

FIELD NOTES

Observations on a young Long-eared Owl from Allegany County: A young Long-eared Owl (*Asio otus*) was found by Rex Brown on June 24, 1966 near Belvidere, N.Y. about 2 miles north of Belmont, the Allegany County seat. The bird was sitting on the limb of an aspen tree (*Populus tremuloides*) about 10 feet from the ground. The tree was one of a stand of 25 to 30 foot aspens covering about 200 acres of a wet Genesee River flat. No nest was seen and neither of the adults were about. The young could not fly and made no effort to get away until it was in hand. Brown kept the bird until July 9 when he gave it to Olmstead who kept it in captivity until Aug. 14, and took a series of seven kodachrome slides between June 25 and Aug. 10. Eaton kept the bird in captivity from Aug. 14 to Oct. 18 when the bird died, apparently of a lung infection.

The major changes in plumage during this time in captivity were obtained from a review of Olmstead's slides. *June 25:* iris yellow; body covered by barred juvenal down feathers—back darker grey than breast; allula and other flight feathers appeared quite fully formed; bill horn color. *June 26:* facial disc dark brown, some slight suggestion of ear tuft feathers. *July 12:* Downy ear tufts obvious; brown facial discs with broad white outer trim; body still covered by juvenal down. *July 16:* white trim below and around sides of facial discs; ear tufts still downy; downy body feathers still horizontally barred with greyish brown but not vertically barred; facial discs with broad white outer trim; body still covered by juvenal down. *July 16:* white ear tufts lost; the brown facial discs more prominent. *Aug. 10:* second set of ear tufts now prominent and contour feathers appeared to be complete being vertically and horizontally marked on the lower breast. *Sept. 11:* last picture taken; typically plumaged Long-eared Owl; white feathers between eyes and bill increased in fullness during Aug. and Sept.; the ear tufts reached full development about the end of Aug.

During June, July and Aug. Olmstead fed the bird hamburg, mice, rabbit entrails, snakes and liver. The bird took quite readily to captivity and after July 9 was kept in cages 6 feet by 6 ft. by 6 ft. and larger so that it could fly a few strokes of the wings before perching. From Aug. 15 to Oct. 18 Eaton fed the Owl 18 Deer Mice, 12 Short-tailed Shrews, 5 Field Mice, 3 Long-tailed Shrews, 2 Red-backed Voles, 3 Chipmunks and about a pound of liver.

When a mouse was placed on a post within the cage the owl flew to the post, grabbed the mouse with its foot and mouthed the mammal in a manner not unlike a bitch ridding its pups of fleas. Then the owl moved the mammal to its bill and flew to a sheltered end of the cage. First it picked at the skin over the occiput until the skin was broken. It then took the head in its mouth, and pulling the head free of the rest of the mammal, swallowed it with a slight pumping action of the head and neck. The bird then picked off the forelimbs. Next it attacked the entrails and ate most everything, occasionally flicking off and away, rather large pieces of small intestine. If the small mammal was not too large the rest of the trunk was swallowed whole—the last piece to disappear was the tail.

The bird was heard to give a weak, high pitched whistle in July and Aug. at night. It was, for the most part, almost mute. In bright light the bird would wink, its long eye lashes moving in a rather seductive manner and when attempting to localize sounds would weave and bob its head.

The bird was prepared into a skeleton and is now No. 1073 in the bird skeleton collection at St. Bonaventure University.

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