1882. p. 155

EARLY FINDS.—March 19th Junius A. Brand, of this city, called on us with a set of two Barred Owls' eggs, perfectly fresh. The nest was in a large hollow chestnut, some thirty feet high. This is a very early record. The eggs were brought to us fresh from the nest and unblown. *Norwich, Conn.*

O. & O. VII. Aug. 1882. p. 148

AN ICY NEST. took my first Barred Owl's egg—~~the shell~~ ~~not~~ ~~being~~ ~~quite~~ ten days late. This owl's hole of ancient domain is barrel-shaped and now open at the top, and on the 24th of March there was such a heavy slab of solid ice in the bottom that for one year at least it seemed as if the tenant must secure quarters elsewhere. But, April 3, I took the first egg, substituting a hen's egg for the rest of the clutch which can be safely reckoned upon. Except a dab of wet feathers the egg was in the middle of the slab of ice which had begun to melt very slightly under the heat of the owl's body. We read of strange nesting-places, and queer material used in construction, but isn't this the first instance of a collector finding his eggs on ice?—*J. M. W., Norwich, Conn.*

O. & O. VIII. June, 1883. p. 48.

## OÖLOGY.

J. PARKER NORRIS, Editor.

*The Editor assumes no responsibility for those articles which have the names of the writer attached.*

### Owl versus Hawk.

BY J. M. W., NORWICH, CONN.

At this season the field oölogist will associate certain points of resemblance and difference in the breeding habits of our four large local *Rapacivæ*. Briefly grouped, they are as follows: He will note that they all prefer an old tenement. The crow is their architect whose ground plan obtains, and the grey squirrel the *pro tem.*, tenant whose fixtures revert to the estate. The Great Horned Owl breeds earlier than the Barred, is shyer and more formidable, and lays but two eggs. The Red-tailed Hawk breeds earlier than the Red-shouldered, is more retiring and fiercer, and commonly lays two eggs. Our nebulous owl usually lays three eggs, often but two, and sometimes four. *Buteo lineatus* usually lays three eggs, often but two and occasionally four. It is presumed that the Barred and Red-shouldered which lay two eggs are old birds, and those which have trios and now and then break into fours are young adults. At any rate it will constantly be found that when individuals of either sort lay two or three in one year, successive years will also bring pairs and trios. I took two five years in succession from one Red-shouldered Hawk, and from one old Barred Owl six years in succession got only pairs. Her clutch is always two, in fact. Yet the fact remains that trios are typical sets of mature birds of these two species. But again; in Sandy Hollow, Ledyard, three years running I took sets of four from a Red-shouldered and the fourth year got four fledged young. In '82, '83 and '84 I took but trios and pairs from my large Red-shouldered contingency, but in 1885 four quartette clutches came early to the front. And this year the season opened with two sets of four Barred Owl's eggs. This is the apparent system, and these the changes that surprise and enchant us in our spring field work.

When the angry Red-tails find Mrs. Bubo in their old home I fancy they would not often dispossess the tenant but for the noisy help of the crows, always "spoiling" for this kind of a free fight. April 3d, 1886, I took a clutch of one Barred Owl and three Red-shouldered Hawks, and three years ago I took a similar clutch. In the first place the aggressive hawks were aided

by such a contingent of crows that the poor owl's life became a burden to her and she was forced to seek a quieter neighborhood. These avian troubles were in open nests. But when *Bubo* and *Syrnium* breed in cavities they can "hold the fort," for no self-respecting *Buteo* will ever crawl into a hole. O. & O. XI. Jan. 1886. p. 84-85

somely spotted and clouded with russet and chestnut. The larger end is entirely obscured by them: 1.40 x 1.13. No. 3. Delicately clouded and spotted with russet and chestnut. The markings entirely cover the ground color at the smaller end: 1.44 x 1.13.

Set XVI. June 13, 1877. Blue Mountains, Northampton County, Penn. Collected by Shriner. Nest on a chestnut tree about thirty feet from the ground. Four eggs, incubation very far advanced; dull grayish white ground color. No. 1. Heavily blotched and spotted with burnt umber, the markings forming a partial band around the centre of the egg: 1.50 x 1.24. No. 2. Speckled and spotted with burnt umber. At the larger end there are very heavy blotches of the same color: 1.54 x 1.24. No. 3. Speckled, spotted and blotched very heavily with burnt umber: 1.51 x 1.24. No. 4. Heavily blotched and clouded with burnt umber and raw umber. The markings are much heavier at the larger end: 1.52 x 1.26.

Set XVII. May 19, 1885. Near the Blue Mountains, Northampton County, Penn. Collected by Shriner. Nest on a white pine tree. Four eggs, incubation commenced; ground color grayish white. No. 1. Heavily blotched near the larger end with very dark chocolate and cinnamon: 1.53 x 1.23. No. 2. Heavily blotched at the larger end with dark chocolate brown and cinnamon: 1.51 x 1.23. No. 3. Heavily blotched with dark chocolate and cinnamon. The markings form an indistinct band near the larger end: 1.48 x 1.21. No. 4. Very heavily blotched with dark chocolate brown: 1.52 x 1.23.

And now there remains to be described seventeen eggs of this species, which are not one set, but which were all laid by one bird. On May 23, 1880, "J. M. W." found a nest in a pine grove near Norwich, Conn. Mr. Rawson describes the male as being "ridiculously small, and of Jay size. The female was normal, with a peculiar break in her quaverings of alarm, marking her identity anywhere." Mr. Rawson continues: "From nest in pine but thirty feet south of road, May 23, took one broken and three fresh eggs. Same Sunday, p. m. nest torn down by Crow hunters. Entire new nest then built the next day in pine, one hundred feet north of road. Take three eggs May 30, leaving none. June 1, note one egg, but leave it. June 2, take two eggs leaving none. June 5, note one egg. June 6, two eggs in nest, take one. June 9, take two eggs substituting pigeon's. Mawk on side of nest—not covering eggs. Clutch not laid. June 11, one egg.

June 13, one egg. June 17, one egg. June 19, one egg. June 21, one good egg. June 23, nest egg cold. Male and female not seen. June 25, take last egg—under-sized."

These seventeen eggs are now before me, and they are particularly interesting as showing two points: (1) the general resemblance in markings of the majority of them, and (2) the gradual exhaustion of coloring matter owing to the great number laid in quick succession by this one female. The ground color of all is of a bluish white, and they are blotched, clouded and spotted with burnt umber, chestnut, cinnamon, drab-gray, and lighter tints of the same colors. They present a great uniformity in size also, except the last laid egg, which is smaller. The others all average about 1.40 to 1.45 in length, by 1.17 to 1.19 in breadth.

The persistency with which this bird laid is truly remarkable.

---

### Nesting of the Barred Owl.

BY "J. M. W.," NORWICH, CONN.

---

During the last ten days in January, 1888, the Barred Owl was heard calling nightly, with the mercury steadfastly at zero. The nights were wonderfully clear and woe befell vermin or rodent that crossed the moonlighted spaces in the woods on the snow-covered earth. But it was not alone for his early breakfast that *Syrnium* lets us know he is afield so soon this season. Notwithstanding the intense cold, he knows it is time to look up his mate, and all through February he grows noisier in his addresses, and his serenades are not hushed until the eggs are laid, when he is under the spell of the same instinct which makes the Buteos silent during incubation.

During the open Februaries, several years ago, Mr. Brand and myself took eggs in winter, but of late the last of March sees full clutches of this bird. I have seen eggs on a solid cake of ice in a hole and in open nests with a foot of snow in the woods. On March 13, 1887, Mr. Wm. Ely of this place, took a set of four fresh eggs from an open nest almost in the city limits. Sets of four are extremes and are far from common. Three eggs is the rule for young birds and two eggs for old owls.

Though *Syrnium* dearly loves a hole or crevice in a tree and will cling to a suitable hole for years though often harried, yet any old open nest will be made to answer the two month's

# ORNITHOLOGICAL — AND — OÖLOGIST.

\$1.00 per  
Annum.

PUBLISHED BY THE FRANK BLAKE WEBSTER COMPANY.  
ESTABLISHED MARCH, 1875.

Single Copy  
10 cents.

Vol. XVIII.

HYDE PARK, MASS., JANUARY, 1893.

No. 1.

## The First Spring Outing.

The winter and spring of 1892 will long be remembered for the visitation of the Russian epidemic, La Grippe. Un-sparing in its infliction, it numbered its victims in every household and in every avocation. Even the ornithologist was made to realize how it felt, and the walls of my house echoed and re-echoed to the form of expressing the presence and effect of the detested plague in all its variations.

When one has passed through these experiences week after week and week after week, the things that charmed before lose much of their attraction; even life itself bears a different aspect. What though the almanac indicated the near approach of spring, with its fascinations to the collector, I guessed that I shouldn't do much collecting this year and then suspended thinking long enough to sneeze a few times.

But one morning the sun came out bright and warm, the winds were hushed and I didn't hear anybody sneezing. How different one feels at such a time; the world looked more attractive, the fields seemed inviting and a thought of the woods reviving. I gently suggested the possibilities of a trip to that old hollow tree, where the Barred Owl had been accustomed annually to prepare a set of eggs for me, to my boy, and his eyes danced and sparkled with animation. But then he hadn't been through the Grippe, and of course was all ready to start, with one

foot up. "O, let me climb to the nest!" Of course I don't think I shall ever climb another tree if it be over two feet up to the branches.

It was a pleasant morning for a pleasant trip; it seemed to put new life into one debilitated by the epidemic. The drumming of the Grouse, and the startling whirr when we flushed one, stirred the blood, and we stopped to listen to the sweet song of a Purple Finch as, perched in a tree top, he repeated his delightful lay. Little families of Chickadees, cheering each other with pleasant notes, were intent on the important business of securing a breakfast, while one member of the family in different garb from the others showed that he had not been adopted long enough to learn the family language when he tried to join them in singing, his notes sounding more like the tinkling of a tiny bell. What a melodious whistle suddenly burst on the ear, loud and clear and startling in the quiet of the forest, and while the boy looked at me with inquiring wonderment expressed on his face, a flock of Fox-colored Sparrows began springing up from the ground and darting away one after another. How they can sing and what splendid voices they have. Wouldn't it be delightful, when they get home, to be there with them and listen to their chorus? I wonder where the enchanted spot may be.

A turn of the path brought in view the place we sought and a surprise awaited us—the spoiler had been there with the



woodman's axe. Instead of the tall trees that covered the spot a year ago, heaps of cord-wood were scattered all over the brown hillside, with very few of the old trees left; but we soon discovered that among those few was the dilapidated old tree whose hollow trunk had contained the nest of *Syrnium*. But little encouragement, however, could we take to ourselves, for within a few feet from the trunk was a square corded pile of split wood. With scarcely interest enough to go to the spot, I lifted my staff and gave a gentle blow upon the base and was promptly startled by seeing the big brown head emerge and with great flapping of wings speed away to a neighboring tree, whence she glared at us with her beady black eyes and called out *who-who-who-oo-ou*. By this time the boy was sitting astride the one remaining branch of the tree, which stood like an arm reaching out to grasp a support for the decaying foundation. "Three eggs this year," he exclaimed as he gazed down into the depths, "and they are away down deep, the whole length of my arm." Last year it was so that the bird could sit on the eggs and just peep over the top at an intruder. It was a beautiful set, almost globular in form, and being quite fresh they were clean and white. We returned over the hill way to visit the Red-tailed Hawks' nest as we did last year when we secured the set of three beautiful spotted eggs; but while we found the nest unchanged, it appeared to be without a tenant this year. Night nearly overtook us before we reached home, and the first spring tramps will tire one; but the pure air is invigorating and one does not seem to require such full measure of success on the first trip as later to be fully satisfied, for we unanimously pronounced it a successful and enjoyable outing.

*John N. Clark.*

Old Saybrook, Conn.

**A List of the Birds of Randolph County, Ind., with some notes on the Mammals of the same county.**

For some years previous to August, 1891, I made careful notes on the birds and mammals found in the above county, and believe the following to be a pretty accurate list of the winter birds. A few listed are truly migrants, but the dates at which they were seen would place them on the winter list. The mammal list is not complete. No Bats are given. I have seen some there, but do not know the species. The list of Mice and Shrews I believe to be only partially complete.

WINTER BIRDS.

- A. O. U.  
 194. Great Blue Heron. Not common in winter, but one was seen late in December.  
 289. Bob White (Quail). Very common and much sought by hunters. The county is thickly settled, but nearly every farm has a flock or two.  
 310. Wild Turkey. Now extinct but formerly quite common.  
 316. Mourning Dove. A few remain around feeding places the entire winter.  
 325. Turkey Buzzard. Occasionally seen during warm winters.  
 333. Cooper's Hawk. Has been taken in the winter.  
 337. Red-tailed Buzzard. Quite common at all times.  
 339. Red-shouldered Hawk (Chicken Hawk). Common for a hawk.  
 352. Bald Eagle. One is occasionally seen.  
 368. Barred Owl. Very common.  
 373. Screech Owl. Common. More of the gray color than the brown.  
 375. Great Horned Owl. Abundant for this species.  
 376. Snowy Owl. Two were taken in the county in December, 1891, the only ones I have ever known.

woodman's axe. Instead of the tall trees that covered the spot a year ago, heaps of cord-wood were scattered all over the brown hillside, with very few of the old trees left; but we soon discovered that among those few was the dilapidated old tree whose hollow trunk had contained the nest of *Syrnium*. But little encouragement, however, could we take to ourselves, for within a few feet from the trunk was a square corded pile of split wood. With scarcely interest enough to go to the spot, I lifted my staff and gave a gentle blow upon the base and was promptly startled by seeing the big brown head emerge and with great flapping of wings speed away to a neighboring tree, whence she glared at us with her beady black eyes and called out *who-who-who-oo-ou*. By this time the boy was sitting astride the one remaining branch of the tree, which stood like an arm reaching out to grasp a support for the decaying foundation. "Three eggs this year," he exclaimed as he gazed down into the depths, "and they are away down deep, the whole length of my arm." Last year it was so that the bird could sit on the eggs and just peep over the top at an intruder. It was a beautiful set, almost globular in form, and being quite fresh they were clean and white. We returned over the hill way to visit the Red-tailed Hawks' nest as we did last year when we secured the set of three beautiful spotted eggs; but while we found the nest unchanged, it appeared to be without a tenant this year. Night nearly overtook us before we reached home, and the first spring tramps will tire one; but the pure air is invigorating and one does not seem to require such full measure of success on the first trip as later to be fully satisfied, for we unanimously pronounced it a successful and enjoyable outing.

*John N. Clark.*

Old Saybrook, Conn.

Then we started out again for another woods about a mile away, and in a short time took our first set of the day. It was that of a Red-shouldered Hawk and contained three rather dull marked eggs, and unusually small for this species. The nest was very low, not more than twelve or fourteen feet high.

We then started for our team, for it was quite a long distance to our next piece of woods, which had formerly contained a very large pair of Red-tailed Hawks, but after arriving there and spending over an hour of hard tramping we were obliged to give it up; but, as we were coming around near the nest which was occupied by them last year, we discovered that it was once more occupied, but not by a Hawk. On investigating it proved a Barred Owl: we could plainly see its head and eyes watching us as we manoeuvred around throwing clubs, etc., trying to drive her off; but she stuck close.

Bridgeport Conn.  
H. W. Beebe, Oct. 17, May 1892  
p. 68-69

200-21 abol. 17, May 1892 p. 68-69

I could not help recalling my experience of the year before, and the resolve that I made when I reached the ground after climbing to this same nest, that if ever a Hawk or any other bird had its nest in another tree like that it would not be molested by me. But this was something new to me. I had never seen a Barred Owl's nest before and had no set of their eggs in my collection, so I wished to get them very much. I tried to persuade my friend, Mr. L—, to try his hand at this one, but he would not be persuaded; so I finally decided to make one more attempt myself, but must own up beaten, for after getting over half way up my courage gave out and I had to come down again. So we were obliged to leave her, with this faint hope that next year she would take up her abode in a more respectable tree.

**New Eng. Raptores. Number Eggs in  
a set. F. H. Carpenter.**

Barred Owl, (*Syrnium neotomum*).

24 sets of 2  
19 " " 3

O & O. XII. Oct. 1887 p. 168

**Collection of Raptores Eggs. J. P. N.**

Barred Owl, 13-2, 11-3, 24 59

**O. & O. XV. Apr. 1890. p. 56**

ards me a Peregrine Falcon, one eye glancing up at a killdeer many feet above him. His long pointed wings beat the air with short, quick strokes, as they bore him with increasing speed till he reached a point just below his unwary victim, when, as an arrow from a bow, he shot upwards, passing not a foot ahead of the incoming killdeer. The bird literally flew into the outstretched talons that seized and bore it several hundred yards to the top of a tall red oak tree.

Not many minutes had elapsed before I was standing under the tree. A well directed charge of No. 8 shot was launched at the hawk; the killdeer fell from his grasp; he fell to the under side of the limb on which he was perched, quivered a few seconds, released his hold, and followed his dead quarry to the ground.

On another occasion, I was shooting ducks in a slough in the Warrion bottom, when I heard an unusual noise, so loud and so continued was it that I took it to be the scream of some large bird in distress—a Pileated Woodpecker perhaps. I hastened towards the place whence the cries proceeded. As I waded into the water, I saw a Peregrine Falcon hovering above the timber, as a Fish Hawk balances himself before he descends. I started a black duck from under a log not ten feet from me; as I proceeded other ducks left their hiding places and sought safety in flight. They were aware of the danger over head in the shape of the Falcon, and all the frightful screams of the cunning hawk had not caused them to leave the water. My presence in their very midst had alarmed them and so soon as they were on the wing the Falcon darted like lightning after them, and they disappeared through the timber with their pursuer close behind them.

The capture of the Killdeer by the Falcon, in the manner above described, was certainly astonishing. It was evidently a ruse, as the bird did not see its enemy, till like an apparition, he shot up just ahead and the two taloned feet were extended to receive it.

ed bird escaped by squatting suddenly. The upward flight of the Falcon seemed to me not less rapid than had been his descent. I had one barrel loaded, the contents of which I sent after him without apparent effect, as he lowered in a few seconds beyond the reach of danger.

One among other occasions, when this marauder has suddenly appeared on the scene, I shall never forget. I had one day scattered a covey of partridges (*Colinus virginianus*) in an open field, and had hunted the single birds for some time with varied success; now killing, now missing a bird. Finally my dog pointed in a sedge field, at least a half a mile from the nearest woods. I flushed the bird and missed it; almost simultaneously with the shot, a Peregrine Falcon stooped from the sky; coming downward and directly behind the whirling partridge, he passed by me swift as the leaden shower I had just sent in vain after poor Bob White; overtaking but missing his quarry before it had flown two hundred yards. It seemed to me that the Falcon must have flown with at least four times the speed of the partridge, and that he flew at least a half a mile while the latter was going two hundred yards.

