

The Status of *Buteo platypterus iowensis*.—The new race of *Buteo platypterus* described by the late Prof. B. H. Bailey as *Buteo platypterus iowensis* ('The Auk,' XXXIV, No. 1, January, 1917, p. 73) was based on a specimen from Eagle Lake, Hancock County, Iowa. Its distinction from *Buteo platypterus platypterus* consists in its sooty brown plumage both above and below; and its geographic distribution extends from Manitoba to Iowa. It develops, however, on further investigation that examples of *Buteo platypterus* of the ordinary light type inhabit the same breeding range in Manitoba, Minnesota, and North Dakota. Since, of course, two geographic races of the same species cannot have identical breeding areas, it follows that we must seek some other reason for the existence of the dark Broad-winged Hawks that live in the upper Mississippi Valley. Mr. Robert Ridgway has already recorded (Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., IX, 1886, p. 248) a dark *Buteo platypterus* from Iowa as an example of melanism in this species; and this evidently is the correct explanation. That nearly all these dark birds come from Iowa, Minnesota, and Manitoba is interesting, but does not militate against the view of their melanistic character, for it is well known that melanism and similar color phases may occur in one part of the range of a species and be totally absent in another. Furthermore, melanism in the genus *Buteo* is of common occurrence; and notable examples of this are *Buteo borealis*, *Buteo swainsoni*, and *Buteo ferox*. From the foregoing it seems necessary to treat *Buteo platypterus iowensis* as a synonym of *Buteo platypterus platypterus*.—HARRY C. OBERHOLSER.

Flight of Horned Owls in Canada.—The article by Mr. Arthur W. Brockway in 'The Auk' (Vol. XXXV, No. 3) upon the 'Large Flight of Great Horned Owls and Goshawks at Wadlyme, Connecticut' has prompted me to revert to the subject in connection with the phenomenon here. Any occurrence of this nature is particularly interesting and especially so among the Raptores of the North.

His information regarding the early November flight in Canada is perfectly correct; vast numbers having appeared at that time throughout the country. Mr. C. W. Nash, of the Provincial Museum, Toronto, informed me that hundreds of Great Horned Owls were noted in that region and in every locality that I have visited the same news of excessive numbers of these birds has reached me.

During the latter part of October, 1917, and the fore part of November I was in the wilderness northeast of Lake Superior. During my entire time there, I never once heard an owl, although they are frequently heard in wilderness camping. I remarked on the apparent absence of the species at the time, and often sat alone on the quiet shores of the lake at night, listening for the voice I had learned to enjoy, but not once did a lonely "hoot" disturb the silence of the solitude.

Every one there also remarked on the scarcity of the Varying Hare, as compared with the numbers usually present. After the first fall of snow

I noted occasional signs, and also procured a specimen, but their numbers were negligible. Grouse too, were scarce.

The significance of the whole thing dawned upon me when on November 7, the first day after my return to Southern Ontario, I noted several Horned Owls, which was an uncommon occurrence. The day previous a friend had observed three. These birds were lazily perched in the open hardwoods enjoying the sunshine, and quite apparently oblivious to their surroundings. This is contrary to the usual secretive habits of the birds when here.

Continuously throughout November these owls were frequently observed and many were shot for taxidermic purposes. After this month their numbers were reduced but signs of their killing, usually a luckless Cottontail, was noted with greater frequency than is usually the case.

Personally, the ingress of Goshawks was not noted as exceptional, although greater numbers may have prevailed in other localities. Each fall sees a certain influx of these destructive birds, with their bold propensities for domestic fowl, much to the vexation of most poultry-men.

To reiterate: The point of interest lies in the fact that the Horned Owls were apparently absent from the north country at the time of my trip October 20–November 6; common on my return to Preston, Ont. November 7, and apparently so at other points in southern Canada; with their subsequent invasion of the northern States, which I assume immediately followed as indicated by Mr. Brockway's communication to 'The Auk.'—J. DEWEY SOPER, *Preston, Ont.*

***Picoides arcticus* in Florida.**—Through the courtesy of Mr. J. D. Allen, of Mandan, North Dakota, the writer is privileged to record a specimen of the Black-backed, or Arctic, Three-toed Woodpecker (*Picoides arcticus*), which Mr. Allen collected himself on Pablo Creek, northeastern Florida, about March 20, 1875. Pablo Creek enters the St. John River a few miles west of Mayport, and the point at which this Three-toed Woodpecker was taken lies well up toward the source of this stream, which would make it some distance southwest of Mayport, the exact number of miles being now not determinable. The specimen is an adult male in perfect plumage, although by reason of being mounted is now in somewhat dilapidated condition. It has never been out of Mr. Allen's possession, and his recollection of the circumstances of its capture are perfectly clear and conclusive. It is an astonishing record for the State of Florida, and one that is not likely ever to be duplicated. The occurrence of a far northern species such as this so far south of its normal range naturally invites speculation as to the probable cause of its presence there, but it certainly was not a cage bird.—HARRY C. OBERHOLSER, *Washington, D. C.*

Early Nesting of the Northern Pileated Woodpecker in Pennsylvania.—According to the experience of field oölogists of Pennsylvania, the right time to find fresh clutches of the Northern Pileated Woodpecker



Soper, J Dewey. 1918. "Flight of Horned Owls in Canada." *The Auk* 35, 478–479.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/4073227>.

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/54099>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2307/4073227>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/90450>

Holding Institution

Smithsonian Libraries and Archives

Sponsored by

Smithsonian

Copyright & Reuse

Copyright Status: Public domain. The BHL considers that this work is no longer under copyright protection.

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.