

SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

RANGE EXTENSION OF THE BARRED OWL IN WESTERN WASHINGTON AND FIRST BREEDING RECORD ON THE OLYMPIC PENINSULA

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The Barred Owl (*Strix varia*) has been extending its range west and south for more than 4 decades (Grant 1966; Taylor and Forsman 1976; Boxall and Stepney 1982). The first observation of a Barred Owl in Washington State was made in 1965 in the eastern edge of the state by Rogers (1966). In 1973 the first Barred Owl recorded on the west side of the Cascade Mountains was found dead in Skykomish, King Co. (Taylor and Forsman 1976). Reichard (1974) found a pair in the northwestern Cascade Moun-

tains, and since 1976 several records of Barred Owls nesting along the western flanks of the Cascade Mountains have been reported (Allen et al. 1985; Harrington 1985, Wash. Dept. Wildl., pers. comm.).

No formal surveys have been conducted on the Olympic Peninsula. However, because Barred Owls respond readily to Spotted Owl (*S. occidentalis*) calls (Hamer 1987), surveys for Spotted Owls might effectively be considered Barred Owl surveys. Spotted Owl surveys have been con-

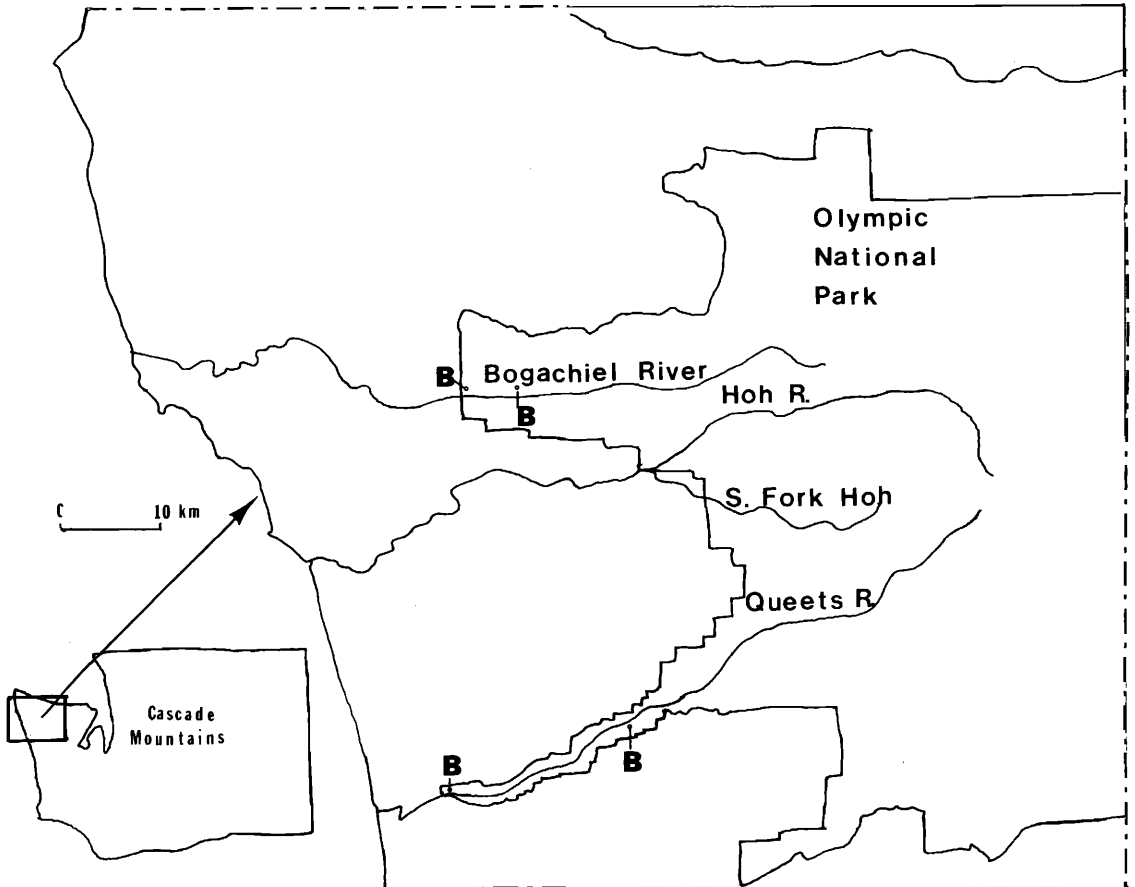


Figure 1. Locations where Barred Owls (B) were observed on the west side of the Olympic Peninsula, Washington State in 1985.

ducted on the Olympic National Forest since 1978 but have elicited no Barred Owl responses. Similarly, Spotted Owl survey results from the Washington Department of Wildlife since 1983 have not reported Barred Owl responses. Postovit (1977) surveyed Spotted Owls along 55 routes, each about 4 km in length, on the Olympic Peninsula, including 8 drainages in Olympic National Park. No Barred Owl responses were reported.

Barred Owls were first observed on the Olympic Peninsula in 1985 during a 2 yr call survey for Spotted Owls in Olympic National Park by an interagency team with representatives from the Washington Department of Wildlife (WDW), Department of Natural Resources, and Olympic National Park (WDW 1987). Four river drainages were call surveyed for Spotted Owls along the west side of Olympic National Park between May and July 1985 (WDW 1987). Responses were obtained from Barred Owls at 4 locations: 2 in the Queets River valley and 2 in Bogachiel valley (Fig. 1). At the Bogachiel response sites Spotted Owls answered either simultaneously, within a half-hour, or within 500 m of the Barred Owls. In 1986 both sites were occupied by Barred Owls, and no Spotted Owls were heard, suggesting that the Spotted Owls might have moved or been displaced. One response site along the Queets Valley road was occupied by a pair of Barred Owls that produced 3 young in 1985 and 1986. Responses in Olympic National Park in 1987 (Sharp et al. 1987) were from river terrace or lowland areas.

Range expansion by the Barred Owl might be a threat to the Northern Spotted Owl, whose numbers are declining due to fragmentation and loss of old-growth habitat (Marcot and Gardetto 1980; Forsman et al. 1984; Simberloff 1987). Barred Owls are known to occupy a greater variety of habitats, and have several adaptive breeding strategies and behavioral patterns that might cause competition with the Spotted Owl (Hamer 1987).

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