

A SEPTEMBER RECORD OF THE BOREAL OWL IN MONTANA

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The status of the Boreal Owl (*Aegolius funereus*) in the western United States has been summarized by Kuchel and Garrott (*Western Birds* 6:21-23, 1975) and Johnson and Hudson (*Auk* 93:195-196, 1976). Summer month sightings in Montana consist solely of a family group observed by David Shea at Waterton Lake, near the Canadian border in July 1973 (Skaar, *Montana bird distribution*, Bozeman, Montana, 1975), and there is only one early fall record, a specimen collected near Bozeman in September 1964 (Skaar, *Birds of the Bozeman latilong*, 1969).

It was of interest therefore to find a Boreal Owl on 12 September 1976 while I was working on a wildlife inventory and habitat typing project for the Deerlodge National Forest. The site was in a dense stand of Engelmann Spruce (*Picea engelmannii*) surrounding Albicaulis Lake, Powell County, in the Flint Creek Range about 27 km west of Deerlodge, Montana, and about 320 km south of Waterton Lake. The elevation is 2440 m.

When found, the bird was perched about 3 m above the ground in a dense spruce cover, a preferred roosting situation according to Catling (*Can. Field Nat.* 86:223-232, 1972). The bird was quite tame and seemed totally unconcerned with my presence, allowing me to take several photographs from about 2 m distance (Figure 1). The owl was about 20 cm in length and showed the light beak and dark facial border characteristic of the Boreal Owl.

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Figure 1. Boreal Owl, Albicaulis Lake, Powell County, Montana, 12 September 1976.