

state. See the related article by Simpson in this issue for recent information on the status of the Saw-whet Owl in western North Carolina.—DEPT. ED.]

## Recent Observations of Saw-whet Owls in the Southern Great Balsam and Black Mountains of North Carolina

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In previous articles (Simpson, 1968, 1972a, 1972b), I have reviewed records of the Saw-whet Owl (*Aegolius acadicus*) from the southern Great Balsam and Black Mountains of western North Carolina. The following observations have been obtained subsequently.

### BLACK MOUNTAINS (Yancey County)

Clyde Hopson (pers. com.) reported regular calling by Saw-whet Owls along the north slope of Mt. Hallback (elevation 6,200 feet) in Mt. Mitchell State Park during May, June, and July of 1971, 1972, and 1973. Individual owls were observed with flashlights near the restaurant parking lot on 10 and 13 August 1971 and again on several occasions in June 1972 and 1973. Hopson reported that a single owl had been calling near the restaurant each night after sunset during the period of 20 April to 10 May 1974; and on several occasions, Hopson was able to observe the owl at close range by use of a flashlight. These records combined with previous sightings reviewed by Simpson (1968, 1972b) indicate that the species is a regular although uncommon summer and spring resident in forests of red spruce (*Picea rubens*) and Fraser fir (*Abies fraseri*) in the Mt. Mitchell area.

### SOUTHERN GREAT BALSAM MOUNTAINS (Haywood, Jackson, and Transylvania Counties)

On 14 May 1974, I conducted a spot check of known calling areas along the Blue Ridge Parkway from Locust Gap to Silvermine Bald. A total of five Saw-whet Owls were calling in the range, and three of the five records were from locales where the species has not been previously encountered.

At 21:15 a single owl was calling from the peak of Lone Bald (elevation 5,400 feet) just above the Parkway. A second owl was heard at 22:30 in Sugar Cove (elevation 5,000 feet) on the N slope of Reinhart Knob. At 23:00 two owls were calling loudly just west of Tanasee Bald Overlook. Subsequent investigation revealed that one of the owls was near the summit of Herrin Knob (elevation 5,700 feet), while the other was calling from the crest of Fork Ridge (elevation 5,800 feet) approximately 1,000 feet N of Mt. Hardy. Later the same night, I returned to the overlook with a group of Carolina Bird Club members, including Ted Beckett, Walter Holland, Ramona Snavelly, and Ida Winkler, and we found the two owls still actively calling. At 23:30 our group located a single owl calling from the north slope of Devil's Courthouse (elevation 5,600 feet).

Previous one night surveys along this range have yielded totals of four to seven owls, with five being about average. Each of the five records from the present survey was from the typical habitat of spruce-fir forest with moderate to extensive infiltration with species found in secondary successional, northern hardwood, or heath bald communities.

### LITERATURE CITED

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