

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.*

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.*

Aggressive Screech Owls.—Mrs. John W. Ames of Cambridge has kindly given me permission to publish the following account of an interesting experience which she had with some Screech Owls at Concord, Massachusetts, in June, 1906. I give it in her own words as follows:—

"I came to Concord to the Manse on June 14. A day or two after my arrival I walked down the avenue after supper and as I stood near the

gate an owl hooted and flew close by my head, and then, after a minute, flew back again. I thought nothing of it, until, a few evenings later, my cook came in much frightened and said she had been hit in the head by a bat. She had been about where I was when the owl flew past me, and her description of the sound it made seemed to make it more probable that it was an owl than a bat. A few days later she was struck again as she walked down the avenue, and both times the skin was broken in several places on the side of her head, and the blow was severe enough to be painful for some days. We soon heard from all our neighbors stories of how, as they passed our gate, the owl flew out and struck them, and almost every evening we could hear some signal of distress from the unwary passers-by, such as, 'Look out for the bird!' or 'What is it? Is it a bat?' One man, I was told, had his eyelids seriously cut.

"One evening as I sat in the house I heard what seemed to be an unusual disturbance among the owls, and I wondered if the young ones might be learning to fly. So I walked down about half way to the gate, with a friend, taking the precaution to put hoods over our heads. We stood there for a few minutes, listening, and then, as it was hot, I dropped back my hood. In an instant, with an angry cry, the owl struck me on the side of the forehead, leaving three or four scratches. I had no time to see the bird, but some days later I had a fairly good view of it, as it flew over me to an elm tree on the hill opposite our house. It seemed to me then to have the appearance and usual size of the Screech Owls which we see often about here.

"One evening, about June 25, a number of people came up, protected by baseball masks or hoods, to investigate the whereabouts of the owl's nest, which appeared to be in the clump of trees along the wall at the foot of the hill, and directly opposite our gate. Two boys in the party threw stones at the trees to start out the owls, and the bird showed off as usual, striking several persons in the head. But the next morning, Mr. Ferguson, who keeps a tub of water for his cow under the trees where the owls seemed to live, brought in the body of an owl which had apparently been drowned, as it was found in the tub. Nobody knows anything of the manner of its death and the boys, whom I questioned, said they did not, to their knowledge, hit any of the owls. But I could not help feeling that the poor bird had been struck by one of their stones, and fallen, stunned, into the water. Since then we have heard nothing of the owls except what appeared to be an unwonted crying of the little ones for the next week or two, and I supposed that they were hungry, for, though they could fly, they probably were not yet trained to find their own food."

I have some further notes concerning this family of owls from Mrs. Alfred Worcester of Waltham who, in company with several friends, visited the Manse on the evening of June 26. The party had provided themselves with fencing masks, which proved useful, as will appear from her account of the experience, which is as follows:—

"As it began to grow dark, I saw something every now and then moving among the trees opposite the entrance to the driveway, and when I crept up I could hear the owls snapping their bills, and spitting like a cat, and snarling. It was lucky I had on the mask, for while I was standing there, straining my eyes and ears, something suddenly swooped down without warning and gave me a hard blow on the side of the head, on the edge of the mask, at the same time uttering a scream of rage. A cousin of Mrs. Hoar's, who also had on a mask, was struck squarely in the face, and at the same moment we heard the scream of rage again. Apparently the hardness of the masks and our not being intimidated made the birds desist, for they did not attack us again, although we saw them fly from tree to tree, and clamber, parrot-like, up an inclined branch, and swing on a hanging one."

Mrs. Worcester adds that a pair of Screech Owls which bred "for a good many years" in a tree standing near a house in Arlington, Massachusetts, developed, in 1902, a habit "of attacking the people who went in and out of the yard, and even those who passed on the sidewalk."—WILLIAM BREWSTER, *Cambridge, Mass.*

The Snowy Owl (*Nyctea nyctea*) not generally Abundant in the Winter of 1906-1907.—I think there has been no record showing an unusual abundance of this species for two consecutive years, and our experience shows that there is a lapse of from five to ten years between these noticeable invasions. In the winter of 1905-1906 we had an unusual abundance scattered over the country, but the present season has been devoid of any remarkable flight south into the United States, though in Manitoba they are reported as abundant as last year. In many sections of the Provinces, New England, and the Middle West, my correspondents who received numbers last winter, have had but few this season, and in some instances none.

The following eleven specimens received by Angell and Cash, taxidermists, Providence, R. I., will be of interest as they record complete data. They were received between November 3, 1906, and February 12, 1907.

Nov. 3, ♂, Newport, R. I.

" 5, ♂, Hope Island, Narragansett Bay, R. I.¹

" 12, ♀, Fisher's Island, N. Y.

" 15, ♀, Monomoy Island, Mass.

" 15, ♀, New London, Conn.²

" 19, ♂, Monomoy Island, Mass.

" 21, ♂, Block Island, R. I.

" 28, ♂, Seaconnet Point, R. I.

" 28, ♀, New London, Conn.³

" 30, ♂, Norwich, Conn.

Feb. 12, ♀, Fisher's Island, N. Y.

¹Contents of stomach, a gray rat, head digested, otherwise whole.

²Contents of stomach, rat fur and bone pellets.

³Contents of stomach, dark flesh and feathers of Black Duck.



Brewster, William. 1907. "Aggressive Screech Owls." *The Auk* 24, 215–217.
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