

and puffed out. At any rate, try as I might, I could see no sign of their heads. Though I had never heard of such a thing in owls, I wondered if they might roost with their heads tucked into their back feathers.

Once discovered, long-ears are very difficult to flush from their roost, and they did indeed seem, as Soheil had predicted, "totally oblivious" to our presence. The numerous regurgitated owl pellets were visible every where now beneath the trees, similar to but smaller than those of the great-horned's. I broke open a couple of them and found, as expected, the small white bones of mice and voles.

All in all we counted twelve owls, and possibly we missed a few more. Not a spectacular number, but very likely more long-eared owls than I would ever see again.

As we left the grove, I recalled an article I had read recently about red pines, written by a forester at Quabbin Reservoir. Unlike more foresters, this one had a primarily wildlife-oriented view of trees. Red pines, the article stated, are not indigenous to eastern Massachusetts and, because of their lack of undergrowth, are considered a "biological desert" for wildlife. The artificial pine plantations, originally planted in open fields and construction scars at the reservoir, are considered "an aesthetic as well as a utilitarian failure." So the red pine at Quabbin is gradually being clear-cut to return the land to open fields in some areas and to allow natural tree succession to take place in others.

Such an approach pleases the pure environmentalist in me, at least in the abstract. But the morning's visit to this red pine grove in Lexington made it difficult for me to view the trees as either a "failure" or a "desert." Perhaps, like a few houses scattered over an otherwise empty countryside, a little human tinkering with its habitat can sometimes improve things - at least for owls and those who love to watch them.

Common Tern Color-marking by the Canadian Wildlife Service
Request for Information

During 1981, Dr. Hans Blokpoel of the Canadian Wildlife Service color-marked Common Terns at two large colonies in the Great Lakes area, with the objective of determining the year-round distribution of the birds, especially their migration routes and wintering areas in Latin America. Adult Common Terns were trapped on their nests at the Eastern Headland of the Toronto Outer Harbour (Lake Ontario) and at Tower Island (Niagara River). Orange plastic tags were attached to both wings of the trapped adult birds. In addition, young Common Terns were marked with pink plastic wing tags at those colonies. One standard metal leg band and one colored plastic leg band (yellow with a black horizontal stripe) were put on each of the tagged birds.

If you see a Common Tern with a pink or orange wing tag, please record the following details: place, date and color of the tag. If possible, also record the combination of numbers and/or letters on the tag (the two tags on any bird have the same color and the same combination of letters and numbers) and note which legs the plastic and metal leg bands are on. Thank you very much for your assistance. All reports will be acknowledged and should be sent to:

Bird Banding Office
Canadian Wildlife Service
Ottawa, Ontario CANADA
K1A OE7