

comparison with individuals of this species present at the same location. Campbell and I took a subadult Glaucous Gull, the first Michigan specimen, at Halfway Creek, Erie Township, Monroe County, February 27, 1943.

The Great Black-backed Gull was first noted in this region on March 3, 1928, and a total of 13 were recorded in 12 years (Campbell). No more than one was seen in a day until January 8, 1939, when two appeared at Little Cedar Point, Lucas County, Ohio. Then, early 1940 brought 4 records and the winter of 1940-41, 9 observations, with a maximum for one day of 5, on January 4 at Erie Beach, Monroe County. In early 1942, 11 were seen, with a peak of 6 on March 15 at Erie Beach. In early 1943, 26 were noted, with the high point on March 7, when 11 were counted in the eight miles of shore between Bolles Harbor and North Cape, Monroe County. The earliest date for Black-backs is December 22 (1940), when two were seen after an unusual thaw had cleared the lake of ice following an earlier freeze-up. The latest—the only April record—is April 18 (1942). I took an adult Black-backed Gull, the first for Michigan, along the beach of Erie Township, Monroe County, March 21, 1943.

This specimen, and the February 27, 1943, specimen of the Glaucous Gull, were placed in the University of Michigan Museum of Zoology.

The observations included in this report were restricted to week-ends. All figures neglect possible duplications between different days, but are corrected for such duplications in any one day. The territory covered fairly regularly extends from Little Cedar Point, Lucas County, Ohio, north about 12 miles airline to Bolles Harbor, Monroe County, Michigan. Between these two extremes it includes several miles of the lower Maumee River and the irregular shoreline of Maumee Bay. Other observers who contributed to these data are William Anderson, Mr. and Mrs. Fred E. Stearns, and John Stophlet, all of Toledo.—HAROLD MAYFIELD, 3311 Parkwood Avenue, Toledo, Ohio.

**The Great Gray Owl as a Predator on Pocket Gophers.**—On June 9, 1941, I observed a Great Gray Owl (*Scotiaptex nebulosa nebulosa*) in the Bridger Mountains, about 20 miles northeast of Bozeman, Montana. The locality was in the upper Canadian Zone, at 7,000 feet elevation. The day was cloudy and dark, with occasional spatters of rain. The owl's presence was first given away by the squawking of a Steller's Jay (*Cyanocitta stelleri*), which chased the owl from tree to tree and finally into a stand of dense lodgepole pine and Douglas fir, where the owl was lost to sight.

At 1:15 P.M. I saw the owl in a 25-foot Douglas fir at the edge of a small mountain meadow. Its perch was near the end of a branch about 12 feet from the ground. Within a few minutes the owl made three swoops from this perch, apparently without catching anything. On the fourth swoop it hit the ground with considerable force and in a minute or two flew away with a dead pocket gopher (probably *Thomomys talpoides*) in its talons. An attempt to follow its flight was unsuccessful, and after searching the immediate area for a possible nest I returned to the original meadow. I was astonished to find the same owl, to all appearances, sitting in the same position on the same perch. It again made several swoops, and nine minutes later flew away with another pocket gopher. Fourteen minutes later it was back on the same perch. By 4:30 P.M. the owl had thus caught a total of four gophers and one mouse. The mouse was eaten on the ground where it was caught, but all the gophers were carried away.

The four gophers were caught in the same spot. The first caught was probably heard digging by the owl, which gave every indication of listening to some sound before swooping. Inspection of the spot while the owl was away revealed that the owl had apparently broken through the thin roof of one of the feeding runways of the gopher's burrow. Lack of turf (due to constant tunneling by the gophers in this area) would make such an action easy. The other three were probably caught

as they attempted to plug that break in the tunnel with dirt. Though pocket gophers are chiefly solitary animals, the young gophers are active and still in the parental burrows at this time of year in the Bridger Mountains.

The owl was not wary, but it would fly if I approached to within 40 feet, and then return to the same perch. Apart from this it appeared oblivious of my presence. It seemed to have no difficulty in seeing in the daylight. No sound was made by it at any time.

On July 4, 1941, I again saw a Great Gray Owl flying through an open space in the forest, at 1:00 P.M. when the sun was shining brightly. The location was three miles away from that described above, but in a similar situation. H. B. Mills reports seeing this species in the Bridgers on August 9, 1942, and also in Yellowstone National Park on October 8, 1934. Saunders (*Pac. Coast Avifauna*, 14, 1921:68) reported the Great Gray Owl in Montana as only a winter visitor, but Weydemeyer (*Condor*, 34, 1932:139) reported young on July 4, 1931, from eastern Lincoln County in the northern part of the state. Bent (*U. S. Nat. Mus. Bull.* 170, 1938: 219) has already pointed out that this owl may regularly breed within the limits of the United States. Though no nest has been discovered in the Bridger Mountains it would seem likely that the Great Gray Owl is a permanent resident there.—C. A. TRYON, JR., *Department of Zoology and Entomology, Montana State College, Bozeman, Montana.*

**Plague of Mice as Food for Short-eared Owls.**—Snyder and Hope (*Wilson Bulletin*, 50, No. 2, 1938:110-12) gave a detailed account of an influx of Short-eared Owls (*Asio flammeus*) into the Toronto region during the late winter of 1935-36 when meadow mice (*Microtus pennsylvanicus*) occurred there in unusually large numbers. After examining 1,078 pellets collected under a roost in that area, they found about 72 per cent of the individuals were meadow mice, and about 27 per cent were deer mice (*Peromyscus* spp.), the remaining 1 per cent being house mice and small birds.

A congregation of Short-eared Owls occurred simultaneously with a high *Microtus* population in central New York during a later winter. Between December 31, 1941, and March 5, 1942, from 2 to 14 Short-eared Owls roosted in a white pine grove near the village of Perry City in Schuyler County, New York. Meadow mice were unusually abundant in this area and formed a large part of the contents of 142 pellets collected under this roost at the end of the winter. Following are the results of the examination of the 142 pellets:

Animals represented	Number	
<i>Microtus pennsylvanicus</i> .....	124	(82.1%)
<i>Mus musculus</i> .....	18	(11.9%)
<i>Peromyscus leucopus</i> .....	5	( 3.3%)
<i>Pitymys pinetorum</i> .....	3	( 2.0%)
<i>Blarina brevicauda</i> .....	1	( 0.7%)

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The owls usually emerged from the pine roost at about 3 P.M. each day. As if on a given signal, they would fly out from the pines and start beating back and forth over the adjacent pasture, scanning the snow for mice. On February 9, four Short-eared Owls were seen crossing and recrossing the pasture, while a fifth sat on a nearby fence post with a *Microtus* in one foot. Sometimes they hovered over a particular spot in the snow with a quivering motion of the wings and body; then they would plummet downward with the wings held high overhead and their feet extended as they dropped on the snow. On February 24, 14 owls were flushed from this roost.—PVT. JOHN K. TERRES, *U. S. Army, Peekskill, New York*, and E. W. JAMESON, JR., *Department of Zoology, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York.*