

## VITAL STATISTICS

### OF A HORNED OWL

By  
Emerson A. Stoner

Among my most exciting bird-banding recoveries was that of a Pacific Horned Owl (*Bubo virginianus pacificus*) banded on the nest on April 17, 1927 and killed by a quail hunter twelve years and eight months later.

In my notebook is the entry that my friend, Gunnar Larson, and I entered the live-oak woods in the hilly country between Benicia and Cordelia, California on the above date, taking along a camera and banding apparatus.



HORNED OWL --- Marjorie Stoner

After climbing a steep hill and going down into a ravine between two other hills (called a canyon in the West) we took a look at an old red-tailed hawk's nest which I had previously visited on March 23rd when it held two eggs of the horned owl, and one young owlet which had just hatched from the third egg.

We climbed the twenty feet to the nest in a live-oak on April 17th and found only two live owlets and the hind-quarters of the third which must have died or or been killed very recently as the hind-quarters were of the same size as of two live young.

The young birds showed no inclination to bite or scratch, and we took their pictures and banded them #200712 and 200713.

Early in 1940 I received a letter from the Biological Survey stating that Mr. Ray Bell had killed a horned owl bearing band #200713 on November 23, 1939. It was a thrill to hear from "my" owl, - a delight which is one of the compensations of being a bander.

I talked with Mr. Bell who lived in Vallejo, to learn more of the recovery. He told me he had been quail hunting in Sky Valley, some three miles from the banding location. He had frightened the bird from a tree, and, acting like many hunters who seem to think it a duty to shoot hawks and owls, he took the action which this false impression prompted. It is true that horned owls are not protected by California state law, as seems to be their fate throughout our country.

Well, #200713 must have hatched from an egg laid about March 1, 1927, and lived a full twelve years and eight months. I wonder if #200712 might still be alive?