That bird was bagged that day by neither shooter nor hawk. I marked it down; but I had not the heart to flush and shoot at it again when it had escaped the leaden missiles hurled after it, and the sharp talons of the hungry Falcon that followed in their wake.

#### Nesting of the Barred Owl in Texas.

BY EDWIN C. DAVIS, GAINESVILLE, TEXAS.

Imagine yourself twenty-five miles from any railroad station, and miles away from a house of any kind, on a cold and disagreeable day in March, and no possible chance of finding shelter from a drenching rain. Well, this was the condition of a friend and myself on the 6th day of March, 1886. We had set out to visit the swamps of the Sabine river in hopes of adding a few sets of *Bubo's* eggs to our collections, and as all preparations had been made, on the day named we started and after travelling almost a day through underbrush, over decayed logs, and after wading through bogs and driftwood almost waist deep, we arrived at our place of destination. Being very much fatigued from our day's journey we concluded to "pitch our tents" on a high point near by, which we discovered to be above high water mark. (The

#### Nesting Habits of Texas Birds. H. P. Atwater, London, Ontario.

Barred Owl, (*Strix nebulosa*). Breed in the river bottom in holes in the tall trees, but are not very common. I did not climb to the nests.

O. & O. XII. Aug. 1887 p. 124

### Nesting of the Barred and Great Horned Owls.

A little more than a half mile west from my residence is a piece of woods where for a number of years past, in the early twilight and especially before a storm, I have heard the Barred Owls (*Strix nebulosa*) hoot; and determining if possible to find their nest, I procured the services of my old friend, an expert climber, William C. Brownell, and early on the morning of March 19, 1888, we sallied forth, and on reaching the woods we armed ourselves with stout clubs, and separated a few rods apart.

We commenced pounding on all the old trees and stumps that had a hole in them, when presently I heard my old friend yell: "I have found her!" Making my way over logs and brush as fast as possible, I found him gazing intently at a hole in the side of a large basswood tree, about fifty feet from the ground. He soon informed me that he had scared a Barred Owl from that hole, and strapping on his climbers he ascended the tree and announced that there was one fresh egg. We left the nest and returned again to the tree on March 24th, when we collected a full set of three fresh eggs. We also collected a second set of two eggs from the same nest on April 17, 1888. They were slightly incubated. I again examined the nest May 6th, and 8th, and found her sitting on the empty nest like an old sitting hen, and when disturbed she took her place again on the nest in about twenty minutes after being scared off. She is the only wild bird I ever saw that would sit on an empty nest after having her eggs taken; and it will be as well here to state that Mr. Elmer Durfee of the adjoining township of Livonia, collected a set of four Barred Owls' eggs March 14, 1888, from a hole in a basswood tree about thirty-five feet from the ground, and later in the spring he collected a second set of three eggs from the same nest, and shortly afterwards a red squirrel took possession of the tree, which caused the owls to forsake their home.

O. & O. XIV. Apr. 1889 p. 54

James B. Purdy

**Habits of the Barred Owl.**—The first paragraph of the interesting article by Mr. Bolles in the April number of 'The Auk,' would leave the general reader under the impression that the Barred Owl (*Syrnium nebulosum*) defends its nest and young by attacking the intruder. My own experience would lead me to conclude that it is a very timid bird. I have collected many sets of their eggs, and have frequently climbed to the nests to examine their young, and in no case have I ever been attacked by the parent birds. They usually fly away at the approach of the collector, and remain away until he leaves the vicinity. If the nest contains young, they make demonstrations of cries and snapping of bills from the safe shelter of a neighboring tree. I have known them to fly toward me snapping their beaks, until within a few yards, but they were careful not to come very near. I have never been attacked or seen other persons attacked by any species of Owl in defense of its nest, except when the Owls were in confinement. I once experienced great difficulty in getting a set of eggs from a cage containing three Great Horned Owls.—D. E. LANTZ, *Manhattan, Kansas.* **Auk, VII. July, 1890, p. 286**

### Nesting of the Barred Owl at Raleigh, N.C.

On April 21, 1887, we took our first "set" of Barred Owl (*Strix nebulosa*) consisting of a good-sized young one and no eggs. We also killed the "papa" of said young one but Mrs. B. O. escaped us. This young one we kept for over two months, but on June 28th we concluded to kill him, and on going to do so we found him dead on the floor. Perhaps fourteen large house rats we had given him to feast on was the cause. Anyhow he died in a mysterious way, and was made into a skin, but not before he had become a terror to us all.

Although only the male bird was killed, yet the stob in which "George" was raised has never been used since. Next year on April 9th, we took a set of two addled eggs from a hollow in the top of an old stob twenty feet high and killed the female bird. This year, though not much expecting anything on account of the death of the female, we got a set of two nearly fresh eggs on March 18th from the same stob, but did not molest the old bird. My brother who went up to the nest said there were only the two eggs there. On April 6th, however, he again went to the stob and flushed the owl. On going up to the nest he found one egg firmly imbedded in the chips and dirt at the bottom of the hollow. He left the egg for three days but no more were laid so he took it on April 9th. The egg on blowing proved to be addled but not to any extent, and it has always been a question with us as to whether it might have belonged to the first set of two or not.

C. S. Brimley.

Raleigh, N. C.

O & O. XIV. Sept. 1889 p. 132

### A Philadelphia Collection of Eggs of the Raptors.

*Strix nebulosa.* Barred Owl. Ten sets of three, thirteen sets of two. Total: twenty-three sets, fifty-six eggs.

O. & O. XIV. Mar. 1839 p. 45

Scarcity in 1883-4

*Syrnium nebulosum*

Maine  
Dec. 31 - 1883

Barred Owls are very scarce this year. Goodale has had only three while last year he had over one hundred. Bowler of Bangor Me. who mounted eighty last year has had only two this. The winter is about the same - fully as severe - as that of 1882-3 with deep snows. Small birds of every kind scarce. No irregular winter visitors at all

Maine

*Syrnium nebulosum*

Habits

I once had a Barred Owl dive at me when I was running, trying to reach camp before dark. His shadow attracted my attention, and looking up I saw him balance on spread wings not far above my head, his claws drawn close up to his body. When I looked up he lighted within a few feet of me. The Barred Owl can see but poorly in the day time and it was quite light when this bird approached me.

Manley Hardy, --Letter of Sept. 14, 1883.

1884

Nov. 28 The Barred Owl crop, like the apple crop, comes around with some regularity every second or third year. This is one Owl year and for the past week or two Barred Owls have been captured in large numbers everywhere about Boston. Maynard has had ten within a week, Goodale perhaps twice as many. Arthur Smith has killed three in Brooklyn.

Manley Hardy wrote me Nov. 4 that several Barred Owls ("very fat") had been recently taken near Bangor (Me.). Under date of Nov. 22 Mr. Case

*Syrnium nebulosum*

Scarcity in 1883-4

Barred Owls are very scarce this year. Goodale has had only three while last year he had over one hundred. Butler of Bangor Me. who mounted eighty last year has had only two this. The winter is about the same - fully as severe - as that of 1882-3 with deep snows. Small birds of every kind scarce. No irregular winter visitors at all

Mass  
Dec. 31 - 1885

Maine

*Syrnium nebulosum* Habits

I once had a Barred Owl dive at me when I was running, trying to reach camp before dark. His shadow attracted my attention, and looking up I saw him balance on spread wings not far above my head, his claws drawn close up to his body. When I looked up he lighted within a few feet of me. The barred Owl can see but poorly in the day time and it was quite light when this bird approached me.

Manley Hardy, -- Letter of Sept. 14, 1883.

writes "there has been quite a flight of Barred Owls in this vicinity". Thus it would seem that they extend northern Maine early in November, and that a little later than the middle of that month, and about the same time reached Connecticut. Francis tells me that a friend of his killed two, and a companion saw, in Norway woods in one day. He has had no other Barred Owl but there has been no remark abt. capture of Barred Owls into Maine. Goodale also has three Richardson's Owls from northern N. H. & Maine.

Man. Wellerly

1888

*Syrnium nebulosum*  
Eating snakes.

Nov. 4 A Barred Owl skinned by S. M. Denton had in stomach two snakes one a Garter snake as large <sup>in diameter</sup> as one's thumb bitten in two in middle, the other a small snake of a blue color

*Syrnium nebulosum*.—Lastly I had a juvenile Barred Owl in my possession. In it, as in the others, abundance of food produced the same effects—larger size and more robust organization. The food most preferred was birds and small rodents; frogs and fish were eaten when quite fresh, though the latter were taken only when hungry. Insects, too, were eaten.

Digestion was rapid, requiring about one and a half hours for the digestion and absorption of a pair of Sparrows. Birds were always eaten without pulling a feather. If not too large they were swallowed whole, for the throats of young Owls are quite capacious. The indigestible parts are ejected when digestion is completed.

The Owl never, except once, fed knowingly in my presence (and it was difficult to observe its habits without its knowledge). Its sense of sight is so acute, and its range of vision so extended, that I was compelled to use many devices to deceive the bird and accomplish my purpose of observation without being observed. The food put into its cage was seldom eaten until pressed by hunger, and the bird never ate in a day more than one-third the quantity of food eaten by the Accipiter in the same time.

It could not easily be petted, nor did it acquire a fondness for being handled. Indeed it seemed to remain unaffected by kindness, and to love solitude.

Auk, V, July, 1888, p. 248.

Feeding Habits of young *Syrnium*.  
H. Johnston Reddy.

AN OWL-EATING OWL.—In the cloudy morning of April 14, 1879, a male Barred Owl (*Strix nebulosa*) was shot in a thickly-built part of the city of Troy, N. Y., from the stomach of which I took several of the larger feathers, and one entire foot, tarsus and tibia, of a smaller Owl, — probably *Scops asio*. — AUSTIN F. PARK, *Troy, N. Y.*

Bull. N. O. C. 5, July, 1880, p. 185.

BARRED OWL.—A very fine specimen was brought me by a friend a few days ago, who, while driving along saw it perched on the fence. A club was thrown at it, but as it did not move my friend walked up to it and found it was blind. He lifted it into his sleigh and brought it in, when I found that the bird had had iritis, in which extreme adhesions had taken place, rendering the eyes almost wholly useless. The bird has a fine plumage although almost a skeleton.—G. A. McCallum, *Dunville, Ontario.* O. & O. VIII. Mar. 1883. p. 23

#### Amount of Food Consumed by the Barred Owl

BY C. S. BRIMLEY, RALEIGH, N. C.

As a matter of some interest I give the amount of food consumed by a young Barred Owl from June 4th to 26th inclusive, viz. twenty-three days, while in confinement:

- 1 Purple Gallinule.
- 20 Catbirds and other birds of same size.
- 12 Birds size of Orchard Oriole.
- 27 Chipping Sparrows and other birds of same size.
- 10 House rats.
- 16 Meadow and other mice.
- 1 Lizzard.
- 2 Terrapins (flesh off).

In all eighty-nine animals, birds etc., an average of three per diem, which in round numbers would be 1,000 a year, and the Owl didn't get what he considered a full meal more than twice during the twenty-three days.

O. & O. XII. Aug. 1887 p. 122

#### Something about Owls. C. O. Ormsbee, Montpelier, Vt.

Of the Barred Owl, inhabiting the entire country east of the Rocky Mountains, one hundred and nine stomachs were examined. Five contained poultry or game-birds, thirteen contained other birds, five contained Squirrels, four contained Rabbits, and the others contained Mice, Frogs, Lizards, etc.

O. & O. Vol. 18, Oct. 1893 p. 138

Though I came up to Killingly in pursuit of the winter birds, I will leave it to the reader if the birds are not "getting onto" me. Just listen. A week ago last Friday evening, when walking by the side of Alexander's Lake, with skates in my hand, a Barred Owl of common size but unexampled courage disputed my passage across a small stream of water. I could not make out whether *Syrnium* was a-fishing, looking for rodents in the rockwork, or had some dead quarry near. After a short preliminary skirmish, his audacity cost him a blow from a skate, which put him "out of it" for awhile. But after I had dropped my skates and picked up my specimen to smooth its plumage, the "specimen" came to life with a vengeance, and, assaulting me in the flank, fixed its talons into my overcoat and the small of my back. Then ensued a battle-royal that would have made the gentle reader laugh in owlish glee to witness. The angry owl, hissing and snapping its bill, and still working its talons through kersey, kilt and jaeger; and J. M. W. trying to shake himself free, jumping, swearing and blindly striking at his enemy in the rear with an old burnt sassafras stick.

J. M. W. --- Norwich, Conn.

O. & O. XVI, March, 1891, p. 38



channels of least resistance are used, and the greatest amount of labor performed with a given amount of energy.

As long, therefore, as physical exercise is grossly neglected, and unpsychological methods of teaching remain in general use, disease must continue in abundance, though ever so many improvements be made in sewerage, ventilation, and disinfection; for, as our argument has shown, attempts at prevention will in great part remain ineffectual until good systems of physical and natural methods of mental development have been introduced into the schools.

*Popular Science Monthly* XLII no 3 July, 1892 pp. 313-328

## WAYS OF THE OWL.

By FRANK BOLLES.

SINCE June, 1888, I have had in my possession for longer or shorter periods eleven live owls, including snowy, great-horned, long-eared, barred, and screech owls. I have also had opportunities of watching Acadian and screech owls in a wild state. In June, 1888, I secured two young barred owls from a hollow beech tree in a White Mountain forest. I have them still after three and a half years of happy companionship. During the first summer they were pets not easily petted. They used beak and claws fiercely and resented familiarity. I kept them in a large slatted cage in my barn, where they had plenty of air and light. They bathed freely and frequently. They ate largely of animal food. They were awake by day, restless at twilight, but profoundly quiet by night. They could see perfectly in bright sunlight, and better at night than most creatures. In the autumn I took them to Cambridge, where they were given a large cage in my cellar. During the winter I handled them more and more freely, beginning by using stout leather gloves, but soon stroking and rubbing their heads with my bare hands. They became more and more gentle, and I found that even when they nipped me with their beaks they did not attempt to cause serious pain. One of them, whose name is Puffy, injured his wing early in his captivity, and has never been able to fly. The other I keep clipped in one wing. In the spring of 1889 I began taking Puffy with me on walks. I found at once that he was wonderfully useful in attracting other birds. During the summer of 1889, the following winter, and the summers of 1890 and 1891 he was my companion on walks, drives, and trips in my Rushton boat. To a smaller extent I have taken his mate Fluffy with me, but he is of a less patient disposition than Puffy, and during a long walk is sure to hop from the stick upon which I carry him many more times than Puffy would in an equal period. In May, 1891, I secured a third baby barred owl from the same beech

# THE AUK:

A QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF  
ORNITHOLOGY.

VOL. VII.

APRIL, 1890.

No. 2.

## BARRED OWLS IN CAPTIVITY.

BY FRANK BOLLES.

CHOCORUA is one of the boldest, most picturesque, and at the same time one of the most southerly, of the White Mountains of New Hampshire. At its southern foot are several small lakes fed by its streams. The chief of these streams is called Chocorua River, and its main lake Chocorua Lake. North of this water, fringing the river for half a mile, is a growth of yellow birch, beech, and hemlock of considerable age and size. The dainty Parula is frequently seen in its gray moss. Cooper's Hawks, Broad-winged Hawks, and Yellow-bellied Woodpeckers are common tenants of its shades. On June 1, 1888, while nest-hunting in its midst, I saw a Barred Owl sitting on the edge of a cavity in a beech. The tree was a giant. The cavity was about thirty-five feet from the ground, on the southwesterly side, and quite large. The Owl did not move, even after I threw a stick at her. Convinced that the cavity was worth exploring, I went home and returned with a friend, a ladder, and a gun. As a result two old birds were shot, and two young ones taken from the nest. The gun was quite necessary, for my friend would have fared badly in climbing if I had not shot the old birds before they could attack him. Their threatening cries and loud snapping of their beaks were quite enough to discourage an unarmed robber.

I wrapped the two young birds in a towel and later placed them side by side in an ordinary canary cage. They were savage, using beaks and claws vigorously. When released in my door-

504. *The Barred Owl* [*Syrnium nebulosum*]. By R. Rowe. *Canadian Sportsman and Naturalist*, Vol. I, p. 27. — Its abundance at St. John, N. B., in the winter of 1880-81. Notes also the capture there of various other species. *Can. Sport. & Naturalist*

43. *Three Early-breeding Birds*. By J. M. W[hipple]. *Ibid.*, VI, p. 80. — Breeding of the Barred Owl in March; notes on the breeding of the Great Horned Owl and Red-shouldered Hawk, and on early spring arrivals; reference to Woodcocks killed by telegraph wires. *Fam. Sci. & Fano. Jour.* 1982. "George." By H. H. Brimley. *Ibid.*, pp. 6-8. — A captive Barred Owl. *Orn. & Zoologist's Serial annual*, Vol. 2, No. 2.

737. *Barred Owl*. By F. H. C[arpenter]. *Ibid.*, pp. 69, 70. — Its nesting habits, as observed at Rehoboth, Mass. *O. & O.* Vol. VIII

*Scotiaplex*  
*cinerea*

Syrnium curvum

Bangor,  
Maine.

I saw at Crosby's three Great Grey Owls, one of them in flesh. Also found that Mr. Merrill, of Bangor had received two more, and a taxidermist at Skowhegan (on the Kennebec) had two more making seven of these rare birds. Two of those Crosby had were a very dark blue-grey, if that term is allowable--almost a purplish shade. One had breast of one color, the other flecked with white streaks. One in flesh was much lighter. These were all sent in to be mounted and could not be bought at any reasonable price. Mr. Merrill bought his. There was a curious incident connected with one of Crosby's. When the first was mounted Crosby bought a Richardson's Owl alive, of a boy who saw it sitting in a fir bush close to a house in the city, holding an English sparrow in its claws (this proves that it hunts by day). He went up and took it in his hands. Mr. Crosby let it go in his work-room, where it flew around all day. There were on the shelves lots of Snowy, Great Horned, barred, Hawk, Long and Short-eared, Screech, Richardson's and Arcadian Owls, besides lots of most kinds of our small birds, but only one Great Gray Owl. In the morning Mr. Crosby found, to his great disgust, that the rascal had picked the head of the Great Grey almost bare, from eyes to neck. He estimates some 500 feathers picked out, all of which he had to replace singly, sticking them in place.--(Letter of Manly Hardy, Jan. 30, 1890.)

*Syrnium cinereum.*

1890 Mass.

Feb. 3 Deer Island, Boston Harbor. - Goodale and Frasca have received a Great Gray Owl in the flesh from Deer Island. It came to them Feb. 4 and was, they think, shot the day before.

