

2. In describing a bird don't copy the description from a field guide. The impression given is that the bird was not very carefully scrutinized. Try to include descriptive details which you have never seen in print.
3. Try to get confirmation of the sighting. A good photograph is unbeatable as evidence.
4. Notify local birders quickly so that other observers can confirm the identification.



THE GREAT GRAY OWL

Great Gray Owl photograph courtesy of the Lawrence Eagle-Tribune.

In the early afternoon of January 6th, 1977, a teacher at the West Elementary School in Andover telephoned me that she was sure that the large owl reposing 15 feet up in a birch tree by the edge of the school's parking lot was a Great Gray. It had flown there in the morning and remained, paying no attention to the many children playing beneath. As soon as I saw it, I was convinced that the identification was correct--noting every field mark and in particular the white collar with the dark spot in the center. But to make sure, the eyes had to be seen. It took 20 minutes of jumping up and down and shouting to induce the owl to "open up" and they were yellow. I telephoned the Massachusetts Audubon Society and other interested persons. Some arrived in time to see it. But many were disappointed as he flew off towards the end of the afternoon--not to be seen again there. Several people tried unsuccessfully the next day in the big snowstorm to find it, but to no avail.

Juliet R. Kellogg