

Bulletin of the Museum of Comparative Zoölogy
AT HARVARD COLLEGE.
VOL. XLI. No. 1.

BIRDS OF THE CAPE REGION OF LOWER CALIFORNIA.

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WITH ONE MAP.

CAMBRIDGE, MASS., U. S. A. :
PRINTED FOR THE MUSEUM.
SEPTEMBER, 1902.

Bubo virginianus elachistus, subsp. nov.¹

DWARF HORNED OWL.

Bubo virginianus (not *Strix virginiana* GMELIN) BAIRD, Cat. N. Amer. Birds, 1859, no. 48, part; Proc. Acad. Nat. Sci. Phila., 1859, 301, 302 (Cape St. Lucas). SHARPE, Cat. Birds Brit. Mus., II. 1875, 19-23, part.

[*Bubo virginianus*] var. *arcticus* COUES, Key N. Amer. Birds, 1872, 202, part.

Bubo virginianus, var. *arcticus* COUES, Check List, 1873, 63, no. 317 a, part. BAIRD, BREWER, and RIDGWAY, Hist. N. Amer. Birds, III. 1874, 64, part (Lower California).

Bubo virginianus subarcticus (not *Bubo subarcticus* HOY) RIDGWAY, Nom. N. Amer. Birds (Bull. U. S. Nat. Mus., no. 21), 1881, 36, no. 405 a, part; Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., VI. 1883, 349 (crit.; Victoria Mts.). BELDING, *Ibid.*, V. 1883, 543 (Cape Region); VI. 1883, 349 (Victoria Mts.). BRYANT, Proc. Calif. Acad. Sci., 2d ser., II. 1889, 284 (Cape Region; Victoria Mts.).

Bubo virginianus arcticus COUES, Check List, 2d ed., 1882, 80, no. 463, part.

B.[ubo] virginianus subarcticus RIDGWAY, Man. N. Amer. Birds, 2d ed., 1896, 263, part.

Subspecific Characters: — Similar to *Bubo virginianus saturatus*, but very much smaller.

Measurements: —

			Wing	Tarsus	Length of bill from nostril
Male	Type, No. 17,866	{ Sierra de la Laguna, May 31, 1887, M. Abbott Frazar }	12.96	2.45	.85
Male	No. 17,865	{ San José del Rancho, July 20, 1887, M. Abbott Frazar }	13.20	2.50	.85
Male	No. 47,302	{ Santa Anita, July 17, 1896, Loye Miller }	12.52	2.28	.80
		Average	12.89+	2.41	.83+
Female	No. 17,867	{ Sierra de la Laguna, April 29, 1877, M. Abbott Frazar }	13.42	2.35	.89

This dwarf form of *B. virginianus*, the smallest, if I am not mistaken, which is at present known, at least from any part of North America, is represented in my collection by four adult birds, three of which are colored and marked nearly like average specimens of *saturatus*. The fourth appears much paler, but it is in excessively worn condition, and a number of new feathers sprouting among and

¹ In April of the present year I showed my Horned Owls from the Cape Region to Mr. Oberholser. He told me that he had decided to describe the form which they represent, but finding that I had already done this in manuscript and that my paper was likely to appear before his, he was kind enough to suggest that I use the above name, which he had selected and which is derived from the Greek ελαχιστος = least.

beneath the old and faded ones indicate that the fresh plumage, when completed, would have been as dark as that of the other three skins. There is a specimen in the National Museum, however, obtained by Mr. Xantus in the Cape Region, which, although apparently neither worn nor faded, is nearly as light-colored as average examples of *B. v. pallescens*. Mr. Oberholser, who is at present engaged in a critical study of the entire *B. virginianus* group, tells me that he has noted similar color variations in most of the forms which he has examined, and that he regards them as representing different and probably permanent color phases comparable to, although less conspicuous than, those which are found in so many of the members of the genus *Megascops*.

Mr. Frazar found this Owl nearly everywhere from the coast to the tops of the highest mountains, but not commonly except on the Sierra de la Laguna, where as many as three or four were often heard hooting at once. Mr. Belding had a similar experience, rarely meeting the bird in the low country, whereas it was "frequently heard and occasionally seen" at the higher elevations. Its preference for the mountains is doubtless due to the fact that they afford the only extensive forests of large trees which exist in this region, for *Bubo virginianus* is comparatively indifferent to considerations of mean temperature and equally at home in subtropical, temperate, or subarctic climates. This, however, can be said only of the *species*, as the adaptation of the individual to extremes — whether of heat or cold, moisture or dryness — must be usually very gradual, for in most cases it has been accompanied by modifications of color or physique sufficiently pronounced to distinguish birds which have become established in one region from those of another where the climatic conditions are widely different. The Horned Owls which inhabit the southern extremity of Lower California afford a good illustration of this fact, for, as has been already pointed out, they differ considerably from all the forms which occur in other parts of North America. I have seen no specimens from anywhere on the Peninsula north of La Paz, and hence have no means of judging just how far northward the present subspecies extends, but Mr. Bryant states that "on the peninsula opposite Magdalena Island, I found in a giant cactus a bulky nest of sticks upon which could be seen two young" Horned Owls, and "at Comondu an owl of this genus was several times seen at the opening of a small cave high up in the cliff," while at Ubi one was heard hooting on the night of May 9, 1889, and at Calnialli a feather was picked up in the trail. Mr. Anthony also met with Horned Owls "among the pines on San Pedro Martir at 2,500 to 10,000 feet elevation" (Bryant).

Speotyto cunicularia hypogaea (BONAP.).

BURROWING OWL.

Speotyto cunicularia hypogaea BELDING, Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., V. 1883, 543 (Cape Region). BRYANT, Proc. Calif. Acad. Sci., 2d ser., II. 1889, 285 (Cape Region).