1891

Feb. 16 Marblehead. - One shot by C. F. Orne and sold to Peabody Academy of In Mass.  
Salem for their Essex County collection

" 17 Weston. - Frasca Bros. received to-day a ♀ shot by E. O. Clark in Weston, Mass. ~~I afterwards secured this specimen for my collection.~~ It is one of the largest & finest I have ever seen! The owner will not sell it.

" 27 Groton. A ♀ received to-day in flesh by Frasca Bros. It was shot by W. H. Bruce in Groton, Mass. ~~and is one of the largest and finest specimens that I have ever seen. The owner will not sell it.~~

These are all the specimens that have been taken ~~seen~~ in Mass. as far as I can learn. A very few have been killed in Maine this winter but not nearly as many as last year. Vickary had <sup>(a ♀)</sup> one taken in January in some part of Maine  
(I afterwards secured the Groton specimen for my collection)

In Maine

Maine "I have never had any Great Gray Owls except three years ago when I got 27 of them" (S. L. Crosby of Bangor in letter dated Dec. 8, 1893)

In Maine  
winter of  
1890-1891.

"Crosby got one Gray Owl" this winter (Worley Hardy letter Feb. 20, 1891)

Calais. "I found upon getting home this Spring that there has been a strange migration of Great Gray Owls during the past winter. I hear of nearly a dozen taken about here & only about half of them saved. They were thought to be large Scand. Owls with a number of Scand. Owls were also taken"  
(Geo. A. Boardman letter Aug. 11, 1890)

*Scotiaepus cinerea*

1894-95 Maine

near Bangor. - "It may interest you to know that I found in the store of Holt & Merrill of Bangor a Great Gray Owl taken near Bangor last winter (Manly Hardy letter Nov. 9, 1895)

1897

Minnesota.

Having an unusual number of Great Gray Owls from Minn. - also several Arctic Horned - & plenty of Snowy - They seem to get as many of Great Gray as "Isit that unusual - In most cases stomachs are empty or nearly so [C. K. Reed of Worcester letter of Feb. 12, 1897]

[None reported from any part of New England this winter (1896-97)]

1898

Mass.

Feb. 22

Payson Park, Belmont. A remarkably fine, dark-colored ♂ shot by R. B. Malone and taken in the flesh to M. Abbott Frason two days later (Feb. 24). Frason made the bird into a skin and sent it to me the same afternoon. He writes: "It was killed Feb. 22 in three thick evergreens on the Payson Place back of the farm house, by R. B. Malone who lives in a little yellow house right against the evergreens" This is the only instance that I have heard of of the occurrence of *S. cinerea* anywhere in N. E. this winter. Feb. 22 was dull and warm with rain through the forenoon. During the preceding week snow had fallen to an unusual depth in the interior & western parts of New England. The "evergreens" above mentioned are Norway Spruces. 50 or 60 ft. tall, planted in a long, straight row with an orchard to the east & open fields to the north & west.

Gymnura cinerea

Lynn Mar 2-90

Mr Brewster

Dear Sir  
The Owl you write  
about was stolen in  
Maine it is a female.  
it is real, mine but  
will try and buy it.  
if you will let  
me know all and  
what you will give  
for it so I can  
tell what to offer  
the owner. A fine  
one of the same kind  
at Maplehead. He  
10 of this month parties  
wanted to sell it to  
me but before  
I could get a letter

 Printer & Taxidermist.

JAMES P. MELZER.

Millford, N. H. Mar. 5<sup>th</sup> 1890.

Mr. S. W. Denton,

Wellesley,  
Mass.

Dear Sir;

The Great Gray Owl sent  
to you Feb. 25<sup>th</sup>, was killed in  
Townsend, Mass., Feb. 17<sup>th</sup> in a  
small meadow surrounded by  
small pine trees.

Scotiaptex cinerea.

Belmont, Mass.

1898. I drove to the Payson place this morning to make enquiries respecting the fine Great Gray Owl which Frazar sold me a week or so ago. Mr. Malone told me that he shot it at about 2 P.M. on February 22nd. During the whole forenoon the Crows had been making a great outcry behind his house and their numbers kept increasing until as he thinks upwards of 100 birds were assembled. Their clamor finally became so loud and incessant as to annoy him seriously and soon after dinner he took a Flobert rifle and went out to disperse them. Immediately behind his house is a row of tall Norway spruces, behind this an old apple orchard and just beyond the orchard a dense growth of Norway spruces, larches and arbor vitae encircling an open space in the middle of which are the stables and paddock of the fine old Cushing estate. A circular driveway passes under or through the trees which average 50 or 60 feet in height. Between the driveway and the paddock, in the middle of the thickest spruces, stands a white pine - a vigorous tree with a full, green top but with dead under branches. The Owl was perched on one of these dead branches about 25 ft. above the ground and some five feet below a fork in which there is an old Crow's nest.

As Malone approached the spruces he saw great numbers of Crows sitting on or flying over them and, picking out a bird that offered a good mark, he fired at it but missed. A few



Scotiaptex cinerea.

Belmont, Mass.

1898. moments later a woman, who had come from the Payson farm  
March 2. house, impelled by curiosity to find out what the Crows were  
(No.2). about, called to him that she had found a great Owl and asked  
him to shoot it. On going to the spot he at once saw the bird  
sitting erect and looking, he says, "as big as an Eagle". It  
stared at him fixedly with its yellow eyes wide open but  
showed no alarm at his presence although he went almost di-  
rectly under the branch on which it was perched. After look-  
ing at it for a moment he fired but missed. At his second  
shot the bird flew across the paddock and alighted on the end  
of a spruce limb but it was badly wounded and soon fluttered  
down to the ground where it stood erect presenting so menacing  
an appearance that Malone did not dare touch it for several  
minutes. It lived two or three hours after this.

Lake Umbagog.

Great Gray (?) Owl.

1898. At about seven o'clock this evening the mysterious Owl  
Sept.25. that we hear at Pine Point only at wide intervals began honk-  
ing on the hemlock knoll behind the camp keeping it up for  
several minutes and then moving further off to the eastward.  
He did not hoot at all on this occasion.

**Scotiaptex nebulosa** (Forster), GREAT GRAY OWL. Breeding records of this species are rare enough to make note of a bird recently received by the Museum. It is a young bird just changing from the natal down into the juvenal and first winter plumages. Patches of the former remain on all parts of the body but interspersed freely with the latter two. The natal down plumage is dull brown, made hoary by the lighter tips to the feathers. The underparts, wings, back of the neck and facial disk are barred with yellowish gray. The juvenal plumage includes the large flight and tail feathers which are as in first winter coloration. The remainder of the plumage is heavily barred with an ochraceous gray more yellow on the back of the neck and shoulders than elsewhere. The bars average about half an inch wide and the same distance apart. The first winter plumage shows but here and there in small patches and is about as generally seen in winter specimens.

The large wing and tail feathers are well formed and the bird was evidently capable of short flights. However it had not left the nest long nor was it able to fend for itself. Another in like plumage was taken at the same time so the brood had evidently not separated and I think we are justified in concluding that the nesting site was not far distant from the place of capture.

These birds were killed July 31, 1911, in the township of Chisholm, Nipissing District, Ont., by Mayor Kelly of Powassan, Ont. Chisholm township lies about five miles east of the extreme eastern corner of Lake Nipissing, extending south and east from that point.—P. A. TAVERNER, *Victoria Memorial Museum, Ottawa, Ont.*

*Arch. XXIX. July 1912. Pl. 397.*



*Syrnium cinereum*

Brewer, Maine.

It seems singular about the Gray Owls. In all my life I never knew certainly of but one being taken before. That one I saw. I also know of one being seen several times at Chesuncook Lake in the winter of 1884. (Letter of Manly Hardy,, Jan. 30, 1890)

*Syrnium cinereum*

Bangor,  
Maine.

Since writing you, another Great Gray Owl has been brought in--making a total of 7 so far-- will report any further captures that I hear of. (Letter of Harry Merrill, Feb. 7, 1890)

*Syrnium cinereum*

Brewer, Me.  
1890.

Large numbers of Great Gray Owls have been taken in this State this winter. Mr. Daniels of Portland reports in the Portland Transcript of 25 being bought there. Thirteen have been brought into Bangor, and I hear of four others.

Letter of Manly Hardy, April 9.

Brewer, Me.

*Syrnium cinereum*

1890

Apr. 26

Letter of Manly Hardy

As to Gray Owls, I have sent off all my "Transcripts", but you could get a copy by writing to Elwell & Pickard of Portland or to Mr. Daniels. He might also perhaps give news of some others, Crosby had 13 brought to him and lately got another badly mounted from Isle au Haut which was taken there, making 16 Merrill of Bangor has had three. I hear of two at Skowhegan; one at Garland, a little south of Moosehead Lake, and one at Lincoln. My opinion is 100 taken in the State would be a low estimate. It seems singular that one should be taken on Isle au Haut, one of the extreme outer islands, but it has always been a resort of Acadian and Richardson's Owls. Crosby has sold all his Gray Owls except the mounted ones. He sold one to Joe Fefferson, the actor for \$20 Daniels states that he bought some at \$1 each. Crosby got some at that. They were very dark--- more of a purplish tint than gray.

Bangor, Maine.

Symposium curriculum

During the past month six Great Gray Owls have been shot within a radius of 40 miles of this city, and have been brought here to be mounted; many more may have been shot and not preserved. These birds are very rare in this vicinity, and since my interest in birds, I have not known (personally) of but one or two being taken in this state. This flight seems rather remarkable on many accounts. Our winter has been very mild as a whole, although we have had some extremely cold days, which were, however, exceptional. Being cold weather birds, and considering this very "open" winter, they can hardly have been driven south by the weather. As to food supply-- that is, of course, problematical. It was noticed, however, that Pine Grosbeaks arrived here in flocks of considerable numbers rather early in the fall or winter of 1889, and it is possible that the Owls followed the flight of small birds, that may have been driven south by lack of food. (Letter of Harry Merrill,

Jan. 28, 1890)

JAMES H. BOWLER.

ISAAC H. MERRILL.

OFFICE OF

**Bowler & Merrill, Bankers**

AND PROPRIETORS OF THE

Bangor Safe Deposit Vaults.

Bangor, Maine. Mar 2 1890

William Brewster Esq

Cambridge Mass. Dear Sir: Since

writing you five (5) more Great Gray Owls have been brought into the city - Making a total of twelve (12)

Respectfully Yours

Harry Merrill

OFFICE OF

**Bowler & Merrill, Bankers**

AND PROPRIETORS OF THE

Bangor Safe Deposit Vaults.

Bangor, Maine. *Feb 18<sup>th</sup> 1890*

*Wm Brewster Esq  
Cambridge Mass*

*Dear Sir - Great Gray Owl*

*No 13 came in last week - and I mounted  
him day before yesterday. Owl ♂. Tarsus very small  
- in small was 1 mouse & 1 mole*

*Respectfully Yours*

*Isaac Merrill*

GREAT GREY OWL. E. S. Bowler, Bangor, Me., says he received from Katahdin Iron Works a perfect specimen. Length 25½; wing 17½; tail 12. Extent 55 inches.

O. & O. IX, Jun. 1884, p. 76.

Two Great Gray Owls received from Belfast, Maine. Color of the eyes of one a light straw yellow.

O. & O. XV, Feb. 1890 p. 30

C. F. Newell, an energetic taxidermist, located at Calais, Me., last fall, and during the winter has done quite an extensive business. He was enabled by his location to obtain a large number of deers' heads, for which he found a ready market. On Nov. 10, the hunters reported to him that they had seen four white (Albino) Bucks. He succeeded in securing one. It was entirely white except a patch on the head. Last summer he had a set of moose horns that weighed 40 lbs., and the extent was 4 ft. 9 in. He has reported some Great Gray Owls. He is now preparing to take a trip north for the purpose of collecting mammals.

O. & O. XV, Feb. 1890 p. 30

Great Gray Owl.

I had a Great Gray Owl come in to-day. It was shot at Wells, Me., last week. I thought you would like to know about it for the O. & O.

E. P. Wonson.

Gloucester, Mass.

O. & O. XV, Mar. 1890 p 48



Lake Umbagog, Mo.  
Sept. & Oct. 1893.

Sept 22  
3  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
Oct 1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
Nov 1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
Dec 1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31

although on two occasions (Oct 5 & 7)  
I heard the whistle, yell & hoot come  
from the same spot and apparently  
from " " bird there must have  
been two Owls of different kinds  
perched near each other for in Worcester  
after I had returned to Cambridge  
Mass Sargent while working on the  
canal at Pitt. Pk. shot the whistles!

*Syrnium cinereum.*

1884.

April 25. A *Syrnium* shot at above place  
& date has been sent S. S. Bowler  
as told me by him in letter dated  
April 28, 1884. The bird measured L., 25- $\frac{1}{2}$ ;  
wing, 17- $\frac{1}{4}$ ; Tail, 12; ex. 55.

Maine (Newport)

*Syrnium cinereum*

1890

In January.

Jan'y 4

"On Saturday, Jan. 4, Crosby had a fine  
Great Gray Owl brought in alive, wing-tipped.  
It was taken at Newport, Maine, 25 miles west  
of Bangor. He killed it the same day" [Crosby  
or the man who took it?] (M. Hardy Oct. Jan. 6-1890)



**Great Gray Owl** (*Scotiaptex nebulosa*).—The general rarity of this species and the irregular intervals of its visits, should warrant a record of all specimens that come to our notice. The following have been captured during the present winter:—

The S. L. Crosby Co., taxidermists, Bangor, Me., have received eight specimens up to Feb. 1, 1907, these being the first sent to them for the past three years.

Mr. Walter D. Hinds, taxidermist, Portland, Me., had received the following up to Feb. 8, 1907. Two from Bailey's Island, Portland Harbor; two from Cape Elizabeth, Me.; and one from Damariscotta, Me. The first specimen was received Nov. 8, 1906.

Mr. W. P. Conger, taxidermist, Burlington, Vt., has received six specimens, with the following data—

- 1 ♂, Malone, N. Y., Jan. 1, 1907.
- 1 ♀, Shelburne, Vt., Jan. 2, 1907.
- 1 ♂, Champlain, N. Y., Jan. 2, 1907.
- 1 ♀, South Burlington, Vt., Feb. 2, 1907.
- 1 ♀, Colchester, Vt., Feb. 7, 1907.
- 1 ♂, Colchester, Vt., Feb. 11, 1907.

Mr. C. E. Dionne, of Laval University, Quebec, under date of March 6, 1907, informs me that he has examined six specimens the past winter.

Rev. C. W. G. Eifrig, Ottawa, Ont., in writing on winter birds (*The Ottawa Naturalist*, Vol. XX, Feb. 15, 1907) states: "Of the Great Gray Owl, I have seen and heard of four so far this winter, all of which have found their way into the hands of Henry the taxidermist."

Mr. Henry W. Howling, taxidermist, Minneapolis, Minn., had received eleven specimens prior to Feb. 7, 1907.

Mr. J. D. Allen, taxidermist, Mandan, N. Dak., under date of March 11, 1907, writes: "I have never had any Great Gray Owls in the flesh until this winter. Two fine specimens have been received, one from Moorhead and two from Detroit, Minn."—RUTHVEN DEANE, *Chicago, Ill.*  
*Auk*, 24, Apr., 1907, p. 215.

*Stockton Springs, Maine.*

Co. Boston Soc. Nat. History.

*Scotiaptex nebulosa.* GREAT GRAY OWL.—A specimen was obtained that was shot at Stockton Springs, Maine, in January, a few years since.

*Auk* 25, Apr-1908, p. 234.

Brief Notes.

A Great Gray Owl was shot, January 14, in Vermont near the Massachusetts line. It was a ♀ and very poor in flesh. The stomach contained the remnants of a mole.

L. H. Reed. Worcester.

(O. & O. X V. Feb. 1890. p. 29.)

Great Gray Owl (*Scotiopteryx nebulosa*).

Ruthven Deane.

Coult. XXIV, Apr. 1907, p. 213 Chicago, Ill.

In Vermont records see under  
Maine -

Unusual Visits of Birds in Western Massachusetts during 1896.

*Ula cinerea*.—A Great Gray Owl was captured in Blandford, March 4. This is the third of the kind known to have been taken in this county.

Robert O. Morris,  
Springfield, Mass.

Essex Co., Mass.

*Strix cinereum*.

Two in the Essex Co. collection of the Peabody Academy, Salem, one without a label the other marked "Salem, Jan'y 1867, F. W. Putnam." They are evidently ♂ & ♀ one being very much larger than the other.

New England.

*Strix cinereum*.

Dr. Samuel Cabot tells me that he has a pair of *Cinereous Owls*, one killed in Longwood (Brookline) Mass. the other in Vermont. — both taken many years ago. (Notes taken after a talk with Dr. Cabot Jan'y 18-1885)

CAPTURE OF THE GREAT GRAY OWL IN MASSACHUSETTS. — Under date of Feb. 25, 1882, Mr. Robert O. Morris, of Springfield, writes me that "a Great Gray Owl (*Syrnium cinereum*) was captured in Agawam last week, the skin of which has been preserved." A later letter, in reply to a request for further information, states that the capture was made by Mr. E. A. Kellogg, on February 21, and that Mr. Kellogg's attention was attracted to the bird by a number of Crows circling around a pine tree on a branch of which the Owl was sitting. Length of the specimen, 28 inches; extent, 60 inches; tail, 13.

Only two specimens have been recorded as positively known to have been taken in this State in the last forty years, but there are several earlier records.—J. A. ALLEN, Cambridge, Mass.

Bull. N.O.C., 3, April, 1888, p. 123.

Addition to the Bristol County List.

A gentleman residing at Taunton, Mass., shot in the outskirts of the city an Owl, which from his description conforms exactly to that of the Great Gray Owl (*Ula cinerea*) in size, shape and coloration. It is impossible to mistake the Great Gray for the Barred or Great Horned Owl, as this gentleman has shot a number of each of the last two. Unfortunately the owl was not considered rare and he did not have it preserved. John C. Cahoon.

613. *Winter Birds in Western Massachusetts.* By W. W. Colburn. *Ibid.*, No. 6, p. 106.— Capture of the Great Gray Owl (*Syrnium cinereum*) at Agawam. (This specimen is also recorded in Bull. N. O. C., VIII, p. 123, and by W. A. Stearns in *Amherst Record* (newspaper) of Aug. 1, 1883.) *For. & Stream*, Vol. XX

From Eastern Mass. M. A. Frazer.

Along the coast of Maine great gray owls seem to have been more abundant than ever previously recorded. Only one, however, come under our notice as taken in this State, and that was killed on Deer Island, Boston Harbor, on Feb. 4.

