

A GREAT GRAY OWL FOUND DEAD ON LONG ISLAND, NEW YORK

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During the unprecedented irruption of 1978-1979 at least two Great Gray Owls (*Strix nebulosa*) reached Long Island. These were the first confirmed occurrences of this species on Long Island since 1902. The first of these birds was seen many times between December 1978 and the end of March 1979. On 17 March, 1979, a second specimen was discovered dead on the north shore of Long Island at Centerport Beach (See Wheat, in press, 1979).

The bird was delivered to the Huntington Audubon Society, where the following measurements were made by S. Ruppert:

Overall length	673 mm.
Wing cord	445
Tail length	330
Tarsus	115
Wing Span	1295
Cere	33
Weight	1058 g.

These measurements correspond closely with the averages listed by Chapman (1934) for body, wing, and tail lengths. The weight falls midway between the averages of 900 g. for males and 1200 g. for females reported for 19 pairs of Great Gray Owls in Sweden by Hoglund and Lansgren (1968). The wing length falls within Godfrey's (1966) range for females in Canada but is greater than that for males. Since internal decomposition made examination difficult and no gonads were found, this is the best indication of the bird's probable sex.

I had the opportunity to examine the owl and to mount the skin. The radius and ulna of the right wing were exposed and some muscle was absent from that wing and shoulder, suggesting attack by scavengers. No other puncture wounds were present, but there were several small lesions on the legs which appeared to have resulted from decomposition. Although body fat reserves were absent, there was no evidence of depletion of the breast muscles.

The skull was fully ossified. That the owl may have been a sub-adult is indicated by several lighter, non-consecutive secondaries in each wing, the relative color of which corresponds to Grossman and

Hamelt's (1964) description of juvenal versus adult plumages.

An autopsy performed by Basil Tangredi, D.V.M., revealed no evidence of shot and no evident cause of death.

The mounted skin will be displayed at the Theodore Roosevelt Audubon Sanctuary in Oyster Bay, Long Island, New York.

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