

On July 6, 1924, one of my nephews, with a friend, was fishing in a small stream near the headwaters of Garcia River. As the two fishermen were walking through a gloomy stretch of the narrow, wooded cañon, they saw a fluffy owl on a low limb of a near-by Douglas fir. Upon their approach, the bird left its perch and flew, about six feet above their heads, across the small stream, and landed in another fir on a limb about ten feet from the ground. My nephew threw a stone and hit the owl, injuring one wing so that it could not fly. It was brought alive to San Francisco, and proved to be a female spotted owl, not long out of the nest. The remiges and rectrices are almost fully developed, but otherwise, with the exception of the scapulars and a few feathers on the sides of the breast and around the eyes, the bird is yet in downy plumage. This specimen is now number 26832 in the collection of the Museum of the California Academy of Sciences.

The Saw-whet Owl (*Cryptoglaux acadica acadica*) is supposed to breed locally along the Sierra Nevada, and there are nesting records from this range for central and southern California; but there is no breeding record, to my knowledge, for the northern part of the state west of the Sierras. There is now in the Academy collection, the dried remains of one of these owls, that was brought in on June 18 by Raleigh A. Borell, my field assistant during the spring and summer of 1926. The mummy was picked up by H. Kohenberger, owner of the ranch on which we were encamped, as he was showing the mountain trails to Borell. It was found among the pines on the southwesterly slope of the South Fork Mountains (about ten miles northwest of Forest Glen post office), at a point considerably above our camp, which was at an elevation of about 3100 feet.

Although rather dilapidated, this specimen is in sufficiently good condition to show that it is nearly full sized. The tail is missing, but the wings are intact, and the primaries are about four-fifths grown. There is no sign of white anywhere except for the markings on the wings, and on the head, where the white "eyebrows" are well marked. The specimen is number 29085, Academy collection.—JOSEPH MAILLIARD, *California Academy of Sciences, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, California, January 11, 1927.*

Pigmy Owl: The Little Demon.—On the morning of May 24 I was up early for my weekly trip to the rim of the valley. I had planned to go up the Ledge Trail to Glacier Point and, on leaving the house, I decided to go by the way of Sentinel Bridge and the south road, hoping to have a visit with the Saw-whet Owl. The young Saw-whet Owl was not at home; or, if he was he was still sleeping, for he did not respond to my knock. I passed on up the road.

I had not traveled a hundred yards when my ear caught the single, hollow whistled note of an owl. The sound seemed to come from directly overhead. Then there came gentle tapping sounds and a subdued trill. While I was gazing up into the branches of a tall Kellogg oak a Willow Woodpecker flashed into my range of vision. My eyes naturally followed the woodpecker which flew to a nest where he fed the occupant without entering the hole. This action would indicate that either the young were well grown, or that the female bird was being fed by her mate. The woodpecker flew away at once and I sat down to await his return that I might learn whether or not young birds were being fed.

I had not long to wait. In less than a minute a strange bird flew to the nest hole. At first I was puzzled; the new arrival appeared to be struggling to get into the hole. Soon, however, I realized that he was tugging violently in an effort to withdraw his head from the hole. The struggle continued. There was no sound. Perhaps a minute passed and then the bird withdrew his head and in his bill he held a woodpecker. With the limp body of his victim he fluttered down to a lower branch. Now, perched on the branch with the victim held in place by strong talons, the Pigmy Owl, as the strange bird proved to be, proceeded to tear away feathers from the throat, apparently to make sure that his victim was dead; for in a moment he flew to another perch, this time carrying the woodpecker in his talons.

Soon he flew a little farther and attempted to gain a toe-hold at the entrance of another woodpecker hole. His burden was too much for him (the woodpecker was almost as large as the owl) and he was forced to flutter down to another perch. Here the owl rested a moment, took a new grip on his victim and flew upward into the cedar boughs opposite the nest hole he had so recently visited. In the cedar boughs he was discovered by a Tolmie Warbler which instantly sounded the alarm. The distress cries

of the Tolmie Warbler attracted a Yellow Warbler, a Robin and a pair of Sierra Juncos. These birds scolded the owl but did not attempt to strike him. The owl apparently gave no heed to his tormentors and soon flew again to the nest-hole in the dead oak. Now, he managed to cling to the rim of the hole and going head first he did contrive to drag the dead woodpecker after him.

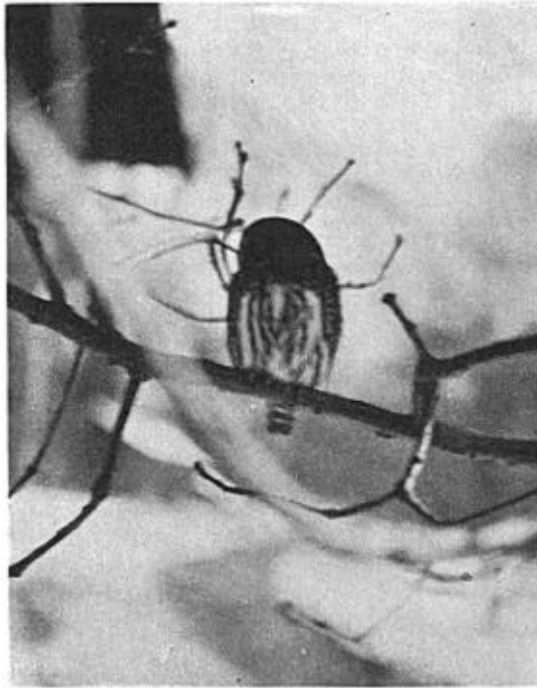


Fig. 55. FIGMY OWL IN YOSEMITE VALLEY.

Having had a good look at the victim, I am inclined to believe that it was a young male Willow Woodpecker, full-feathered and about ready to leave the nest. So far as I could tell, the parent woodpecker on returning did not discover his loss, at least he made no outcry. The Pigmy Owl's nest was in a deserted Hairy Woodpecker hole twelve feet above the ground. This hole was drilled and used by a pair of Hairy Woodpeckers last spring.—CHARLES W. MICHAEL, *Yosemite, California, January 31, 1927.*

The Gila Woodpecker at Holtville, Imperial County, California.—On March 21, 1926, I observed a pair of Gila Woodpeckers (*Centurus uropygialis*) about a mile north of Holtville. Both birds were busy, part of the time, carrying black mulberries to fence posts where they thrust them into crevices before eating them. As far as I can learn there is no published record of the occurrence of this species west of the immediate vicinity of the Colorado River.—RALPH HOFFMANN, *Carpinteria, California, January 1, 1927.*

An English Sparrow Deceived.—Much might be written in evidence of the power of sight discrimination in birds, but on November 22, 1923, I saw an English Sparrow make a mistake which was surprising to say the least. On a large billboard, in Ashland, Oregon, there was a picture of a rowboat (advertising a moving picture show), and I saw this sparrow actually attempt to alight on the edge of the boat, evidently not