*For. & Strm*, April 24, 1880. p. 263

Great Gray Owl in Worcester County, Mass. — A Great Gray Owl (*Scotiaptex cinerea*) was killed in Princeton, Feb. 28, by E. T. Whitaker, a member of the Worcester Sportsmen's Club. The day was severely cold, the thermometer registering 4° below zero. This is the first record for this species in this County.—GEORGE B. CHURCHILL, *Worcester, Mass.* *Auk*, 8, July, 1891. p. 313

The Great Gray Owl near Boston. — On February 7 of this year I saw a Great Gray Owl (*Scotiaptex nebulosa*) in Dedham, Mass. I was attracted to the spot by a great clamor of Crows and soon found my bird perched on a low limb of a white pine in open mixed woods. It held in its claws a dead and partly eaten crow, which when it was finally dropped by the owl in flight, I found to lack the head and fore part of body and the viscera. The owl seemed perfectly fearless of me, but showed nervousness when the crows cawed near by, and followed with its eyes the flight of the single crows that flew over its tree from time to time. I drove it about from tree to tree with snowballs. It flew low and always took a rather low perch, — from ten to twenty feet from the ground, and usually on a large branch of a pine tree, near the trunk, though twice it alighted on the very top of a red cedar. I could get as near as the height of its perch permitted and was frequently within twenty feet of it during the hour or two that I spent in its company.—FRANCIS H. ALLEN, *Boston, Mass.* *Auk*, XXI, Apr., 1904, p. 278.

1013. *Great Gray Owl. Spectral Owl. Strix cinera* (sic). [By F. T. Jencks.] *Ibid.*, No. 7, p. 3.—Record of a specimen killed "late in the winter of 1882 and '83," on Fox Island, near Wickford, R. I. Reference is made to another specimen in the collection at Brown University, "said to have been taken in Seekonk, Mass., some twenty years ago," but apparently not previously recorded. *Rand. Notes Nat. Hist.* 1

**GREAT GRAY OWL IN RHODE ISLAND.**—A very fine specimen of this species (*Syrnium cinereum*) was killed at Wickford, R. I., March 25, 1883. Mr. Gray, in our employ, heard of it and succeeded in purchasing it. We had a Horned Owl to mount the same day, and also a Barred Owl. The body of the Great Gray Owl was less than half the size of the Horned Owl's, and but little larger than that of the Barred Owl, though the bird itself exceeds the Great Horned in size. The eye is very small, and the breast feathers extremely long. Taken all in all, it is the most bird for the least substance we ever examined.—FRED. T. JENCKS, *Providence, R. I.* *Bull. N. O. C.*, 3, July, 1883, p. 183.

**Great Gray Owl (*Scotiaptex nebulosa*) in Rhode Island.**—Through the kindness of Messrs. Angell and Cash, taxidermists, Providence, R. I., I am enabled to quote the capture of a third specimen for the State. This bird was shot within a mile of the city limits of Providence, on Nov. 19, 1906, and proved to be a male. The two previous records are given in 'Birds of Rhode Island,' Howe and Sturtevant, 1899, p. 62, one specimen taken in 1870 and the other March 25, 1883.—RUTHVEN DEANE, *Chicago, Ill.* *Auk*, 24, Apr., 1907, p. 215.

• General Notes

*Winter Birds in Connecticut.*

On January 19 I purchased a fine male of the Great Gray Owl from a farmer who had shot it the day before at North Haven. The Owl was still alive.—A. H. VERRILL, *New Haven, Connecticut.*

*Auk* X, April, 1893. p. 203.

*East Haven, Conn.*

**Scotiaptex nebulosa.** GREAT GRAY OWL.—Dr. Sanford showed me on April 13, 1907, a freshly mounted Great Gray Owl, the toes of which were still flexible, which he had just purchased at a restaurant in New Haven. This bird evidently had been recently killed, and Dr. Sanford was assured it was shot in East Haven the last of March. I know of no other certain record since Linsley (*Am. Jour. Sci.*, XLIV, 1843, p. 253).

*Auk* 27. Oct. 1910 p. 463.

A number of Great Gray Owls have been taken  
New England this winter. Snowy Owls fairly common,  
other owls scarce. Redpolls common. Snow Buntings,  
Pine Grosbeak and Crossbills, scarce.

O. & O. XV, Feb. 1890 p. 30

CAPTURE OF THE GREAT GRAY OWL IN THE ADIRONDACKS, N. Y.  
— In March, 1879, a fine female of this rare Owl (*Syrnium lapponicum cinereum*) was shot in the Adirondacks by a guide, and forwarded to a gentleman in New York City. It arrived in poor condition and was not mounted, but a skin was made of it. This is, I believe, the first record of the occurrence of this bird in this State. The specimen is now in my collection.—ROBERT LAWRENCE, *New York City*.

Bull. N. O. C. 5, April, 1880, p. 122.

Birds of the Adirondack Region.  
C. H. Merriam.

115. *Ulula cinerea* (Gmelin) Bonaparte. GREAT GRAY OWL.—Rare. I saw a Great Gray Owl near Seventh Lake, in Hamilton County, late in the fall of 1870; and skinned a specimen that was killed in north-eastern Oneida County, April 10, 1873. Mr. Robert Lawrence has a female that was shot in the Adirondacks (exact locality not stated) in March, 1879.\*

Bull. N. O. C. 6, Oct, 1881, p. 232

*Ulula cinerea* in Steuben, Co., New York.—I am pleased to report the occurrence in this locality of the Great Gray Owl; a female in fine plumage was shot some five or six miles southwest of this village on the 10th of last February by a farmer who claimed it was trying to catch his chickens. It was so tame he thought he could have easily killed it with a club. The bird was thin, and from the appearance of its digestive organs it had fasted a long time.—A. H. Wood, *Painted Post, Steuben Co., N. Y.*

Auk, V. Jan. 1888. p. 110-111.

The Great Gray Owl in Lewis County, New York. — I take pleasure in recording the capture of the Great Gray Owl (*Scotiaptex cinerea*) in this locality. It is, I believe, the first authentic instance of its capture in this County (Lewis). It was shot by a farmer in the town of Watson, Dec. 17, 1889, and is now in my collection. The farmer said that he was slaughtering swine, and the Owl flew from an adjoining piece of woods, alighting in a tree in the yard (doubtless attracted by the fresh meat). The bird, which was an adult female, was in very poor condition and the stomach was empty.—JAMES H. MILLER, *Lowville, N. Y.*

Auk, VII. April, 1890. p. 206

Auk, XII, April, 1895, p. 181.

The Great Gray and Hawk Owls in St. Lawrence County, N. Y.—While at Ogdensburg, St. Lawrence Co., N. Y., recently, I examined a local collection of mounted birds and study skins owned by Mr. H. M. Davidson. In it I found three Great Gray Owls (*Scotiaptex cinerea*), all of which had been shot in the county within a period of five years. I also found four American Hawk Owls (*Surnia ulula caparoch*) which had been secured within the past few years in a large swamp in the township of Hammond, which is in the same county.

On the 19th of December, 1894, while at Carthage, which is at the western border of Jefferson County, New York State, I saw a Grackle—species not determined, as the bird flew on my approach. The day was bright and clear, with the temperature but little above 20°. A farmer near me remarked that he "guessed that bird had made a mistake and thought spring had come."—WILLIAM DUTCHER, *New York City*.

Auk, XII, July, 1895, p. 301.

The Great Gray Owl in Oneida County, New York.—A handsome specimen of the Great Gray Owl (*Scotiaptex cinerea*) was shot at White Lake, Oneida County, during a cold snap the first part of last February. It is a rare bird in this locality, its occurrence being recorded about once every ten years.—WILLIAM S. JOHNSON, *Boonville, N. Y.*

1847. *Great Gray Owl in New York.* By O. Stewart Bamber, M. D.  
*Ibid.* For. & Stream, Vol. 38, Dec. 26. p. 449.



**Something about Owls.**  
**C. O. Ormsbee, Montpelier, Vt.**

Of the Great Grey Owl, which is very rare south of the fortieth parallel, nine stomachs were examined. All of them contained small Rodents, and one in addition contained a Snow Bunting.

**O. & O. Vol. 18, Oct, 1893 p. 138**

**Brief Notes.**

*Correction.*

*In O. and O. Vol. 14, 1889,  
page 57,*

I mentioned a  
Great Gray Owl, which is only a ♀ *Nyctea*  
*nyctea.* *Albert Lano.*

*Minn.*

**O. & O. Vol. 18, Oct, 1893 p. 143**

*Nyctala  
richardsoni*

Birds within Ten Miles of Point  
deMonts, Can, Comeau & Merriam

64. *Nyctala tengmalmi richardsoni*. RICHARDSON'S OWL.—A common winter resident, and very tame. This Owl has a low liquid note that resembles the sound produced by water slowly dropping from a height; hence the Montagne Indians call it *pillip-pile-tshish*, which means "water-dripping bird." These Indians have a legend that this was at one time the largest Owl in the world, and that it had a very loud voice. It one day perched itself near a large waterfall and tried not only to imitate the sound of the fall but also to drown the roaring of the torrent in its own voice. At this the Great Spirit was offended and transformed it into a pygmy, causing its voice to resemble slowly dripping water instead of the mighty roar of a cataract.

Bull. N. O. C., 7, Oct., 1882, p. 237

*Early appearance of certain northern species at Ottawa, Canada.*

I saw one Richardson's Owl (*Cryptoglaux tengmalmi richardsoni*) only, which had been shot November 16, at Ottawa.—G. EIFRIG, Ottawa, Canada. *Auk*, XXIV, Jan., 1907, p. 110-111.

*Birds of Toronto, Canada,  
by James H. Fleming,  
Part II, Land Birds,  
Auk, XXIV, Jan., 1907, p. 74.*

142. *Cryptoglaux tengmalmi richardsoni*. RICHARDSON'S OWL.—Winter migrant, of irregular occurrence, November 8 to April 3; I have examined nine specimens since 1885, but the number taken probably averages one a year.

*Milford, Maine.  
Boston Soc. Nat. History.*

*Cryptoglaux tengmalmi richardsoni*. RICHARDSON'S OWL.—One was obtained from Milford, Maine, where it was shot on December 22, 1906.

*Auk* 25, Apr. 1908, p. 235.

RICHARDSON'S OWL IN SOUTHERN NEW HAMPSHIRE.—On December 15, 1879, I took a female *Nyctala tengmalmi richardsoni* at Hollis, New Hampshire. It was in a small grove of white pines, and was sitting bolt upright by the side of a trunk about ten feet from the ground. It was wide awake, for it watched me closely as I stepped back in order not to mutilate it. The weather was mild at the time with about three inches of snow on the ground.—WILLIAM H. FOX, *Washington, D. C.*  
*Bull. N. O. C.* 8, Jan, 1883, p. 61.

A. H. (Shelburne)

*Nyctala richardsoni*

1887

A. P. Philbrook has a specimen which  
he shot in winter of 87-88 (Chadbourne)

Saugus, Mass.

*Nyctale richardsoni.*

1884

Dec -

Geo. O. Welch has a fine adult ♀ taken as above. He was walking in the woods just after a heavy fall of moist snow and noticing a dark spot in the leafless, but snow-laden, branches of a small oak went to the spot and found it an Owl.

Lyngsboro, Mass.

*Nyctale richardsoni*

1885

March

Under date of March 11, 1885 Mr. ~~W~~ Parham writes: "I have a fine Richardson's Owl which I have just shot here."

CAPTURE OF RICHARDSON'S OWL (*Nyctala tengmalmi richardsoni*)  
NEAR PROVIDENCE, R. I.—A beautiful male specimen of this species was taken east of this city and brought to us by a milkman, Dec. 18, 1882. As it passed through several hands before reaching us we could not ascertain just where it had been killed, but think it must be accredited to Massachusetts, as it was in all probability taken in Seekonk, where the man lives who brought it to us. As the Massachusetts line runs but two miles east of this city, this is almost beyond doubt a Massachusetts record.  
—F. T. JENCKS, Providence, R. I.

Bull. N. O. C. 3, April, 1883, p. 122

Mass.

*Nyctala richardsoni*

One taken at Brocton, Mass., Nov. 29, 1888  
O. & O. XIII, Dec. 1888 p.

Legum Jan 31  
Wm Brewster Esq  
The Richardson Owl <sup>seen in my coll. now</sup> was  
taken Nov 4 1882 at Nahant  
have written Mr Hart in regard  
to the Green Winged Teal  
your sk of the Teal.

Richardson's Owl, taken at Brocton, Mass., Nov. 29.

O. & O. XIII, Dec. 1888 p. 191

Notes.

A specimen of the Richardson Owl was found dead in  
Peabody, Feb. 2. Geo. O. Welch.

O & O. XIV, Feb. 1889 p. 30

Another Richardson's Owl in Massachusetts.—As *Nyctala tengmalmi richardsoni* has been so seldom taken so far south as this point (central Eastern Massachusetts), it may be well to record an additional example. I have in my collection a fine specimen obtained in this place on Jan 1, 1885. It was approached without difficulty in broad daylight by a wood-chopper and killed with a stick.

This is about the southern limit of the range of the species as at present determined. I find but three examples on record to the south of this; the early one of Dr. Wood for Connecticut in 1859, and the two obtained in 1881 and 1882 near Providence, R. I., as reported by Mr. Jencks in the 'Nuttall Bulletin' of April, 1881, and April, 1883.

The circumstances of this capture indicate the defective day-vision characteristic of the strictly nocturnal species, in accordance with Richardson's statement: "It is so much dazzled by the light of the sun that it becomes stupid and may easily be caught by hand."—F. C. BROWNE, Framingham, Mass. *Auk*, 2, Oct., 1886, p. 384.

**Richardson's Owl in Eastern Massachusetts.**—A Richardson's Owl (*Nyctala tengmalmi richardsoni*), female, was shot at Hyde Park, Mass., near the railroad tracks, towards the Clarendon Hills station by Frederic Downey, November 26, 1905. It was skinned by Mr. Frank Blake Webster, of whom I purchased it. It is now in my museum.—JOHN E. THAYER, Lancaster, Mass. *Auk*, XXIII, Apr., 1906, p. 222.

RICHARDSON'S OWL IN RHODE ISLAND.—A specimen of Richardson's Owl (*Nyctale tengmalmi richardsoni*) was obtained this winter near this city. Its capture was ascertained by Mr. Newton Dexter, who saw the bird in the possession of a young lady whose brother shot it.—FREDERIC T. JENCKS, *Providence, R. I.* Bull. N. O. C. 6, April, 1881, p. 123

*Southwick & Jencks report about  
150 owls this season*

Among them is a Sparrow Owl taken near Providence and

*O. & C. VIII. Mar. 1883. p. 24.*

3  
8  
1  
19

**Richardson's Owl and Other Owls in Franklin County, New York.**

— A specimen of Richardson's Owl (*Cryptoglaux funerea richardsoni*) in the flesh was recently received by the American Museum from Dr. Wm. N. MaeArtney of Fort Covington, Franklin Co., N. Y. The bird was shot on November 14 in a cedar thicket near Fort Covington, in the township of that name, by Wm. N. MaeArtney, Jr.

Dr. MaeArtney writes that he shot one of these Owls in the nearby township of Dundee, Province of Quebec, within a few rods of the State line in 1879 or 1880; and about 1885 one taken in the same town was brought to him, the latter specimen being now in his collection. All three birds were secured in late fall or early winter.

Eaton, in his recently published 'Birds of New York,' states that there appear to be but two definite records of Richardson's Owl in the State, one from Oneida County, the other from Essex County.

Dr. MaeArtney states that during the winter the Snowy Owl is frequently observed, and occasionally the Hawk Owl, Barred Owl and Great Gray Owl. The Long-eared Owl is seen at times, while the Great Horned, Saw-whet, and Screech Owls are common, the rufus phase of the last being rather rare.— W. DEW. MILLER, *American Museum of Natural History*.

*Auth. XXX 11. Mus. 1915. p. 228.*



**New Name for Nyctala.**—The generic name of Richardson's and the Saw-whet Owls, *Nyctala* Brehm, 1828, is preoccupied by *Nyctalus* Bowdich, 1825, for a genus of mammals, and as no other term appears to be available I will propose *Cryptoglaux* (κρυπτος, hidden, and γλαύξ, an owl), with *Strix tengmalmi* Gmelin as the type. The species in our list will thus stand as *Cryptoglaux tengmalmi richardsoni* (Bonap.), and *Cryptoglaux acadica* (Gmelin).—CHARLES W. RICHMOND, *U. S. National Museum, Washington, D. C. Auk*, XVIII, April, 1901, p. 193.



Nyctala acadica.

Great Island, Hyannis, Mass.

1888.           Hearing the Nuthatches whining in peculiar low excited  
Dec.15.       tones (in some dense woods of *Pinus rigida*) and incessantly  
I went in search of them and found them dancing about among  
the branches of a bushy pine. I suspected an Owl and looking  
closely soon discovered one sitting erect and still on a hori-  
zontal branch. It looked gray and ragged like a weather-beat-  
en piece of bark. I took it for a gray Scops but on shooting  
it found I had a *Nyctala acadica*. I gave the specimen to  
Cory.

*Myctale acadica*

1890 Mass.

Nov. 30

Lexington. One shot by A. Danielson in dense young in poplar  
poplar & maple sprouts eight to ten feet high on sprouts  
the border of a large meadow behind Bryant's (near  
the "lone pine"). Mr. D. in company with two other  
sportsmen was hunting Quail and this Owl was  
started either by them or their dogs as they forced  
their way through, ~~both birds~~ being shot flying.  
<sup>A Red-necked Owl and</sup>  
A third Owl, which Mr. D. thinks to be a Short-  
eared, was also flushed and shot in these sprouts.

Maine

Biddeford Pool. One of the men employed at the Resort to  
life-saving station, whom I met at Trossee Bros. rocks along  
to-day (Dec. 4-1890), tells me that he killed a good sea coast  
many Saw-whet Owls every autumn along the  
shore near the station. He finds them invariably  
among or near rocks in the crevices of which  
they are in the habit of concealing themselves. Some  
autumn they occur in in very large numbers. He  
calls them Rock Owls.

1891 Mass.

Jan. 1

Waltham. Faxon shot a ♂ which was sitting on the branch of a small in leafless  
maple by the roadside just beyond the Warren place. He saw it first maple by  
at 1 P.M. and after going home for his gun returned roadside,  
~~an hour later~~ to find it in exactly the same place. He has given me the bird  
in the flesh. It proves to be in fair condition but without any fat  
on the skin. The stomach and crop empty.

Feb. 15

Sudbury. Spelman shot a female which he afterwards gave me in in pitch  
the flesh. It was sitting in a pine (P. rigida) by the roadside and pine by  
happened to catch his eye as he was driving past. roadside.  
Stomach contained skin and bones (but no skulls) of mice,  
apparently A. riparia. The bird was in good condition. The  
ovaries were distinctly granulated but none of the ovaries were especially enlarged.

