

Snowy Owl in Richland County, S.C.

LEX GLOVER
P.O. Box 117
Lugoff, S.C. 29078

JOHN EMMETT CELY
Nongame-Heritage Trust Section
South Carolina Wildlife and
Marine Resources Department
P.O. Box 167, Columbia, S.C. 29202

On 18 November 1986, at about 1600, we saw a Snowy Owl (*Nyctea scandiaca*) about 9 km N of Columbia on US 1. The owl was in the fields and orchards south of the Sandhills Research and Development Center. There was no mistaking the large white owl as it flew through the fields and perched in a small pine or on fence posts, utility poles, and billboards. It remained in the area for one week. While the owl was in the field, we checked it two or three times a day. We fed it mice. Our reason for the feedings was to maintain the owl's health, in case it was suffering from stress. We discontinued feeding when the owl attempted to catch prey on its own. The owl was fed three times during the week, with an average of three mice per feeding. It took only live food; once we dragged a dead rat across the ground, but to no avail. At one feeding, Glover accidentally dropped a mouse at his foot; as he bent down to pick it up, the owl left its perch to capture the mouse. Glover stood up and took a step back, while the owl picked the mouse up centimeters from his foot, brushing his leg with its wing.

On 26 November, a concerned individual caught the bird after it had moved to a busy intersection and had begun flying low over a four-lane highway. The bird was taken to Riverbanks Zoological Park. At the time of capture, the bird, which was an immature male, weighed 1.2 kg (Fig. 1). It was subsequently sent to the University of Minnesota Raptor Rehabilitation Center.

[EDITOR'S NOTE: This individual died in captivity in Minnesota. The whereabouts of the specimen is unknown. However, another specimen has been taken in South Carolina, and it is in the state collection.—WP]

Nest Destruction by the Eastern Wood-Pewee

PARIS R. TRAIL
Route 4, Box 268-A
Edenton, N.C. 27932

I have a home near Edenton, Chowan County, N.C., in the middle of a large acreage of mature deciduous trees. A number of species of woodland birds nest in the woods near the house. On 20 May 1986 I found a Ruby-throated Hummingbird (*Archilochus colubria*) nest by "bee-lining" the female as she left my hummingbird feeder. She was still in the process of lining her nest with willow cotton, so I put a Celestron telescope on it to observe her activities more closely. On 21 May, as I was watching through the telescope, a female Eastern Wood-Pewee (*Contopus virens*) entered the field of view, hovered beside the hummingbird nest, and quickly plucked out a beakfull of willow cotton and flew off. I subsequently discovered that she was



Fig. 1. Snowy Owl, photographed in captivity. (Photo by Chris Merck)

starting a nest on a dead limb of a Red Maple (*Acer rubra*) about 50 yards from the hummingbird nest. The pewee returned for more material and was buzzed and driven away, bill snapping, by the returning female Ruby-throated Hummingbird. The female pewee persisted, however, and during the day, while the female Hummingbird was absent, succeeded in totally destroying the nest. The Ruby-throated Hummingbird has abandoned that site and appears to be nesting in the woods on the other side of the house. I have not found the new nest.

On 23 May I saw the female Eastern Wood-Pewee hovering around the almost completed nest of a pair of Summer Tanagers (*Piranga rubra*). As I watched, she began to filch lining material from *this* nest. She made several trips to the Summer Tanager nest during the day, taking substantial amounts of lining material from it. In the face of this thievery, the Summer Tanagers may have abandoned this nest site, as I have not seen them around it for several days.

Both nests were very well concealed, and the Summer Tanagers' nest was about 100 yards from the pewee's nest. The pewee has completed her nest, so presumably her neighbors' nests are now safe. I had not previously observed this behavior in the Eastern Wood-Pewee and in my limited searches could find no references to it in the literature.