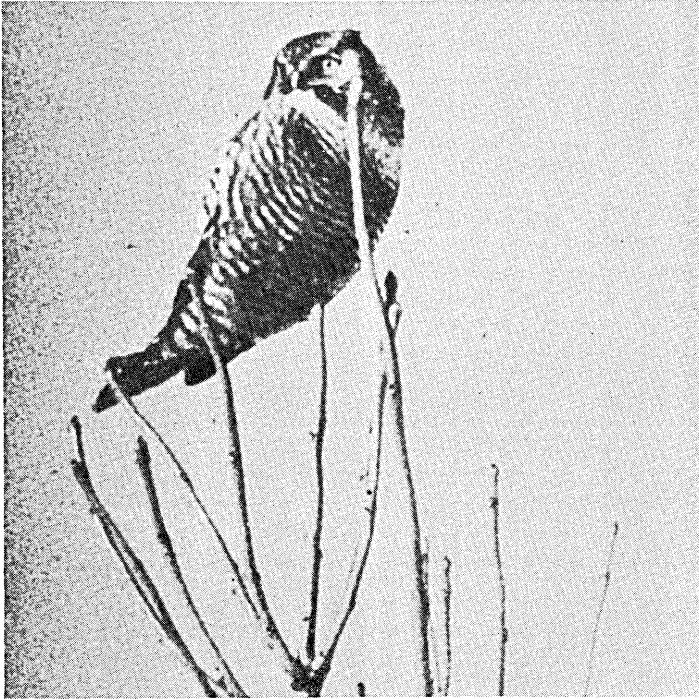


PHOTOGRAPHS OF NEW YORK STATE RARITIES

19. Hawk Owl



Photograph by A. J. Wright II
Near Transit Road, Millersport, Niagara County Dec. 1962

The Hawk Owl (*Surnia ulula*) is a bird of the dense coniferous forest of the tiaga belt across the entire holarctic, its distribution being limited by the tundra in the north and the deciduous forest in the south. Two other owls have a similar holarctic distribution, the Boreal Owl (*Aegolius funerea*) and the Great Gray Owl (*Strix nebulosa*). However the Boreal Owl breeds further south in eastern Europe and western Asia and the Great Gray Owl is missing from the eastern Canada tiaga but breeds in the high mountains of the west as far south as California.

All of these owls irrupt into more southern regions much more infrequently than the more northerly Snowy Owl (*Nyctea scandiaca*). This can be explained by the greater diversity and hence stability of the prey of the tiaga belt as compared to the massive cycle changes of the tundra. Of the tiaga owls the Great Gray is the rarest in this State which is hardly surprising considering its western distribution in North America. There are more records of Hawk Owls than Boreal Owls but this may reflect the conspicuous nature of the former rather than a real difference in scarcity. Eaton (1914) listed 23 records from 12 counties, with the northern counties of Lewis and St. Lawrence in the lead with four specimens each.

Since 1950 the following records are known to the author:

December 20, 1955, Middle Grove, Saratoga County
December 11, 1958, Three Mile Bay, Jefferson County
March 16, 1960, Oneida, Oneida County
March 16, 1961, Binghamton, Broome County
October 25, 1962, Braddock's Bay, Monroe County
November 18, 1962, Peterboro, Madison County
December 28, 1962, Millersport, Niagara County
December 20, 1962, Potsdam, St. Lawrence County
January 4, 1963, Fargo—North Bridge, Jefferson County
February 9, 1963, Sears Pond, Tughill, Lewis County
December 24, 1964, Black River, Jefferson County
November 24, 1965, Tupper Lake, Franklin County
February 1, 1969, Elizabethtown, Essex County

Of these, nearly half refer to the invasion of 1962/63. As in Eaton's day most of the records come from the northern part of the State. There have been no records from Long Island since 1900.

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DATE FOR 1970 ANNUAL MEETING

The date for the 1970 Annual Meeting of the Federation has been set for September 11–13. The meeting will be in Watertown under the sponsorship of The North Country Bird Club.