Nyctale acadica

1891 Mass.

- March 7 Melrose Highlands. On this date "Torrey saw his first Saw-whet Owl." He was on the lower branch of an apple tree just over the wall in a farmer's yard. I came within an ace of taking him in his hand" (W. Faxon, letter March 9, 1891) One seen by Bradford Torrey
- " 12 Cambridge. One seen this morning by Bolles in the tall willows on Concord Turnpike at the S. E. corner of the Brickyard Swamp. B. nearly touched him with a stick before he would fly. He drew in his feathers ~~to~~ and more than half-closed his eyes as B. approached <sup>a thrust.</sup> imitates stump of bird. Specimens used by Faxon Bros. have received fifteen Saw-whets since last autumn all "orders". They have refused others offered for sale. About all have been taken in New England. They consider the "flight" unusually heavy.

1892

- Nov. 19 Concord. One in white pines near Ball's Hill. (Full particulars on another sheet) Several others reported from the region about Boston this autumn. at Concord

1893

- March 8 Cambridge. One seen late this afternoon by Faxon & Hoffmann. It was perched ~~on the~~ in a leafless tree, a willow, on a branch which extended out over the brook (outlet to Little Pond). It proved to be very shy for a bird of its kind not permitting a near approach than to within thirty or forty feet and flying fifty yards or more at a time following the course of the brook and alighting on leafless trees on the edge of the open meadow. There was about two feet of snow on the ground at the time. Twice when the bird had alighted with its back towards F. & H. they made it turn its head squarely towards them by creeping. In early March.

*Nyctale acadica*

1892. Mass.

Nov. 19 Concord. A little before sunset this afternoon I heard Chickadees scolding (they used the day-day note only) vigorously & incessantly in a cluster of white pines - young, bushy trees 25 or 30 ft. in height - on the pine knoll north of Ball's Hill. There were six or eight of them flitting about excitedly among the pine branches and in their midst I soon discovered a beautiful little Acadian Owl perched on a horizontal branch about fifteen feet from the main stem of the tree and not over eight feet above the ground. He was surrounded by the pine foliage which however was too thin to afford him much concealment. Indeed the frame and background of lively green served rather to make him the more conspicuous by its strong contrast with the rich browns & chestnut of his plumage. Aware of this perhaps he did not attempt to imitate a dead prong or stub as the species is often said to do but on the contrary sat in a graceful attitude with eyes wide open and the outline of the plumage full & rounded. The facial disc was very distinctly marked and the outline of the top of the head was slightly hollowed in the middle (oo) probably owing to the erection of the feathers of the upper part of the disc the tips of which seemed to rise above the plumage of the crown. As he sat staring at me fixedly never so much as winking his great yellow & black eyes his expression was gentle, confiding and perhaps

*Nyctala acadica.*

1892 Mass.

Nov. 19 Concord - a trifle apathetic. There was not the least trace of either fierceness or alarm. When I moved his gaze followed me, the head turning slowly and evenly, but it never went beyond the axis of the shoulders although I stood directly behind the bird for some time and tried to attract his attention in this direction by various sways to which he paid no heed but looked straight forward the while. At length I seized the end of the branch and shook it slightly. Instantly a pair of broad wings unfolded and their owner flew across an opening to another pair flapping quickly, steadily & noiselessly the first half of the way, sinking the last half on his wings, and at the end pitching upward sharply to his perch after the manner of ~~the~~ Owls and Hawks <sup>generally</sup>. There was nothing peculiar in the manner of flight which, indeed, exactly resembled that of a Mottled Owl. The second perching place was on a stout branch near the body of the tree. Then the little bird again took an easy, natural attitude and again regarded me calmly & fixedly with wide opened eyes. I did not again disturb him further.

The Chickadee left the Owl soon after I first discovered him and walked ~~away~~ off through the woods until out of hearing.

*Myiata acadica.*

1893

Mass.

Nov. 4

Acton. While passing through a grove of white pines my attention was attracted by a great clamor made by a number of Chickadees and Golden-crests. Approaching I found about 20 of the former and 15 of the latter flitting about excitedly in a tall young pine about 30 ft. above the ground. They moved in an irregular circle of about 6 ft. in diameter in the center of which perched on a stout branch close to the trunk sitting very erect & perfectly motionless I soon espied a Saw-whet. The Chickadees made only the dee-dee note, the Kinglets a fine hissing tone. Both birds became silent and flew away in various directions as soon as I came under the tree and several minutes before I shot the little Owl. The last named bird did absolutely nothing but sit and stare at me with wide opened eyes. The specimen is now in my collection.

Killed by  
Chickadees &  
Kinglets.

Arthur Robbins who was with me at the time says that he once (several years ago) heard the Saw-whetting note of one of these Owls at night, in late autumn, in the woods near his home in Carlisle, Mass.

Saw-whet call  
heard in autumn

1896

Oct. 27

Concord. At about 3.30 P. M. I found a Saw-whet among some down young pines in the Glacial Hollow near Ball's Hill. Its presence was betrayed in the usual way, viz. by the holding of a number of little birds (four or five Chickadees, two Canada Nuthatches, a Fox Sparrow and three or four Junco) which were hopping about in the branches within a few yards of it keeping up an incessant clamor. By noting the central point around which they moved and scrutinizing this carefully I quickly discovered the Owl. He was in a pitch pine on a stout branch about 8 ft. out from the main stem & 25 ft. above the ground. He sat rather erect but with his plumage puffed out & his nostrils full & rounded. I held him with sticks but he did not fly until I shook the tree. He then shot down nearly to the ground skinned along a path for a few rods & perched up into a white pine alighting close to the trunk on a dead twig about 7 ft. above the ground. I approached within about 2 yards where he drew in his feathers & sat tall upright looking very large & fully cadaverous. I left him unharmed on a dead perch.



Nyctala acadica.

Concord, Mass.

1894                    Another and very curious experience connected with an  
Owl befell me November 13th. I had spent the day at Ball's  
Oct. 11                    to  
Nov. 21.                  Hill, as usual, and was pushing off in the canoe to return to  
Concord when I noticed a great number of feathers floating on  
the river. One of my men who had been at work on the shore  
said that he had noticed them passing for half-an-hour or  
more. During this time there had not been a breath of wind  
and they had merely drifted slowly with the current. As I  
looked I could see them as far as the eye could reach both up  
and down stream not scattered about but forming a nearly  
straight and rather narrow line.

                  Paddling out I picked up a number of them and found that  
they had belonged to a Saw-whet Owl. They had come from every  
part of the bird including the wings and tail. Many of the  
body feathers were in bunches - a dozen or more together.

                  This trail of feathers was as easily followed as the paper  
"scent used in the game of hare and hounds but it stopped  
abruptly at the foot of the Beaver Dam Rapid. There was a  
large musk rat house on the bank at this place and at first I  
suspected that the little Owl had been plucked there but upon  
examining the mound carefully I failed to find so much as a  
single feather. I then decided that the plucking operation  
must have ceased some time before I started and that the last

Nyctala acadica.

Concord, Mass.

1894. feathers which I came to had floated down from some distance  
Oct.11 above the spot where I found them. Accordingly I kept on up  
to stream scanning both banks closely, a not very difficult task  
Nov.21 for they were nearly everywhere covered with snow. I was be-  
(No.2). ginning to despair of success, however, when, on reaching the  
sharp turn just above Holden's Hill, I caught sight of a bunch  
of feathers clinging to a twig of one of the large white ma-  
ples which line the west and south bank at this bend. Pushing  
in under these trees I at once found abundant evidence that  
the Saw-whet had been picked and eaten there, but by what,  
remained as much a mystery as ever. The murderer must have  
been a bird, however, for he had chosen as a dining table a  
stout branch which extended out over the water at a height of  
about fifteen feet. This branch was smeared with blood and  
several feathers clung to it while many others were caught a-  
mong the button bushes beneath. On a snow bank at the water's  
edge I found still others as well as a few small fragments of  
flesh but these must have been cast down from above for the  
snow bore no signs of footprints.

On my way down river in the morning I started a Red-tailed  
Hawk from this very belt of maples but yet I can scarcely be-  
lieve that he was really the destroyer of the poor little Owl.  
The latter was probably caught in the maples where he was eat-  
en for Saw-whets are often found at this season in leafless  
trees on meadows or the banks of streams.

Nyctala acadica.

Concord, Mass.

1896.            At about 3 P.M. I was returning from Davis's Hill when I  
Oct.27.        heard a number of small birds chirping and scolding loudly and  
continuously in a cluster of young pines near the bottom of  
the Glacial Hollow. Suspecting that they <sup>were</sup> mobbing an Owl I  
went at once to the spot and found five or six Chickadees, two  
Canada Nuthatches, several Juncos and Fox Sparrows hopping  
excitedly from twig to twig in the upper branches of a pitch  
pine. As usual in such cases they were moving in a circle and  
I had only to scrutinize the central space closely to discover  
the Owl, a pretty little Acadian sitting on a stout horizontal  
branch about eight feet from the main stem and some eighteen  
feet above the ground. He appeared quite indifferent to the  
movements and clamor of his persecutors but he kept his eyes  
fixed on me with some show of interest but without drawing in  
or displaying others signs of suspicion or alarm. The Chick-  
adees were the most noisy and aggressive of the little birds  
about him but none of them ventured to approach him nearer  
than to within six or eight feet. They called de-de-de-de  
incessantly. The Fox Sparrow clucked loudly. Two Red Squir-  
rels on the opposite side of the hollow added materially to  
the racket by a continuous loud snickering but I doubt if  
either of them really saw the Owl or knew what the excitement  
was all about.

Nyctala acadica.

Concord, Mass.

1896. I left the place without disturbing any of the birds and  
Oct.27. went to the cabin for my camera. When I returned some fifteen  
(No.2). minutes later the Squirrels were still snickering but all the  
little birds had departed. The Owl, however, was still  
perched on the pitch pine branch exactly as I left him. After  
exposing at him the only two plates I had I threw some pieces  
of branches at him. Whenever one of them hit very near him he  
would bend forward and examine the spot with close attention  
then resume his former attitude. <sup>At length</sup> Although I shook the tree  
forcibly when the Owl at once left his perch and darted off  
first sweeping down nearly to the ground then rising and fol-  
lowing a foot-path, finally alighting in a young white pine  
on a short, dead, lateral branch scarce six feet above the  
earth. I walked up to within a few feet of him when he  
straightened himself up and drew in his feathers so that his  
body looked no thicker than his head (while in the pitch pine  
he had appeared very plump and fluffy); I could have taken a  
fine picture of him in his alarmed attitude had I any more  
plates.

Nyctala acadica.

Cambridge, Mass.

1898. Clear, still and mild.

Feb. 7. Shortly after noon I took a walk about our garden on snow shoes. The sun-light, reflected from the deep, unbroken field of snow, was very dazzling. As I was passing near a young scarlet oak, still covered almost as densely with foliage as in midsummer, I discovered an Acadian Owl perched near the extremity of a long, horizontal branch about nine feet above the ground. How he chanced to attract my eye is a mystery for there were no small birds about to betray his presence and he was sitting perfectly motionless in the very middle of a cluster of tan-colored leaves which matched his plumage closely. When I returned with my camera an hour later he had not changed his perch nor even his attitude. I took a number of photographs some of which show his position and facial expression better than I can describe them. Walter Deane and Gilbert were with me and we all walked around and even beneath the tree without appearing to disturb the bird. He seemed to be very drowsy sitting, most of the time, on one leg with the other drawn up under his feathers and his eyes nearly closed although a sudden movement on the part of one of us would occasionally cause him to open his eyes wide for a moment. He was sensitive to certain sounds but paid no attention to our voices.

Nyctala acadica.

Cambridge, Mass.

1898.           After I had exposed all my plates we put up a ladder di-  
Feb.7.           rectly under the tree and Gilbert, ascending it, had his hand  
(No.2).          within a few inches of the Owl when the ladder gave way and  
fell with a crash striking against some of the branches in  
its descent. The loud noise and the agitation of the tree  
startled the bird considerably but instead of flying as we all  
expected he would do he merely bent forward and gazed intently  
down at the prostrate man and ladder. We remained motionless  
for a few moments after which Walter, going around to the op-  
posite side of the tree and waving the camera slowly, succeed-  
ed in attracting the Owl's attention while Gilbert again  
climbed the ladder and slowly extending his hand from beneath  
and a little behind the bird caught it by the feet. It  
snapped its bill sharply and rapidly when seized. I put it  
into a large cage where it remained quiet until nightfall af-  
ter which it fluttered a good deal against the wires. A dead  
House Sparrow which I left in the cage was untouched the next  
morning.

On looking closely about the garden I found on the snow  
beneath a red cedar numerous feathers from the wings, tail  
and body, of a House Sparrow and beneath the hollow, vine-en-  
shrouded trunk of an old apple tree a very small pellet com-  
posed of

Feb.13.          The Saw-whet is still alive and apparently healthy. He

Nyctala acadica.

Cambridge, Mass.

1898. is rapidly becoming tame and no longer flutters against the  
Feb.13. bars of his cage. The House Sparrow lay untouched in the  
(No.3). cage for four days when it was removed. A dead white mouse  
was substituted and promptly eaten (all but the head) on the  
following night. Yesterday at about noon the bird gave the  
saw-whistling call at frequent intervals for an hour or more  
the weather, at the time, being dark and lowery. He called  
again at noon to-day when the sun was shining brightly. At  
close range (the cage is about 15 feet from my desk) the sound  
has little or no metallic quality and bears only the most re-  
mote resemblance to saw filing. On the contrary it may be  
best described as a soft and low but rather throaty whistle  
very like that of Glaucidium. It also suggests the peep of  
Hyla pickeringii but is much less clear and bell-like and is  
on a lower key. It is given very rapidly and evenly as a rule  
and the number of repetitions is very variable. Twice or  
thrice I have heard a prolonged, monosyllabic note more metal-  
lic in quality than the ordinary call but otherwise similar.

Feb.14. The Saw-whet was unusually active this morning and during  
the forenoon kept flying from perch to perch but it did not  
appear to be in the least frightened or unhappy. At about 11  
A.M. it whistled twice, but briefly and in subdued tones. At  
3 P.M. I found it crouched on the bottom of the cage evidently

Nyctala acadica.

Cambridge, Mass.

1898. very ill. Someone suggested that a smell of fresh paint,  
Feb.14. which pervaded the museum at the time, might be the cause. We  
(No.4). accordingly took the bird out of doors but it expired only a  
few minutes later. Its death struggle was as violent as that  
of a bird that had been shot. It fluttered half across the  
cage and at the last beat the floor vigorously with its wings.  
On dissecting it I failed to detect any signs of internal in-  
jury or disease. The stomach was empty but the bird was not  
emaciated. It was a male with testes as large as #1 shot.



Nyctala acadica.

Lincoln, Maine.

Nest and four eggs.

1897.

" I found a set of four eggs of the Saw-whet Owl that

Apr. 23

were partly incubated but had no difficulty in saving them.

to

Apr. 29.

This set is very different from the set sent last year. I will give you the measurements which are not just correct as I have not got a good rule to do it with, but this will give you some idea of them.

1st  $1\frac{1}{4} \times 1$ , 2nd  $1\frac{5}{16} \times 31/32$ , 3rd  $1\frac{1}{4} \times 31/32$ , 4th  $1 \times 13/16$

You will see that the 4th is very small and is more blunt than the rest and was not incubated any, probably not fertile. I found the eggs in a poplar stub about 15 ft. high in a narrow strip of woods between two lakes. I took five Flying Squirrels from this same hole this winter and upon going by the place thought I would try the stub. Upon the first blow from my hand the Owl looked out of the hole. I then passed on thinking perhaps the set was not complete. This was the 23rd April. I went on the 29th and the female acted the same but would not leave the hole and as I climbed up she disappeared from the hole. Upon opening the cavity I found her at the bottom of the nest and she did not leave until taken from the nest and thrown into the air. She then flew a short distance and waited until I left when she flew to the hole and went in. There was a freshly killed mouse in the nest. The

only resistance of the female was the snapping of her tiny bill. Will sell the eggs at \$3 each. Perfect in all respects".

Letter from W.J. Clayton, May 10, 1897, Lincoln, Maine.

Boston, 93 Sudbury St., Sept. 50, 1892.

Mr. William Brewster,

Concord,

Mass.

Dear Mr. Brewster;—I have just bought an Acadian Owl, which is undoubtedly a young bird of this year, though apparently in full plumage, still I can see by the texture of the plumage that it is without doubt this year's bird. It flew into a house on Deer Island and as it is so early in the season, it strikes me that it must be a bird raised in that vicinity. Do you want the bird if a nice skin at \$2.50.

Yours truly,

William Brewster

Nyctala acadica

10. 1. 1907 [me.] May 11 1907

[Letter from Blanchard to John E. Hooper who has two 3 egg mentioned]

I saw you  
 you, Blanchard and  
 Blanchard later and  
 in an all well day  
 I found that the  
 Hawk by hearing the old  
 bird singing and followed  
 the sound  
 and found it was in  
 an old Woodpecker  
 hole in a hollow  
 log about  
 25 feet from the ground  
 and I got a ladder and  
 went up and when I went  
 to put my hand in the  
 hole I fought like a  
 tiger and I had to

taken her and a nest  
 put her in a bag  
 and I saw a nest  
 to the eggs the hole  
 was about a foot  
 deep and I could have  
 had a pick  
 and the first thing I  
 found was a pile of  
 white-bellied long  
 tailed feathers and  
 after throwing out  
 some of them I found  
 some mold and some  
 feathers from a ground  
 squirrel wing and  
 to one side of the nest  
 was a egg I brought the  
 old bird home and  
 put her in a cage and  
 in 30 min laid an egg  
 which she broke

[ Blanchard ]

Birds of Upper St. John.  
Batchelder.

80. *Nyctale acadica* (Gm.) Bd. SAW-WHET OWL.—This bird is not uncommon at Houlton. Mr. Frank P. Orcutt told us that it was tolerably common at Fort Fairfield.

Bull. N. O. C. 7, July, 1882, p. 150

Birds within Ten Miles of Point  
de Monts, Can. Comeau & Merriam

65. *Nyctala acadica*. SAW-WHET OWL.—Not very common. In winter Mr. Comeau once saw one of these little Owls fly out from within the carcass of a great northern hare that had been caught in a snare. The Owl had eaten away the abdomen and was at work within the thoracic cavity when frightened away.

Bull. N. O. C. 7, Oct, 1882, p. 287

*Winter Birds of Western Ontario. M<sup>r</sup> Hurvath.*

This ride took in a circuit of twenty-five miles, and we came back without a specimen save a poor emaciated Saw-whet Owl which we found lying peacefully on his back on the snow at the foot of a fence post, from which he probably dropped dead the night before in a fit of starvation.

Bull. N. O. C. 8, July, 1883, p. 145.

Notes from the Magdalen Islands.

*Nyctala acadica*. June, 1900.

H. K. Job, Kent, Conn.

Auk, XVlll, April, 1901, p. 200.

