

NOTES AND NEWS

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The Editor

3.X.55

THE AUK

Sir:

Twenty-nine years is a long time between the committing of an error and its correction but—better late than never.

In 1926 I published a paper entitled "On Photoperiodism, Reproductive Periodicity, and the Annual Migrations of Birds and certain Fishes" in the Proceedings of the Boston Society of Natural History (38: 147–189) in which I referred to Snowy Owls weighing up to 10 and 12 lbs. (p. 161). Francis Harper, the then Editor, demurred at this statement at the time but, as it proved impossible to find any authenticated weights, these figures were permitted to stand against his better judgment. They were based on the estimates of our local taxidermist who had quite evidently never weighed any of the numerous specimens mounted by him over the years.

During the past three years one of our graduate students, Albert F. Oeming, has trapped and banded 35 Snowy Owls during the winter months in the Edmonton, Alberta, district all of which have been weighed on standardized scales. With his permission I append his figures herewith. Twenty-three females averaged 4 lbs. 11½ oz. (max. 5 lbs. 6 oz.) while 12 males averaged 3 lbs. 10 oz. (max. 4 lbs.).

The situation is self-explanatory, and I need add nothing except to apologise to Dr. Harper (and his readers) for having perpetrated a howler in his sacrosanct columns, 29 long years ago.

Yours etc.

Wm. Rowan