



# United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
BUREAU OF SPORT FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE

Bird and Mammal Laboratories  
National Museum of Natural History  
Washington, D.C. 20560

27 February 1974

File No. 28-75-2

accepted  
JR 8/5/75

Ronald A. Ryder  
Department of Fishery and Wildlife Biology  
Colorado State University  
Fort Collins, COLORADO 80521

Dear Dr. Ryder:

Dr. Banks has no doubt written you concerning the Horned Larks and the owl. I note, however, that you desire information on the age of the specimen. The specimen is an adult. We have few aged specimens and I cannot be sure if the bird is fully adult, but it is very likely at least two years old. Measurements of wing chord and tail compare favorably to those of a female in Ridgway and in Earhart and Johnson, Condor 72: 253, 1970.

Enclosed is a list of your catalogue numbers of the 10% (26) Horned Larks as agreed for retention and deposit in the National Museum.

Thank you for the opportunity of seeing the specimen of Aegolius funereus. The specimen will be mailed to you this week.

Collected 15 June 1973, west slope side of Rabbit Ears Pass, Routt Co., Colo. by Gerald R. Craig, raptor biologist.

Sincerely,

*M. Ralph Browning*

M. Ralph Browning

Another Boreal Owl record (no specimen)  
Encl.

Jack -  
You may want to send Mr. Wagner a form -

His address:

John L. Wagner  
P.O. Box 445  
Walden, CO  
80480

## OBSERVATION CARD

Band No. \_\_\_\_\_

Rest. rec'd

12/20/74 JR

Species Boreal Owl

Sex \_\_\_\_\_

Age Imm.

No. present 1

Date 7/13/1974 Time 3:00pm

Location 5mi N. of Chambers lake on the

Laramie river road & Laramie Co., Colo.

Weather chd - warm

Vegetation Spruce-fir forest

Behaviour Was along the side of the road by a

small stream. Was not mature enough to fly,

Observed or collected by JL



Species: BOREAL OWL

Aegolius funereus

(Vernacular Name)

(Scientific Name-use binomial)

Date(s): July 13, 1974

Time Bird Seen: 3:00 pm

to 3:15 pm

Locality 5 mi N of Chambers Lake on Laramie River Road

Nearest Town: Glendevy, Colo. (Post Office only) County: Larimer

Other observers who independently identified this bird:

NAME

ADDRESS

TELEPHONE

none

Optical Equipment: 7x35 binoculars

If photographed, type of equipment used: \_\_\_\_\_

Light Conditions: Cloudy, just before an afternoon shower

Distance from bird (how measured) 20' when first seen; bird was held later and examined

Number of Birds Seen: 1

Sex: U

Plumage: \_\_\_\_\_

The bird was first seen while I was driving down the road. I backed up and watched the bird with my binoculars. The bird was sitting on the ground next to a road cut where a small trickle of water came out of the trees. The bird made no attempt to fly or to walk away. I watched the bird for 5 min. then walked over to it. The bird still made no attempt to get away but just sat there popping it's bill as I approached. The bird continued this activity as I picked it up for closer examination.

Describe in great detail the bird's size, overall shape, plumage and color-pattern. Include details on shape of bill, wings and tail. Give particular emphasis to the marks you used to identify the bird. Reference to its resemblance in field guide descriptions is not enough. Describe what you actually saw in the field:

1. In my hand the owl was about 8-9" tall. It was about 3-4" across the nap and back area. It's head was very flat looking on top. It's eyes were on the front of its head. Its wings were rounded on the ends and covered with white spots. The tail was blunt but not square and also had white markings.

2. It was a cloudy day and the light was bad. In this light the bird was a very dark brown with white spots over its whole body. It was white around the neck and chin area. The owl was fully feathered but could not fly. No broken bones were felt in the wings.

3. The owl had very bright yellow eyes and a bright yellow bill which was a typical owl shape. The yellow color was one of the most noticeable characteristics of the owl.



Describe the bird's song or call, if heard, including method of delivery, i.e., from perch, in flight, etc:  
No call was heard. The only noise made was the popping of its bill.

Describe the habitat in which you observed this bird: It was a Spruce-Fir climax zone next to a small river which has a large amount of willow along its course. Engleman spruce, Picea englemanii, Sub-alpine Fir, Abies lasiocarpa, Willow, Salix spp. Elevation: approx. 8,775 ft.

How were similarly appearing species eliminated? Using size, eye color, bill color & plumage characteristics, I looked at the small owls in the field guides.

Main character differences:

1. Eyes wrong color for Barred Owl
2. Too small for Hawk Owl; breast markings different
3. I am very familiar with the burrowing owl and the overall color was wrong
4. The saw-whets I have seen did not have that much white on them and the bills are different in color
5. No "ears" like the screech or Whiskered owl.
6. Too large and eye color wrong for a Flammulated owl.
7. Bill color is wrong for a Pygmy owl.

Prior experience with this and similarly appearing species:

Have made many observations on burrowing owls and have seen several saw-whets at close range.

Books, illustrations and advice consulted and how did these influence this documentation?  
Peterson's Field Guide to Western Birds. Robbins, Bruun, Zim & Singer.  
Birds of North America

I also called Our Raptor Biol., Gerald Craig, Colo. Div. of Wildlife, 6060  
This report was written from notes made during \_\_\_\_\_ after \_\_\_\_\_ observation; from memory \_\_\_\_\_  
Broadway  
Denver, Colo.

PRINT NAME: John L. Wagner Wildlife Conservation Officer

Street Address: P.O. BOX 445

SIGNATURE:

DATE: 2-12-1975

Town and State: Walden, Colorado

ZIP: 80480

Return to: JACK REDDALL - 4450 South Alton Street, Englewood, Colorado 80110