*Birds of Toronto, Canada,*  
*by James H. Fleming,*  
*Part II. Land Birds,*  
*Auk, XXIV, Jan., 1907, p. 74.*

143. *Cryptoglaux acadica*. SAW-WHET OWL.—Regular winter resident, October 4 to March 3; probably resident, as I have a young bird taken May 15, 1889, and another young one taken in August. A large flight of these owls occurred in the fall of 1889, and in October (12 to 28), 1895.

Birds of Dead River Region, Me. F. H. C.

79. *Nyctale acadica*, (Saw-whet Owl). In late autumn this little Owl is quite frequently observed by the crews at the logging camps. While I have enjoyed considerable acquaintance with this species in other portions of Maine, my record for this region is very brief but very satisfactory when viewed from a collector's standpoint. On the morning of Jan. 7th I went into the grain shed of the camp and there saw sitting closely together on a joist, three Owls of this species. They are now lying side by side in the same camphor scented drawer. From that date I made it a regular duty to pay a morning visit to the grain shed, but save for a little band of Chickadees it remained tenantless.

Copyright, 1886, by EATON

O. & O. XI. Dec. 1886. p. 177

*Nyctale acadica*. - <sup>2 imm. 15/16.</sup> <sup>fr. Mt. Lafayette.</sup> July 27. Profile House N. H. July 27-Aug. 7. 1886

Winter Birds of Webster, N. H. by Falco.

[ Saw-whet Owl, (*Nyctale acadica*).

O. & O. X. Jan. 1885. p. 14

*Notes on Birds about Brandon, Vt.*

During the winter of 1880-81, no less than seven specimens of the little Acadian Owl (*Nyctale acadica*) were taken, all within a few days' time.

*F. H. Knowlton.*  
Bull. N. O. C. 7, Jan, 1892, p. 64

Auk, XII July, 1895, p. 312.

*Bird Notes from St. Albans, Vermont.*

Two weeks later a Saw-whet Owl was sent to me, a bird that asked only the hospitality of a night's lodging when the weather was inclement, and was dispatched with true American promptness. I considered the Meadowlark's presence at that time of year unprecedented in this locality, when the mercury often reminded us that we are near neighbors to the North Pole. Was it ever known to winter so far north before?

*Nelly Hart Woodworth.*  
St. Albans, Vt.



THE M. ABBOTT FRAZAR CO. East Cambridge, Mass.

July 12, 1907

Tel. 1310-2 Haymarket

...Taxidermists...

Send Stamp for Catalogue

\* Peter A. Gallagher  
133 Monroe St.  
East Cambridge

AND DEALERS IN  
Naturalists' Supplies and Specimens

No. 93 SUBBURY STREET

Boston, Mass., Dec. 14 1907

Dear Mr Seale  
Your letter of the 13<sup>th</sup> <sup>or</sup> to hand  
this morning. Not having heard  
from Gallagher in reply to my letter,  
I had our clerk go over to his house  
last night at 7:30 to catch him after  
he had returned from work. He found  
him in, an ignorant Irishman who  
seemed to be afraid that a trap was being  
laid for him, for having an unlawful  
bird in his possession, which probably  
accounts for his non attention to our  
letters. This is the story. July the 13<sup>th</sup>  
when that bird was brought to me  
was on a Monday. Gallagher on the  
previous Friday was walking on  
Main St. towards me, & that a boy  
with this bird, which was still warm,  
he had apparently killed it with an  
air rifle, was going to throw it away,  
& gave it to Gallagher, who brought it  
here the next Monday. We should judge  
that that interval had elapsed since  
its being killed, for when it reached us

# THE M. ABBOTT FRAZAR CO.

Tel. 1310-2 Haymarket

...Taxidermists...

Send Stamp for Catalogue

AND DEALERS IN

Naturalists' Supplies and Specimens

No. 93 SUDBURY STREET

Boston, Mass.,

190

it was tainted & almost unmountable.  
The writers, stating Cambridge in one  
place & E. C. in another, we should not  
think implied any great ~~social~~ difference  
as for my part, I never knew  
where Cambridgeport ended & E. C.  
commenced and an owl could  
fly across the whole district if I  
know it might in less than 10 min.  
It might be a good idea for  
Mr. Brewster to go down there  
some we. & if he went there after  
working having he would likely  
find Gallagher at home.

Yours truly  
M. A. Frazar

E. Mass. 1885.  
22. *Nyctale acadica* - Feb. 9 (Shot by P. Mansfield, Goodale)  
Mass (Windsor)

Common; heard calling frequently in early  
spring; one seen about June 20, 1887 (Bailey)

*Nyctale acadica*.

Mass (Braintree)

*Nyctale acadica*

Francis found a nest with young in  
a swamp in Braintree. Nest in open nest.  
Six young in nest (recorded in Bull)

Mass. (Watertown)

*Nyctale acadica*

1887

July 30

Joseph B. Goodale saw one at  
twilight this evening on Arlington St.,  
Watertown. It flew across the road &  
alighted in the top of an elm. He shot  
at it three times with 32 caliber.  
After he had fired his last shell it  
alighted in a pear orchard, low down.  
He got near enough to strike it,  
with the barrel of the pistol but it  
waded the blow & escaped.

Great Id. Mass. Dec. 1888.  
*Nyctale acadica* - 75-1888

OWLS.—The number of Owls shot in Greenfield and vicinity since May 1st, 1884, are as follows:

Three Arcadian Owls.

S. W. Comstock, Greenfield Mass.

Q. & O. X. Mar. 1885. p. 47.

Winter Notes from Taunton, Mass.  
J. C. Johnson.

December 14th, a ♂ Acadian Owl was shot at this place and brought to me to be mounted. Stomach filled with bones and feathers of small birds. The same man who shot this one brought me one last winter taken in this city.

O. & O. XI. May. 1886. p. 77

Raptors, Bristol County, Mass.  
Hilton B. Read.

Saw-whet Owl (*Nyctale acadica*). This, the smallest of our owls, occurs with us only as a rare winter visitor. While not so uncommon as to merit particular comments, yet I refer to the following dates of capture: within our limits; Seekonk, Dec. 1880, (Miller), Seekonk, Jan. 1882, (Carpenter), Dartmouth. Jan. 1882, Mansfield, Feb. 1883, (Carpenter).

O. & O. XII. Aug. 1887 p. 118

Birds of Bristol County, Mass.  
F. W. Andros.

*Nyctala acadica* (Gmel.), Saw-whet Owl.  
Winter visitant, rare.

O. & O. XII. Sept. 1887 p. 130

Birds Known to Pass Breeding Season  
nr. Winchendon, Mass. Wm. Brewster

12. *Nyctala acadica*.

Auk, V, Oct., 1888, p. 389

Notes on Birds of Winchendon, Mass.  
William Brewster.

*Nyctala acadica*.—A common resident, doubtless breeding numerously, although Mr. Bailey has not as yet succeeded in finding nests.

Auk, V, Oct., 1888, p. 390

1883

Nyctala acadicaCambridge  
Mass.

January 11

One ("♀?") shot by C. R. Bant  
in a "piece of shrubbery" (which  
is very large consisting of small  
trees, bushes and grass and consists  
a number of which are dead, and  
which place in summer is quite  
marshy, having a pond in  
the center) "This must have  
been the one that was extremely  
near of swampy deciduous woods  
on the west side of Pond Pond  
W. B. I

(Note Book C. R. Bant)

1903

March 1  
" 2Nyctala acadica

Belmont

Seen by Richard Everts  
& Howard Loom on 1<sup>st</sup>  
among gray birches near  
Belmont Spring. Loom  
saw it catch a mouse at  
2 P. M. in bright sunshine.  
It dropped from its perch (about  
2 ft) on the mouse without  
springing its wings  
It had another mouse in  
its claws on the 2<sup>nd</sup>  
when Everts  
saw it again in Loom's line.

**Nest of Saw-whet Owl at Bridgewater, Mass.**— Upon Patriots' Day  
(April 19, 1906) in Bridgewater, Plymouth County, Mass., I found a nest  
of the Saw-whet Owl (*Cryptoglaux acadica*). An old Flicker's excavation,  
about 16 feet from the ground in a decayed poplar stub, furnished the  
site. In the bottom of the excavation was an old squirrel's nest, and a  
quantity of hair and feathers from small animals and birds evidently  
killed and eaten by the owl. Upon this mass the eggs, 4 in number, were  
placed.— ARTHUR C. DYKE, *Bridgewater, Mass.*

*Auk*, XXII, July, 1906, p. 337.

Distribution of New England Birds.-  
A Reply to Dr. Brewer. H. A. Purdie.

The Acadian Owl (*Nyctale acadica*) classed by Dr.  
B. as a summer resident, must on the authority  
of various local lists, be deemed a constant resident.  
of the Wis. N. A. Birds, we read

Also (in Vol. III, p. 46) of *Nyctale acadica*: "Mr. Boardman and Pro-  
fessor Verrill both give it as resident, and as common in Maine."

Bull. N.O.C. 2, Jan., 1877. p. 14.

116. *Nyctale acadica* (Gmelin) Bonaparte. SAW-WHET OWL.—Tolerably common resident.

Bull. N. O. C. 6, Oct, 1881, p. 232

Long Island Bird Notes N. T. Lawrence

8. *Nyctale acadica*. SAW-WHET OWL.—Mr. Osborne killed one of these birds on Montauk Point, November 20, 1885.

Auk, 2, July, 1885, p. 272

*Osborne*

Diligent and careful inquiry has failed to reveal the presence of any Acadian Owls. I know of no Ontario County specimens, though Rathbun mentions it as a rare bird in central New York. (List p. 27.)

*C. H. Wilder, Hayland, N. Y.*  
O. & O. X. July, 1885, p. 111

Long Island Bird Notes. Wm. Dutcher

17. *Nyctala acadica*. SAW-WHET OWL.—Giraud says of this Owl, "With us it is quite rare."\* My notes as given below would indicate, on the contrary, that it is common, at least in the winter months. December 6, 1884, Capt. Hubbard, of the Fire Island Life Saving Station, shot one on the beach, which he sent to me. One was sent to me from Merrick, December 31, 1884. Mr. W. F. Hendrickson, of Long Island City, one of my most earnest and reliable observers, writes me regarding this species as follows: "November 15, 1884, saw one with a gunner who had killed it near Train's Meadows, Queens Co. December 27, my brother found one, a female, at Ravenswood, Queens Co., which had been frozen. November 4, a friend shot one at Creedmore, Queens Co., and I saw one in his shop which he was mounting for a customer. It was also killed on the island. March 30, 1885, I found the feathers of one scattered about as though it had been killed and eaten by a cat or Hawk." Mr. Franklin, of Port Washington, Queens Co., informed me that on February 28, 1885, a small Owl had flown or fallen down the chimney flue into his library. He caught it alive and afterward liberated it. From his description of the bird it was undoubtedly this species.

Auk, 3, Oct., 1886, p. 440.

\* Birds of Long Island, p. 23.

*Nyctala acadica*. SAW-WHET OWL.—While walking on the upper part of Manhattan Island, above High Bridge, on the Harlem River, March 13,

1881, I saw a fine Saw-Whet Owl which alighted on a stump among some red cedars and afterwards flew freely about without apparent inconvenience, the day being dark and cloudy.—EDGAR A. MEARN'S, M. D., *Fort Snelling, Minn.* Auk, VII, Jan. 1890, p. 90-91.

The fire draws upward with a steady flame, brightening as the night grows darker and the stars come out one by one. It shines on the tree leaves overhead and moves them to a gentle fluttering by the current of hot air which it sends up; it lifts the shadows of the surrounding woods and sometimes lights the wings of a bat circling near. At times an Acadian owl may pass softly through the lighted space, or sit in the gloom just outside, making known its presence by one of its several noises. The best known note is the saw-whetting, from which it gets its name of saw-whet owl; this closely resembles the sound of filing an "up-and-down" mill saw, set in a frame. It also makes a whining noise, and the soft conversational co-co-co, co-co-co already mentioned. Besides these, I am told of a note resembling the tinkling of small bells and of a harsh, nasal ah-ah. Indeed, I have myself heard at night in the woods a sharp, harsh noise—which I was told was made by the saw-whet—that resembled this as much as anything, but the heaviness of sleep interfered with scientific accuracy, and in my journal I find merely the comment: "Not knowing the other noises I did not remember this." This bird undoubtedly breeds in the woods north of Katahdin, but in the latitude of Bangor I have never seen one earlier than Oct. 19 nor later than March 21. Between these dates they are not rare, being most frequently found in barns and out-houses, where they go for warmth and mice. What they eat when in the woods I do not know, never having seen

Vol. XXXIV no. 3. p. 43.

Feb. 6. 1890.

J. P. Hardy

## FOREST AND STREAM.

one which did not appear half starved, nor having found the feathers of any small bird or any sign of their catching bird, mouse or shrew; but I have known four of them to be picked up dead, apparently from starvation.

**Early Occurrence of the Saw-whet Owl.**— Believing that I have one of the earliest records of the Saw-whet Owl (*Cryptoglaux a. acadica*) for Long Island, I should like to record it.

On October 26, 1911, I was told that a "young owl" was killed on one of the streets of Elmhurst, Long Island. I looked it up and found it was a Saw-whet Owl. I secured it and it is now in the collection of the American Museum of Natural History.— HOWARTH S. BOYLE.

Arch. XXIX. Apr. 1912. p. 239.



*Northern Maine.*

March 27, while passing a large birch, noticed a hole about three feet from the ground. Examination proved it to contain a Saw-whet Owl, which we let remain.

April 6, I again visited the hole where we had discovered the Saw-whet Owl, and was agreeably surprised to find it tenanted as before with the addition of a set of two eggs; average dimensions 1.05 x 90.

*H. H. C. O. & O. IX. Jan. 1884. p. 9.*

**Correspondence**

*Editor of O. & O.:*

On the 6th of July last, I took a set of four eggs of the Saw-whet Owl. The eggs were placed in the deserted nest of a Woodpecker, in a stub about twelve feet up and within ten feet of a travelled highway.

This was the second set from the same nest. A set had been taken a week or ten days previous by a friend of mine. He was not able to give the exact date. I was unable to visit the nest again, but was informed by my friend that the bird soon laid a third set of four, which were allowed to hatch.

In both cases when taking the eggs, the old bird had to be taken from the nest by force. Both sets were perfectly fresh, and are now in my collection.

Birds are abundant here this winter, which is quite the reverse of last season when but very few were seen.

*Wallace Homer, Monson, Me.*  
**O. & O. Vol. 17, May 1892 p. 80**

**Nesting of the Saw-whet Owl.**

The nest of the Saw-whet Owl is considered quite a find and I have had the good fortune to take several sets, I will give some of my experience in that line, thinking it may interest the readers of the "O. & O." About five miles from this village is a tract of mixed land of 100 acres, more or less, composed of about three-fourths hard and one-fourth of soft wood timber, containing many growth trees and old stubs, a favorite resort for Hawks and Owls. Previous to this year I had taken two sets of Saw-whets in an old maple stub in this piece of woods. Last season found the nest in the same place, containing young birds. As this brood was raised unmolested, I thought my chances for taking a set from the same nest were excellent this season. After three visits to the stub this year I made up my mind that I should have to look in some other tree for my Saw-whets, as I had seen nothing of them and it was getting later than the usual time for their nests. I was thoroughly acquainted with this locality, but it is something of a task to search carefully a piece of timber of this extent, and after a long and diligent hunt I began to think that my collection would not be enriched by the eggs of *Nyctala Acadica*. On approaching an old beech stub I was suddenly surprised to see the round head of an Owl looking down at me from an old Woodpecker's hole twenty feet from the ground. At this sight my spirits went up and at the same time my coat and vest came off and I prepared to "shin" up to the nest. Perhaps some of you know how easy it is to shin a tree that the bark has peeled from and left smooth as a flag staff. Add to this the fact that the stub was two feet in diameter and it is not very surprising that I came down suddenly after an ascent of eight or ten feet. I also discovered after two trials that the tree would not be safe for anyone to climb to the top of, as it leaned quite a little and was nearly rotted off at the base. This put a different aspect on the matter, and I began to devise some way by which to get the eggs which I felt sure were waiting for me at the bottom of that old nest.

I decided that I should want at least a rope and an axe; so I went home and got these articles and returned with a man to assist me. The first thing was to put the rope around the tree and take a loop in it, then push the rope as far up the tree as we could reach with a pole, nearly twenty feet.

nd been past the nest since and do not know whether the Owl kept on laying in the same nest, but shall visit it in the spring and hope to find her at home. It was surprising how the Owl returned to the nest after being thrown off at least five times and robbed of her eggs three different times. Each time she followed the same course, crouching to the bottom of the nest and fighting for her treasures, and after being thrown off would dash past within a few inches of my head, trying to frighten me away.

I took a set of Red-bellied Nuthatch in much the same manner as the Owls' nest. It was in a shaky fir stub, about twenty feet up, and would not begin to bear my weight, so I took along a boy weighing about sixty pounds. I cut a small fir sapling, which reached nearly to the nest, and held it up against the stub while the boy scrambled up. He then rested on the top of the sapling while he whittled out the nest and took eight fresh eggs. In taking a set of broad-winged Hawk from a huge birch it was necessary to carry a twenty-five foot ladder a mile. Two fresh and handsomely marked eggs made this a very satisfactory piece of work. The way of the collector is hard and fraught with many difficult and dangerous climbs, but when success has crowned your efforts it is pleasant to think how some of your treasures were earned.

*Fred B. Spaulding.*

Lancaster, N.H.

**O. & O. Vol. 18, Aug. 1893 p. 112-113**

PROBABLE BREEDING OF THE ACADIAN OWL (*Nyctale acadica*) IN MASSACHUSETTS. — The capture of this species in the adult state is by no means of rare occurrence in Massachusetts, but its presence is generally detected in the winter months. Of its breeding so far south in New England I think there has hitherto been no instance recorded. We are now able, however, to note the capture of three specimens in the plumage of the so-called "*albifrons*." The first was taken in Newton, Mass., on June 28, 1876; and the second at Hingham, Mass., on July 5, 1876; the third was captured in one of the cells in the Penitentiary on Deer Island, Boston Harbor, on the 8th of the same month, by an inmate of the prison. These localities being some ten or fifteen miles apart, it would seem hardly probable that these three Owls belonged to the same brood. On April 4, 1877, a specimen in adult plumage was captured in the Penitentiary on Deer Island, where the above-mentioned immature specimen was taken. I am indebted to Mr. Wm. J. Knowlton, of Boston, for the above facts, and from him I obtained one of the young specimens. — RUTHVEN DEANE, Cambridge, Mass.

Bull. N. O. C. 2, July, 1877. p. 84.

