

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

The Horned Owl an Enemy of Barrow Golden-eye?—Twenty miles northeast of Vernon, British Columbia, at an altitude of approximately 1800 feet lies Rollings Lake, a shallow body of water comprising some 300 acres. On the north side a steep, timbered mountain slopes to the water's edge; otherwise the littoral consists of cultivated fields and patches of tule at either end of the lake. The water is rich in aquatic vegetation (*Potamogeton*) and usually swarming with fresh water amphipods, *Gammarus limnaeus*. The latter is a staple article in the diet of the Barrow Golden-eyes which frequent the lake. The bird-life of this lake, and the Barrow Golden-eye (*Glaucionetta islandica*) in particular, has been kept under observation, at irregular intervals, since 1916. At that time, and for several years following, these ducks nested chiefly in the many dead trees along the shore which years ago had been killed by a rise in the lake level. Within recent years most of these trees have fallen or been cut down, but the Barrow Golden-eyes, in somewhat smaller numbers, still nest in the vicinity and lead their broods to the lake which is the only suitable one in the district.

On June 4, 1925, a female of this species was observed leading 43 downy young all of about the same age. The following day this same concentration was seen but the band of young had been reduced to 30. On other parts of the lake a single downy and a group of three were swimming about unattended. These little chaps with necks outstretched glided rapidly over the water, making quick darts from side to side as if picking insects from the surface. At this time the female leading the large band was the only adult on the lake. The adult males had left a week or so earlier and the female parents of the three or four broods, now attached to a foster mother, had vanished. A flock comprising 2 males and 3 females which were obviously immature birds of the previous year was seen. It is believed that the Barrow Golden-eye does not breed until the second year.

It is suggested that Horned Owls (*Bubo virginianus*) were responsible for the disappearance of the missing females. Along the rough, wooded shore on the sheltered north side of the lake are a number of fallen trees, their butts anchored on shore, their trunks slanting into the water. Thus firmly anchored, half in the water and half out, and worn smooth by years of weathering, these tree trunks are used as resting places by Barrow Golden-eyes of all ages. At one time it was common to find three or four such sites each occupied by a female and her brood; another perhaps holding a band of non-breeding birds of both sexes. It is not known if the ducks roost at night on these logs but such is believed to be the case.

In the concealing brush near the water's edge, or on stumps or logs in the forest, one sometimes finds the remains of a Barrow Golden-eye—perhaps a half-eaten carcass, more often a wing, a foot, or a collection of feathers. During recent years Horned Owls have been more than usually plentiful; one hears them hooting from the thickly timbered mountain side, and the evidence points to this predator as the chief, if not the only, local enemy of the Barrow Golden-eye.—J. A. MUNRO, *Okanagan Landing, British Columbia, January 15, 1929.*

Bears and Hawks' Nests.—In regard to an observation of mine quoted by Mr. Taverner (*Condor*, xxx, 1928, p. 157) as to the supposed habit of the black bear climbing trees which contain hawks' nests in quest of eggs or young and Professor Rowan's comments thereon (*Condor*, xxx, 1928, p. 246) I am bound to admit that the evidence is purely circumstantial. No observer to my knowledge has actually witnessed the proceeding, although I have reliable information from an eyewitness as to a wolverine doing this very thing, and the evidence is strong as regards the bear.

It is well known that the black bears will eat anything edible in spring, from poplar leaves to carrion. One old Indian hunter at Battle Prairie informed me that they even hunt and eat snakes at this season, so that it is not likely that the eggs or young of hawks and owls would come amiss.