

NOTES & OBSERVATIONS

First Banding of the Boreal Owl in New York State: The Boreal Owl (*Aegolius funereus*) is considered a very rare visitant in New York State. Although Bull (1974) reported it as virtually unknown outside the Adirondack Region, Yunick (1979) demonstrated that there are more records in the state outside of the Adirondack Region. The New York State Avian Records Committee had verified 21 records up to 31 Dec 1984 (DeBenedictis *et al.* 1985). Three individuals found during the winter of 1978-79 is believed to represent a record maximum number in any season in the state (Yunick 1979). More recently, a bird (possibly 2) was found at Manitou, Monroe County, on 4-5 Mar and 15 Mar 1986 (Griffith 1986). This paper reports on the banding of a Boreal Owl at Nine Mile Point, Oswego County, New York.

Owls have been banded during spring migration at the Richard A. Noyes Sanctuary, Town of New Haven, Oswego County since 1981 (Slack *et al.* *in press*). On 11 Apr 1987 at 2100 hrs (EST) a Boreal Owl was netted in a trail bordered by hemlock-hardwood forest and a stand of alder. The bird was weighed, measured, and banded and then released at 2150 hrs. Bull (1974) lists 18 March as the latest spring record. Thus, this record is apparently the latest spring record for the state.

The Boreal Owl had wing chord measurements of 183 mm (right) and 181 mm (left) compared to the range of 128.5-150 mm for 130 Northern Saw-whet Owls (*A. acadicus*) that have been banded at this location. The Boreal Owl weighed 174 g. Northern Saw-whet Owls captured at the site have weighed from 66-120 g (mean 91.8, $n = 100$). The bird also differed from Saw-whet Owls by having a yellowish bill, finely spotted head, numerous large white spots on the back, and a grayish to black border around the facial disc.

Based upon primary molt (P1-P10 Uniform) and the lack of any diagnostic fault bars in remiges or rectrices, the bird was aged as After-Hatching-Year. Based upon comparisons of wing chord and weight with data from other authors, this bird was a female. Earhart and Johnson (1970) reported wing chord ranges of 155-168 mm for males and 165-179 mm for females. Godfrey (1966) listed the wing of chord females as 164.8-179.9 mm. Weights of males ranged from 85-119 g, while females ranged from 121-160 g (Earhart and Johnson 1970). While this bird was larger than reported by these authors, Karalus (1974) reported female wing chords of 164.9-190.9 mm and weights of up to 235.2 g.

This bird is the first Boreal Owl banded in New York State (D. Bystrak, USFWS Bird Banding Laboratory, pers. comm.). The species has been banded once in Massachusetts and New Jersey, while 48 birds have been banded in Ontario, Canada, as of 1985. There are no banding records for Pennsylvania, Ohio, Vermont, or Connecticut.

Of the previous sight records from New York State, several have been from Oswego County (near Pulaski and Oswego). Monroe County, also along the southern shore of Lake Ontario, had five records between 1964 and 1979, as well as the two more recent birds noted previously. This indicates the species may be more common during winter and spring migration along the lakeshore than previously thought.

The owl banding station was being operated by the author, D. E. Emord, M. C. Lawler, M. C. Reilly, C. Williams, and R. N. Roberts. Others present were S. Kahl, D. O'Connell, P. Stockmyer, K. Stockmyer, D. Ellis, D. Gustafson, K. Curry, D. Curry, D. Heath, J. Heath, and K. Butler. I thank R. P. Yunick, P. DeBenedictis and C. B. Slack for comments on the draft of this paper and D. Coates for typing the manuscript.

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