BREEDING OF THE ACADIAN OWL IN EASTERN MASSACHUSETTS. — On June 4, 1880, I found a nest of the Acadian Owl (*Nyctale acadica*), containing five nearly fledged young, in a cedar tree, in the midst of a dense swamp in Braintree. The nest was an old nest of a Night Heron, repaired with a few leaves and feathers. From the size of the young birds it is evident that the eggs must have been laid about the end of April or very early in May. The young birds were clad in a mottled plumage—gray intermixed with a sprinkling of red. Close to this nest of the Acadian Owl was found the nest of a Long-eared Owl. I have never heard before of Owls of different species nesting so near each other. — N. A. FRANCIS, Brookline, Mass.

Bull. N. O. C. 6, July, 1881, p. 185.

Worcester Co. Mass

Nyctale acadica

"I have taken an Acadian Owl's nest with young this season" (Mr. A. Perry, letter June 5-1887) [Doubtless this nest was formed within a few miles of Worcester N. B.]

4. *Loxia curvirostra americana*, Coues. COMMON CROSSBILL.— Scattered irregularly all through the pine woods. Breeds at 7500 feet.
5. *Xanthocephalus icterocephalus*, Bd. YELLOW-HEADED BLACK-BIRD.— “At 9300 feet.”
6. *Corvus americanus*, Aud. COMMON CROW.— “At 9300 feet.” The Crows of Southwest Colorado have many a lesson to learn. Gun in hand, I have walked past within a few feet of half a dozen who merely honored me with an idle stare.
7. *Cypselus saxatilis*, Ridg. WHITE THROATED SWIFT.— “At 10,000 feet; breeds.”
8. *Ceryle alcyon*, Boie. BELTED KINGFISHER.— I have found it as high as 9500 feet. Breeds on all the lower rivers.
9. *Melanerpes torquatus*, Bp. LEWIS'S WOODPECKER.— Very common up to 7000 feet.

### BREEDING OF THE ACADIAN OWL (*NYCTALE ACADICA*) IN MASSACHUSETTS.

BY WILLIAM BREWSTER.

So far as I can ascertain, the single egg of the Acadian Owl which is preserved in the National collection at Washington is the only authentic example known. It accordingly gives me unusual pleasure to announce the recent acquisition of a fine set of fully identified specimens taken by Mr. W. Perham at Tyngsboro, Mass., April 5, 1881. Mr. Perham is probably already known to some of the readers of the Bulletin as a remarkably successful collector of Hawks and Owls. He takes many eggs of the Mottled Owl by hanging up artificial nests in suitable places in the woods. These “nests” are made from sections of hollow trunks boarded up at the open ends, with entrance-holes cut in the sides, and the Owls apparently find them quite to their taste for they freely appropriate them, both as roosting and nesting places.

Sometime late in March of the present year a pair of Saw-whets took possession of one which was nailed against the trunk of an oak in an extensive piece of woodland. No nest was made, the eggs being simply laid on a few leaves which squirrels

OWLS IN CONFINEMENT.—William Brewster reports in Bulletin a *Saw-whet Owl*, laying an egg (soft shell) while in confinement.

O. & O. VII. Oct. 1882. p. 163.

AN OWL'S EGG LAID IN CONFINEMENT.— The history of my Acadian Owl, given in a late number of this Bulletin,\* has an interesting sequel. On February 4, 1882, the bird (then but nine months old) astonished its friends—and perhaps itself as well—by laying an egg in the bottom of its cage. This, when first brought to me, was of normal size and shape, but soft and leathery to the touch, like the egg of a turtle. One side was fractured; and soon afterward the shell around the edges of the hole began to curl inward until, in a short time, the whole egg became shrivelled and distorted. Finally, in the course of a day or two, the shell crumbled and scaled off in small fragments leaving only the half-dried yolk and albumen.

Of course more eggs were looked for, and in anticipation, the floor of the cage was lined with saw-dust and a hollow stump even supplied to serve as a nesting-place. But despite these attentions the bird obstinately refused to gratify our hopes. For several days after the removal of her egg she was restless and irritable, continually flying from perch to perch, and fiercely attacking any one who ventured to approach her. Indeed, it was two or three weeks before she recovered her wonted gentleness.

I cannot now recall an instance of the breeding of Owls in confinement, but the present occurrence would apparently indicate that it might be accomplished with Saw-whets, which, as captives, seem to be more animated and cheerful than most of the members of their sedate family.—WILLIAM BREWSTER, Cambridge, Mass.

Bull. N. O. C. 7, July, 1882, p. 183-184.

145

The Nest of the Saw-whet Owl.—In April, 1881, I was camped near the base of Mt. Katahdin, while on a trip in that section in search of the eggs of our Birds of Prey. The weather at that time being quite cold, it was necessary to frequently replenish the fire. About 3 o'clock in the morning I arose for that purpose, and noticed a small object moving around amongst the remains of our last meal. Further investigation proved it to be some kind of small Owl, gleaning among the bones for stray morsels of meat. On my near approach it flew into a tall fir, and was hid from sight. During breakfast I again saw it, coming down to within a few feet of us, when, apparently seeing us for the first time, it again retreated to the fir. I then saw it was a Saw-whet Owl, and it seemed to be in no wise affected by the light. At night one of my companions informed me he had seen a pair of small Owls sitting together in an immense birch, but no nest could be found.

The next morning we struck camp, and moved toward the summit of the mountain. In about a week we returned over the same route and again camped at the place just mentioned. On the second night I was surprised to see the little Owl come as before. We concluded he must have a nest near, and the next day, April 30, we commenced to search for the nest. In the afternoon one of my guides was so fortunate as to discover the Owl going into a hole made by a Woodpecker, in a large birch. He looked in but could see nothing, and had stopped up the entrance with moss, so that I might see it just as he found it. On going to it and removing the moss I found the entrance quite large, having been slit by some animal trying to effect an entrance. Carefully cutting away the bark below the hole exposed the nest, which was merely a mixture of fine chips and small feathers of the Grouse. It contained the old Owl and three young ones.

I was disappointed at not securing any eggs, but felt amply repaid in viewing one page in the life-history of this little Owl, who sometimes visits me in my more southern home.

The young Owls were wonderfully droll-looking little fellows, and as they gazed at me with upturned eyes from down in the heart of that canoe birch, in the middle of that immense forest, stretching away for miles, remote from any human habitation, I thought that single look was worth hours of gazing at prepared specimens, inclosed in mahogany cases, in our scientific museums. The formation of a collection does not constitute all there is in the study of ornithology; and around the memory of the scene in that old Maine forest are clustered affections which time cannot destroy.—F. H. CARPENTER, Rehoboth, Mass.

Auk, I, Jan., 1884. p. 94.

121

A Saw-whet Owl's Nest.

As the nest of this bird (*Nyctale acadica*) is quite rare, I will describe one which I found this season, thinking it may interest some of the readers of the O. AND O. The 16th of May found me in a large tract of woods hunting for a nest of a pair of Pileated Woodpeckers which I knew were breeding in the vicinity. Although I was unsuccessful in finding what I was particularly in search of, I stumbled upon a nest which pleased me far more.

Out of curiosity I visited a stub from which a set of Pileated Woodpecker's eggs were taken two years ago. The large round hole from which the eggs had been taken was visible at some distance, and after passing behind some trees I was much surprised to see this hole filled with some grey substance. Upon a nearer approach I discovered this grey substance to be the head of a Saw-whet Owl. I rapped on the stub and shouted to drive her from the nest but she only sat there and stared, evidently at a loss to determine what sort of an animal I was.

Finding that I could not frighten the bird from the nest, I stripped off my coat and prepared to "shin" the tree. This proved to be no easy task as the tree was two feet in diameter and the nest was fifteen feet from the ground and there was not a branch on it. As soon as I began to ascend the tree the owl flew off and lit in another tree about fifteen feet distant, from where she silently watched me. After considerable hard work I reached the hole and was delighted to find five eggs at the bottom of it. The hole was about a foot and a half deep, and was lined with a few feathers. I could not tell whether these were owl's feathers or the feathers of some of its victims. I could not reach into the hole with my coat on and could not carry my collecting box without it, so I had to bring the eggs down one at a time in my mouth. The eggs were chalky white in color, though pretty dirty, and were quite fresh. They measure about 1.20 x .92.

O. & O. XII. Oct. 1837 p. /74

General Notes.

Another Record of the Breeding of the Saw-whet Owl (*Nyctale acadica*) in Eastern Massachusetts.—As there are still but few records of the breeding of the Saw-whet Owl in eastern Massachusetts, I take pleasure in adding one more.

On July 3, 1803, Mr. Gerrit S. Miller, Jr., and I were setting a line of traps in a heavy white pine swamp that lies along Red Brook in the town of Wareham, Mass. We noticed a large old pine stump which was broken off at about 25 feet above the ground and full of Woodpeckers' holes, and pounded on it. We had pounded but once or twice when a Saw-whet Owl popped her head out of the uppermost hole and kept it there motionless, although I fired at her three times with my pistol. The third shot killed her and she fell back into the hole.

On taking the bird out, I found there was a nest containing seven eggs. The nest was quite bulky and composed of gray moss (*Usnea*) interwoven with small pieces of fibrous bark, a few pine needles, small twigs, and feathers of the bird herself. The hole in which the nest was found was 18 feet from the ground and about 8 inches deep.

In the nest besides the eggs was a half eaten red-backed mouse (*Evo-  
tomys gapperi*).

Three of the eggs were in various stages of incubation, one being on the point of hatching,—in fact the young bird had already cracked the shell. Three were addled, and one was perfectly fresh.

On dissecting the old bird we found that she had laid her full set of eggs. Her stomach contained the other half of the *Evo-  
tomys*, which she was apparently eating when we disturbed her.

I believe the only other records for Massachusetts are:—

'Probable breeding of the Acadian Owl (*Nyctale acadica*) in Massachusetts.' R. Deane, Bull. Nutt. Orn. Club, Vol. II, July, 1877, p. 84. Three specimens in first plumage are recorded,—one, taken June 28, 1876, at Newton, Mass., one at Hingham, Mass., July 5, 1876, and one July 8, 1876.

'Breeding of the Acadian Owl in Eastern Massachusetts.' N. A. Francis Bull. Nutt. Orn. Club, Vol. VI, July, 1881, p. 185. Nest with five young found June 4, 1880, at Braintree, Mass.

'Breeding of the Acadian Owl (*Nyctale acadica*) in Massachusetts.' Bull. Nutt. Orn. Club, Vol. VI, July, 1881, pp. 143-145. Account by William Brewster of nest with four eggs taken at Tyngsboro', Mass., April 5, 1881, by W. B. Perham. *Ibid.*, Jan., 1882, pp. 23-25. Additional notes on nesting at Tyngsboro', by W. B. Perham, who found seven nests in all.

'Ornithologist and Oologist,' Vol. XIV, Oct., 1889, pp. 155-156. Record of nest with four eggs, well advanced in incubation, taken at Dunstable, Mass., May 1, 1889, by C. W. Swallow.

In connection with this see also account of four nests found at Holland Patent, N. Y., by Egbert Bagg, in 'Ornithologist and Oologist,' Vol. XII, No. 4, April, 1887, p. 57.—OUTRAM BANGS, Wareham, Mass.

Auk XI. Jan. 1894 p. 77-78

Taking out my box I packed the four eggs snugly away, and found that the nest was made of feathers, the top of chips, and that it contained part of a mouse for future use.

The nest was about six inches from the hole, and it may possibly have been a Flicker's old nest, but I hardly think so.

I succeeded in blowing the eggs fairly, but incubation was pretty well advanced. They resemble the eggs of other owls very much, but are not as spherical as those of most species. The measurements are as follows:

1.25 x .99.

C. W. Swallow.

wn-headed  
ite near

156

ORNITH

Taking out my box I packed the four eggs snugly away, and found that the nest was made of feathers, the top of chips, and that it contained part of a mouse for future use.

The nest was about six inches from the hole, and it may possibly have been a Flicker's old nest, but I hardly think so.

I succeeded in blowing the eggs fairly, but incubation was pretty well advanced. They resemble the eggs of other owls very much, but are not as spherical as those of most species. The measurements are as follows:

1.32 x 1.05, 1.33 x 1.04, 1.30 x 1.03, 1.25 x .99.

C. W. Swallow.

Dunstable, Mass.

O. & O. XIV. Oct. 1889 p. 155-156

five nests found in 1888, one was on the uplands, and four in stumps standing in or close to water.

Of six nests with eggs found in 1889, three were in stumps standing in water, and three more in stumps close to water.

The birds also commenced to line their holes in four other stumps, and to dig holes in two more in 1889, of which two stood in water and four close by; a nest with young was also found in a stump in the creek, bottom standing in water.

Thus of twenty-two nesting sites which have come under my observation, eighteen stood in or near water, and four were on the uplands, thus showing a great preference for damp localities. Now let other Southern collectors come forward and say what is the Nuthatches' preference in their localities.

C. S. Brinley.

Raleigh, N. C.

## A Saw-whet Owl's Nest.

As the nest of this bird (*Nyctale acadica*) is quite rare, I will describe one which I found this season, thinking it may interest some of the readers of the O. AND O. The 16th of May found me in a large tract of woods hunting for a nest of a pair of Pileated Woodpeckers which I knew were breeding in the vicinity. Although I was unsuccessful in finding what I was particularly in search of, I stumbled upon a nest which pleased me far more.

Out of curiosity I visited a stub from which a set of Pileated Woodpecker's eggs were taken two years ago. The large round hole from which the eggs had been taken was visible at some distance, and after passing behind some trees I was much surprised to see this hole filled with some grey substance. Upon a nearer approach I discovered the head of a Saw-whet and shouted she only sat the loss to determine

Finding that from the nest, I compared to "shin" an easy task as the

and the nest was and there was no I began to ascend lit in another tree from where she considerable had was delighted to it. The hole was and was lined with feathers of some reach into the hole not carry my gun had to bring the mouth. The egg though pretty They measure about

ORNITHOLOGIST.

155

### Nesting of the Saw-whet or Acadian Owl.

On May 1, 1889, I started out determined to take a look for hawks, and also to keep my eyes open for signs of nests of the Crow, Ruffed Grouse, Woodpeckers, or other early breeders. I first struck out for a small swamp, in which were some large pine and oak trees, and a few hemlocks. I went up to two nests here, and found both filled with leaves, evidently the home of squirrels. I then started out for higher land, and, after tramping for about two hours, and going up to a number of nests in pine trees with the

O. & O. XII, Oct. 1887 p. 74

### General Notes.

Another Record of the Breeding of the Saw-whet Owl (*Nyctale acadica*) in Eastern Massachusetts.—As there are still but few records of the breeding of the Saw-whet Owl in eastern Massachusetts, I take pleasure in adding one more.

On July 3, 1803, Mr. Gerrit S. Miller, Jr., and I were setting a line of traps in a heavy white pine swamp that lies along Red Brook in the town of Wareham, Mass. We noticed a large old pine stump which was broken off at about 25 feet above the ground and full of Woodpeckers' holes, and pounded on it. We had pounded but once or twice when a Saw-whet Owl popped her head out of the uppermost hole and kept it there motionless, although I fired at her three times with my pistol. The third shot killed her and she fell back into the hole.

On taking the bird out, I found there was a nest containing seven eggs. The nest was quite bulky and composed of gray moss (*Usnea*) interwoven with small pieces of fibrous bark, a few pine needles, small twigs, and feathers of the bird herself. The hole in which the nest was found was 18 feet from the ground and about 8 inches deep.

In the nest besides the eggs was a half eaten red-backed mouse (*Eutamias gapperi*).

Three of the eggs were in various stages of incubation, one being on the point of hatching,—in fact the young bird had already cracked the shell. Three were addled, and one was perfectly fresh.

On dissecting the old bird we found that she had laid her full set of eggs. Her stomach contained the other half of the *Eutamias*, which she was apparently eating when we disturbed her.

I believe the only other records for Massachusetts are:—

'Probable breeding of the Acadian Owl (*Nyctale acadica*) in Massachusetts.' R. Deane, Bull. Nutt. Orn. Club, Vol. II, July, 1877, p. 84. Three specimens in first plumage are recorded,—one, taken June 28, 1876, at Newton, Mass., one at Hingham, Mass., July 5, 1876, and one July 8, 1876.

'Breeding of the Acadian Owl in Eastern Massachusetts.' N. A. Francis Bull. Nutt. Orn. Club, Vol. VI, July, 1881, p. 185. Nest with five young found June 4, 1880, at Braintree, Mass.

'Breeding of the Acadian Owl (*Nyctale acadica*) in Massachusetts.' Bull. Nutt. Orn. Club, Vol. VI, July, 1881, pp. 143-145. Account by William Brewster of nest with four eggs taken at Tyngsboro', Mass., April 5, 1881, by W. B. Perham. *Ibid.*, Jan., 1882, pp. 23-25. Additional notes on nesting at Tyngsboro', by W. B. Perham, who found seven nests in all.

'Ornithologist and Oologist,' Vol. XIV, Oct., 1889, pp. 155-156. Record of nest with four eggs, well advanced in incubation, taken at Dunstable, Mass., May 1, 1889, by C. W. Swallow.

In connection with this see also account of four nests found at Holland Patent, N. Y., by Egbert Bagg, in 'Ornithologist and Oologist,' Vol. XII, No. 4, April, 1887, p. 57.—OUTRAM BANGS, Wareham, Mass.

Auk XI, Jan. 1894 p. 77-78

Taking out my box I packed the four eggs snugly away, and found that the nest was made of feathers, the top of chips, and that it contained part of a mouse for future use.

The nest was about six inches from the hole, and it may possibly have been a Flicker's old nest, but I hardly think so.

I succeeded in blowing the eggs fairly, but incubation was pretty well advanced. They resemble the eggs of other owls very much, but are not as spherical as those of most species. The measurements are as follows: 1.32 x 1.05, 1.33 x 1.04, 1.30 x 1.03, 1.25 x .99.

C. W. Swallow.

Dunstable, Mass.

## The Preference of the Brown-headed Nuthatch for a Nesting Site near Water.

Mr. Davie, in his *Nests and Eggs of North American Birds*, records the finding of a nest in a hole in a stump, standing in a pond, by Mr. Noble of Savannah, Ga., but does not otherwise indicate the preference of the Brown-headed Nuthatch (*Sitta pusilla*) as to high or low localities, and this leads me to give my experience, which is, that when the nesting time comes, the place to look for nests is along the creek banks, around the edges of ponds and such places. One nest found in 1885 was in a fence post on a hill some thirty yards above a swamp.

Of three nests found in 1887 two were on the uplands, and one in a stump standing in water.

Of five nests found in 1888, one was on the uplands, and four in stumps standing in or close to water.

Of six nests with eggs found in 1889, three were in stumps standing in water, and three more in stumps close to water.

The birds also commenced to line their holes in four other stumps, and to dig holes in two more in 1889, of which two stood in water and four close by; a nest with young was also found in a stump in the creek, bottom standing in water.

