

*cac-cac-cac*. With the meager photographic outfit possessed by the writer, no pictures were possible unfortunately. Not a hundred pairs were in evidence on June 27, but Chandler stated that the great majority had already dispersed. Breeding peak is late May and early June. In his present surroundings the writer has no access to a file of 'The Auk,' since Howell's book appeared (1932) so cannot state positively that this is the first nesting record for Florida, but that is entirely possible.—ALEXANDER SPRUNT, JR., *R. F. D. No. 1, Charleston, South Carolina*.

**Antipathy in the Screech Owl.**—When five juvenal Eastern Screech Owls (*Otus asio naevius*) were taken from the nest and raised by hand in the course of a study at Cornell University, a peculiar antipathy was revealed which I have not noted in young of other birds. The word 'antipathy' is used here to mean an instinctive feeling of aversion or dislike.

Having been taken from the nest at the age of twelve to thirteen days, before their eyes were open, it was certain that they had not seen any other birds, except Robins and English Sparrows at a considerable distance, before they were sixty days old. Previous to this time it was found that both juvenal and adult Screech Owls were unresponsive to stuffed skins of their own and many other species of birds, including such enemies as the Goshawk, Barred and Horned Owls. On about their sixtieth day of life an ordinary cabinet specimen of the American Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*), having the usual cotton-stuffed eyes and lifeless attitude, was carried into their room. Immediately all five displayed great horror in their owlish way, like Macbeth seeing Banquo's ghost. The skin was shown them many times that day, being simply held toward them in the hand, and evoked the same response, dread, then fear, then flight or fight.

If the skin was slowly thrust into view through the doorway the owls erected their ear-tufts and continuously uttered a loud chattering note which they usually give only when in a state of extreme anxiety. They would glare at the Crow with irises more contracted than was normal in proportion to the intensity of light in the room. When the skin came to within two feet of any one of the owls, the bird would crouch with wings and feathers spread in the defensive attitude characteristic of owls. As the skin came within reach the juvenal would either peck at the head with its bill (Plate 4, lower figure) or leap forward and strike the head of the Crow with both feet, and then fly to the opposite side of the room. Repetition of the experiment nearly every day for three months failed to lessen the intensity of this reaction. After the owls were five months old, however, the antipathy became less pronounced and was limited to the loud chattering. New surroundings or strange people inhibited their demonstration very little. The same aversion was shown to a Raven skin. The smallest owl showed slight fear of a Starling specimen.

The question naturally arose as to which characteristics of the Crow skin aroused the antipathy. Experiments indicated that the black color plus the slight animation imparted by the observer's hand to the object served to arouse the aversion. If the Crow skin were wrapped with thin white cloth so that color was changed while the original shape of the skin was retained, the owls would disregard it. Let only the front half of the Crow's head be exposed and their aversion would be asserted again. They would not show aversion merely to any black object or bird, as was shown by many trials with a variety of specimens. In addition, an element of vigor, the slight animation imparted to the skin when held in the observer's hand, was necessary to evoke their antipathy. When the specimen was laid on a stationary surface, such as a shelf or a bookcase, the owls would relax, and, later, sit near or

walk over it. As corroboration on this point, it may be recalled that there is this same deference to relative vigor evident when owls are persecuted. A mounted decoy owl will attract more onslaughts from Crows and hawks if its wings or head are kept in motion by some mechanical device. During observations on the Barred Owl (*Strix varia varia*) (Kelso, *Oölogist*, 56: 16-18, 1939) it was noted that Crows would annoy the adults but would ignore the less vigorous juvenals.—LEON KELSO, *Aurora, Colorado*.

**The scream of the Northern Barred Owl.**—Early in the evening of November 29, 1939, I stood with Richard Stackpole, of Boston, at the edge of Crooked Pond, Boxford, Massachusetts. Having tried without success for several minutes an imitation of the usual Barred Owl's hooting I took out of my pocket a small wooden whistle. The pitch of this whistle is so penetrating that I customarily hold my fingers in my ears while blowing.

Back upon the first blast from the whistle, so quickly that my first reaction was that I was hearing an echo, came the rather rarely heard scream of a Barred Owl (*Strix varia varia*) followed immediately by the usual, 'Who cooks for you? Who cooks for you all?' The bird was apparently on the hillside rising from the other shore of the pond and probably not over 150 yards distant, at the most.

Mr. Stackpole and I agreed that the pitch of the answer was identical with the pitch of my whistle. The following day, therefore, I established the pitch of my whistle by comparison with a piano. Pitch was the 'B,' one note below high 'C.'—WENDELL TABER, *Cambridge, Massachusetts*.

**Saw-whet Owls at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.**—The Saw-whet Owl (*Cryptoglaux acadica acadica*) is regarded as an irregular winter visitant in the Philadelphia region. In 'Field Notes' of 'Cassinia,' there are eight published records of the occurrence of this species around Philadelphia from August 1930 to July 1937.

This autumn, 1939, a comparatively heavy influx of these birds has taken place in and near Philadelphia. On October 30, 1939, a dead bird was picked up at 17th and Walnut Sts., in downtown Philadelphia by Quinton Kramer. One bird was seen at Bustleton, Philadelphia, by William Yoder on November 19, 1939, and was captured by hand and banded. About three miles distant, Yoder found another at Holmesburg, Philadelphia, the same day; and this was also taken and banded. Another record on that same day, November 19, 1939, was a bird found in a very small honeysuckle thicket at Frankford, Philadelphia, by James B. Wright. At Fairmount Park, in Philadelphia, Millard Lindauer observed one bird on November 25, 1939. On November 26, 1939, Lindauer found another bird at Mt. Holly, New Jersey. It is well that the Holmesburg bird was banded because, on December 3, 1939, the writer found another bird in the same thicket without a band. This bird was promptly banded. On December 17, 1939, the writer picked up a freshly killed specimen on the highway at Hartford, New Jersey. The same incident occurred when Kramer found a dead bird along the road at Eddington, Pennsylvania, on December 24, 1939.

It can be seen that, in these modern times of automobile conveyance, there is a definite mortality of Saw-whet Owls resulting from their being struck by cars. It has been gathered from Richard F. Miller that the depleted ranks of Screech Owls, as compared to their relative abundance in former years, is partly due to increased traffic of automobiles. It seems obvious that this situation would affect the Saw-whet Owls as well.