Thus of twenty-two nesting sites which have come under my observation, eighteen stood in or near water, and four were on the uplands, thus showing a great preference for damp localities. Now let other Southern collectors come forward and say what is the Nuthatches' preference in their localities.

C. S. Brimley.

Raleigh, N. C.

THE  
ORNITHOLOGIST  
AND  
OÖLOGIST.

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF  
NATURAL HISTORY,  
ESPECIALLY DEVOTED TO THE STUDY OF  
BIRDS,  
THEIR NESTS AND EGGS.

DESIGNED AS A MEANS FOR THE INTERCHANGE OF NOTES AND  
OBSERVATIONS ON BIRD AND INSECT LIFE.

F. H. CARPENTER, Managing Editor.  
REHOBOTH, MASS.

J. PARKER NORRIS, Oölogical Editor,  
204 SOUTH SEVENTH STREET, PHILADELPHIA, PENN.

FRANK B. WEBSTER, Publisher.  
409 Washington St., Boston, Mass.

Nesting of the Saw Whet Owl.

BY EGBERT BAGG, UTICA, N. Y.

Regarding the breeding of the Saw Whet Owl, (*Nyctale acadica*) but little has been recorded. Up to the time of Baird, Brewer and Ridgway's great work, the nest of young birds found by Audubon near Natchez, and that with eggs, (of which a single specimen was preserved in the Smithsonian Institution,) taken by Mr. R. Christ, at Nazareth, Pa., seem to have been all the recorded nests. Since then Mr. W. Perham, of Tyngsboro, Mass., has examined no less than seven nests, mostly in artificially arranged hollows put up for the purpose of attracting the owls, from only one of which he seems to have secured a set of eggs, that belonging to Mr. Wm. Brewster. From some of the others he took young birds, one of which while in the possession of Mr. Brewster, laid a single egg, not fully developed. Mr. N. A. Francis, of Brookline, Mass., records a nest with young birds in an old Heron's nest, which is probably a most unusual location; and finally, Mr. F. H. Carpenter found a nest of young birds at the base of Mt. Kathadin, Maine.

To these few records I have the pleasure of adding four more, and to these five eggs, two sets of seven each; and I can hardly doubt that the particulars of the successful search of the Spring of 1886 will be interesting to the readers of THE ORNITHOLOGIST AND OÖLOGIST.

Dr. Wm. L. Ralph and the writer have for several years had an alliance offensive and defensive in collecting eggs and birds of our neighborhood, and when, during the seasons of 1884 and 1885, the Doctor, who was working at that time from Holland Patent, about twelve miles north of Utica, on the R. W. & O. R. R., found that these little owls were comparatively common in that locality, we determined to make a strong effort to find their nests; and to that end employed a man by the day to patrol the woods and swamps from the first of March, for that particular purpose.

As Dr. Ralph was in the South at the time, the matter was left in my hands, and I had the pleasure and honor of collecting the first full, normal set of eggs of this bird. On the 27th of March, 1886, I received a postal card from our man, stating that he had found a Great-Horned Owl's nest, (*Bubo virginianus*), and I went to Holland Patent to collect the eggs. During the trip the man told me that he had found seven places where the Saw Whets were spending their time; and that on the 12th of March he had found one of these owls in a hole, and had no doubt that she would build there; but that he had visited her on the 25th of March, and that although the bird was still there, he found no signs of nesting. On the 6th of April he wrote me that he had called on her again on the day before, (April 5th) and that there were six eggs in the nest. On April 7th I was at Holland Patent, and although it was about as disagreeable a trip, as regards weather, as I ever made, rubber boots kept the mud and water from my feet, and a rubber coat the rain from my back. It was a hard tramp through the mud and rain, loaded with gun, climbing irons, ropes, etc., but at last we reached our destination, and found, in high and dry woods of hard wood timber, with a few hemlocks scattered among them, and about five rods from the open field, a dead maple stub, and in it at a height of twenty-two feet from the ground, a deserted woodpecker's hole. (This hole had been deserted by its original occupants for at least two seasons, for in 1885 it contained a nest of flying squirrels).

It took several hard blows upon the stub to produce any effect; but suddenly, like a transformation scene in a play, the hole at which I was gazing disappeared, and in its place was the flat face of a little owl, fastened against the side of the stub. That was exactly the effect produced, as the hole was perfectly round, two inches in diameter, and the bird's face exactly filled it. There she sat and no amount of

New York (Onesida Co.)

*Nyctale acadica*

1886 lays 6 to 7 eggs

April see Birds of Onesida Co, N. Y. by Ralph and Bagg; pp. 120-121.

51

pounding upon the stub produced any further effect, except to make her roll her eyes. My companion therefore fastened on the irons and began to climb the stub, which shook and swayed with his weight, but still the bird did not move until his face was almost on a level with her's; when several threatening motions of his hand at last induced her to fly out and alight on the nearest perch, the horizontal limb of a small hemlock, about a rod from the nest. There she sat, perfectly immovable during the three-quarters of an hour that we spent in examining the nest, and immediately after my companion descended to the ground, she flew back into the hole.

I must not forget to mention one curious fact. When the bird's face first appeared at the hole, I exclaimed: "Why! it is a young bird." The dark face and the white eyebrows were very marked, but immediately upon her alighting upon the branch, in the full light, this entirely disappeared, and her face was the ordinary face of an old bird. Exactly the same effect was noticed with one of the others mentioned further on.

We found the hole to be a foot deep and eight inches in diameter at the bottom. There was no nest except the rotten chips left by the woodpeckers and a few of the owl's feathers—probably accidental. There were seven eggs, pure, dead white, without gloss or polish. They were nearly the same size at each end, and about "oval" in shape, according to Plate xvi., figure 11 of Ridgway's Nomenclature of Colors and Ornithologist's Compendium. They measure as follows: 1.18 x .95; 1.13 x .96; 1.19 x .96; 1.18 x .97; 1.16 x .98; 1.14 x .99 and 1.17 x 1.00. They were variously advanced in incubation, though none of them were very much incubated, showing that the bird had been sitting since she began to lay. The consistency of the albumen was particularly viscid, and the yolk small and light colored.

The other nests were so exactly similar to this one that a short description of them is all that is necessary.

The second nest was also found near Holland Patent, on April 21st, 1886, in a woodpecker's hole, in a dead stub, forty feet from the ground, and contained five young birds and one egg, which was just on the point of hatching.

The third nest was taken the same day, near the Trenton Falls of the West Canada Creek, in a woodpecker's hole in a stub, twenty feet from the ground. The hole was nine inches deep and nine inches in diameter at the bottom; and was lined either purposely or accidentally with a

few feathers, dry birch leaves, and chips left by the original architects. It contained seven eggs, exactly similar to the first set, and measuring as follows: 1.18 x .97; 1.18 x .98; 1.24 x .98; 1.24 x .98; 1.25 x .98; 1.21 x .99 and 1.23 x 1.00.

The fourth nest was found April 30th, 1886, about one mile north of Gang Mills, Herkimer County, in a deserted woodpecker's hole, in a stub, fifty feet from the ground, in a heavy swamp; and contained seven eggs within a day of hatching.

From this very successful Spring's work, it seems that we are either particularly fortunate in our location for studying the nesting of this bird, or what is more likely, that the nests have not been more often found simply because they have not been systematically and diligently sought for.

With the data furnished in this article I have no doubt some of the readers of THE ORNITHOLOGIST AND OÖLOGIST, if willing to do the hard and disagreeable work of searching the swamps in March and April, will be able to add to the records of the Saw Whet.

April 1887

cro vol 12.

Onesida County, New York,  
William L. Ralph & Egbert Bagg

*Nyctala acadica*.— Our fifth nest of this species was taken near Holland Patent April 30, 1889, from a hollow 65 feet from the ground in the dead limb of a living tree. The clutch (which was probably not completed) consisted of four fresh eggs

Atk. VII. July, 1890, p. 231.

Mass (Hyannis)

*Nyctale acadica*

1888

Dec. 15 Shot one on Great Island in the pine woods on the east side of the deer forest. My attention was attracted by the incessant, excited, and unusually rapid and abbreviated cries of several Red-billed Nuthatches, and while watching them and trying to make out the cause of their behavior I made out, <sup>in their midst</sup> rather slowly and uncertainly at first, a small Owl sitting very erect on the horizontal branch of a large *Pinus rigida* about six feet out from the trunk & fifteen feet above the ground.

#### A Rainy Day in the Woods.

Saturday, December 26, 1891, we shouldered our guns and pocketed our note-books, and started off for a tramp through the woods to see what we could collect and note in the bird line. By *we* I mean my cousin Frank and myself.

It was cloudy and rather dark and rainy, just the day one would expect to see Owls and such, and therefore we concluded to go first to a strip of woods called Ober's, and then through a large, dark woods and swamp called the Park. Birds (as usual here) were scarce, except, of course, the usual amount of Crows and Chickadees. By the way, if it were not for the latter the woods in winter would seem very lonesome to me. They always seem so sociable, and welcome you to the woods at all seasons.

We had been walking on the road for awhile when I happened to glance into the woods, and my eye caught sight of a small object on a pine tree, which looked some like a bird but more like a pine knot. I kept my eyes on it, however, and thought I saw it move. We went closer and found, sure enough, it was a bird, and one we had been looking for, a Saw-whet Owl. He seemed very tame, so I thought we might capture him without shooting. First I tried walking slowly around behind him with a long pole I had out to hit him with. As fast as I walked he would turn his head until it got around exactly the opposite way from what it should be. I thought then of the piece I read in the O. & O. about walking around and around an owl until he twisted his neck off. But I found this was not that kind of an Owl, for just then, almost too quick for me to see him, he turned his head way around the other way. Finding

I could not get out of his sight, to approach, I got my cousin to go around in front of him and execute a war-dance to attract his attention, then I walked carefully up behind and tapped him (the Owl) on the head, and in a minute more he was in my hands, looking surprised and shocked at such treatment. We thought of keeping him alive at first, but finding he was going to be troublesome we decided it would be better to carry him home in a cone.

The next birds noted were Golden-crowned Kinglets, in a flock of six or eight, of which we captured two. Soon after this we noted a large flock of Juncos and also a flock of Red-polls. We captured one from the former and none from latter flock. In coming back through the woods we started one Ruffed Grouse which I fired at but failed to get.

In the course of the day we overturned an old stump and in it there was a large butterfly, which when released seemed to be as lively as though it were the middle of summer. Is this not an unusual occurrence? I always thought they died in the fall.\*

We spent the rest of the day and evening in my workshop, mounting our specimens.

Birds have been very scarce here this fall and winter so far. We saw more on this trip than I have seen all the rest of the winter put together; and what we thought would be rather a dreary, wet trip turned out to be a very pleasant one, in spite of cloudiness and occasional showers. As I write this the Saw-whet stands on the mantel, all wound with string, staring at me as though he knew just what I was writing about him.

C. E. Brown.

Beverly, Mass.

\* Not at all an unusual occurrence. The family *Vanessa* often hibernate in stone heaps and exposed buildings, and the first butterflies of the spring are these insects, which have been warmed by the approach of the sun.—ED.

The Owl as usual turned its head  
when I moved following me  
with its eyes which were opened  
to thin in last extent. Blowing  
it kept perfectly undisturbed. It  
had a gray, weather-beaten  
look like a scale of bark.  
Its feathers were compressed & it  
appeared very long & slender as  
much as that was just it  
for a gray legs until I shot  
and picked it up. How small  
the chance of finding such a  
creature in an extensive forest  
forest without the old talk spoke  
of the most of shell water! Even had  
of known the tree it was in I  
might have looked on before  
before detecting it. It was fully  
as difficult to see as a Red  
Waxbill's nest.  
I gave the specimen to E. B. Cory.

#### A Rainy Day in the Woods.

Saturday, December 26, 1891, we shouldered our guns and pocketed our note-books, and started off for a tramp through the woods to see what we could collect and note in the bird line. By *we* I mean my cousin Frank and myself.

It was cloudy and rather dark and rainy, just the day one would expect to see Owls and such, and therefore we concluded to go first to a strip of woods called Ober's, and then through a large, dark woods and swamp called the Park. Birds (as usual here) were scarce, except, of course, the usual amount of Crows and Chickadees. By the way, if it were not for the latter the woods in winter would seem very lonesome to me. They always seem so sociable, and welcome you to the woods at all seasons.

We had been walking on the road for awhile when I happened to glance into the woods, and my eye caught sight of a small object on a pine tree, which looked some like a bird but more like a pine knot. I kept my eyes on it, however, and thought I saw it move. We went closer and found, sure enough, it was a bird, and one we had been looking for, a Saw-whet Owl. He seemed very tame, so I thought we might capture him without shooting. First I tried walking slowly around behind him with a long pole I had cut to hit him with. As fast as I walked he would turn his head until it got around exactly the opposite way from what it should be. I thought then of the piece I read in the O. & O. about walking around and around an owl until he twisted his neck off. But I found this was not that kind of an Owl, for just then, almost too quick for me to see him, he turned his head way around the other way. Finding

I could not get out of his sight, to approach, I got my cousin to go around in front of him and execute a war-dance to attract his attention, then I walked carefully up behind and tapped him (the Owl) on the head, and in a minute more he was in my hands, looking surprised and shocked at such treatment. We thought of keeping him alive at first, but finding he was going to be troublesome we decided it would be better to carry him home in a cone.

The next birds noted were Golden-crowned Kinglets, in a flock of six or eight, of which we captured two. Soon after this we noted a large flock of Juncos and also a flock of Red-polls. We captured one from the former and none from latter flock. In coming back through the woods we started one Ruffed Grouse which I fired at but failed to get.

In the course of the day we overturned an old stump and in it there was a large butterfly, which when released seemed to be as lively as though it were the middle of summer. Is this not an unusual occurrence? I always thought they died in the fall.\*

We spent the rest of the day and evening in my workshop, mounting our specimens.

Birds have been very scarce here this fall and winter so far. We saw more on this trip than I have seen all the rest of the winter put together; and what we thought would be rather a dreary, wet trip turned out to be a very pleasant one, in spite of cloudiness and occasional showers. As I write this the Saw-whet stands on the mantel, all wound with string, staring at me as though he knew just what I was writing about him.

C. E. Brown.

Beverly, Mass.

\* Not at all an unusual occurrence. The family *Vanessa* often hibernate in stone heaps and exposed buildings, and the first butterflies of the spring are these insects, which have been warmed by the approach of the sun.—ED.



*Notes from Calais, Maine*

In the last of the Winter quite a number of Saw-whet Owls were found dead, in most cases within or near some barn or other building, where they evidently killed themselves by flying against the walls, as in one instance the Owl was seen in the act of striking. In other cases the Owls were found in some open field, or where there was but few trees. All the birds I examined fairly swarmed with parasites. Is it not possible that these parasites, combined with the scarcity of food during the past severe Winter, so enfeebled the birds that a very slight blow while flying about would kill them or that in some cases they literally starved to death? A few Richardson's Owls were taken.—*Louis M. Todd.*

O. & O. X. June. 1885. p. 95.

*Notes.*

During the last three years we have had reported a noticeable number of instances where the Acadian Owl has been found dead during the winter. Why is it?

O & O. XIV. Feb. 1889 p. 29

Capture of an Acadian Owl under Peculiar Circumstances.

On the evening of January 21st, as I was passing through Main St., I was startled by something passing with the swiftness of a snowball, but with the silence of a moth, close to my ear, and I turned in time to see the unknown object strike the glass door of the store I was then passing, and fall to the ground. Perceiving that it was a bird of some kind, I captured it under my hat, and it proved to be a specimen of the Acadian Owl (*Nyctale acadica*), which I kept captive. The little fellow was very fearless and would strike viciously at my hand whenever I put it into

his quarters, but, as he refused to eat, he died within two days of the time of his capture. This owl is apparently more destitute of sight during the day than others of his relatives which I have had in confinement and was very wild, spending most of the night in beating himself against the wires of his cage. I think it probable that, while passing over the city, he was attracted and dazzled by the bright lights, which caused his untimely capture.

*Harry G. White.*

Taunton, Mass. O. & O. XIV, May. 1889 p. 77

1860. *Out of Door Papers, IX.* By Famin P. Hardy - Notes on *Bubo virginianus* and *Nyctala acadica* - *For. & Stream*. Vol. 34, Jan 23. p. 4. File under *N. acadica*.

1363. *A Feathered Waif.* *Ibid.*, No. 8, Sept. 15, p. 144.—A young Sawwhet Owl (*Nyctala acadica*) captured on a vessel in Lake Superior. *For. & Stream*, Vol. XXIX

1956. *Eggs of Nyctale acadica.* By C. W. Swallow. *Ibid*, No. 9, Sept., 1889, pp. 67-68. *The Loon*, Vol. 1.

1078. *Acadian Owl.* By O. W. R. *Ibid.*, Mch. 19, p. 145. *For. & Stream*. XXIV

**Something about Owls.**  
**O. O. Ormsbee, Montpelier, Vt.**

Of the Saw-Whet Owl, also rare below the fortieth parallel, twenty-two stomachs were examined. Seventeen contained Mice, one a Sparrow, one insects, and three were empty.

O. & O. Vol. 18, Oct, 1893 p. 138

the swamp, in immense numbers. A thorough exploration of the swamp would no doubt have added largely to the list of Water Birds, but I could not afford the time and labor necessary to accomplish even a partial exploration after the birds had begun breeding.

---

NOTES ON THE HABITS AND CHANGES OF PLUMAGE OF THE ACADIAN OWL (*NYCTALE ACADICA*), WITH SOME ADDITIONAL RECORDS OF ITS BREEDING IN MASSACHUSETTS.

BY WILLIAM BREWSTER.

In the Bulletin for July, 1881, I gave an account of the breeding of the Acadian Owl at Tyngsboro', Massachusetts, with a description of a set of eggs taken there by Mr. Perham on April 5. Early in June of the same season Mr. Perham sent me a brood of four young Saw-whets which he had taken from the nest about the 15th of the preceding month. They were all in the plumage of *N. "albifrons,"* and showed little individual variation, save in respect to size, the two females being slightly larger than their brothers. In their fresh, silky feathering they were beautiful little creatures, the warm sepia-brown of the upper parts harmonizing well with the rich fulvous beneath, and their white foreheads showing in strong contrast with both. Nor were their manners less engaging than their plumage, for, unlike most Owls, they were perfectly gentle from the first, never attempting to bite or scratch those who handled them. With each other they were really affectionate, often going through a caressing performance with their bills, and showing a mutual forbearance at meal-times which was very pleasing. They eat all kinds of meat with avidity, but seemed especially fond of mice. The latter were invariably skinned and the flesh torn in shreds and devoured, the skins being swallowed afterwards as dessert. I often saw them eject those peculiar pellets of bones, fur, and other indigestible fragments which all Owls and many Hawks are in the habit of depositing