

# THE SNOWY OWL

THE PLAIN of the snow-covered coastal marsh was interrupted by curving tidal creeks and an occasional white-capped haystack, like a marshmallow cookie. Atop one of these a snowy owl sat, silent and alert. A lone crow flying toward the beach spotted him there and sounded an alarm. In a moment a gang of black rascals was cawing and jeering its traditional enemy of darkness. Since most owls see poorly in daylight, they are considered safe game; but this



Snowy Owl  
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was no ordinary owl. Crouching low, with fierce yellow eyes it watched every movement of its tormentors. Suddenly it sprang into the air. Powerful talons snatched a crow in full flight. Returning to its perch with unconcern the great bird tore out the flesh and swallowed it, then, squatting, wiped off its face in the snow as a cat does. The crows were gone.

The snowy owl is spectacularly handsome. It is all white except for more or less distinct brownish bars on back and belly. Its head is big and round without ear tufts, or horns. By both weight and wing span it is America's largest owl, with a weight of 5 pounds, length to 26 inches and spread of 5½ feet.

In the chill Arctic regions, clear

around the pole beyond the limit of trees and as far north as land is known, the great white owl has its home. Snow persists in May and June when the bird scratches a depression in the moss on a hill-top and lays 5 to 8 white eggs. To feed the voracious young, this fearless hunter will take anything to twice its size from big Arctic hares, game and shore birds to fish, but its normal food consists of mice and lemmings. Much of the year it roams the tundra like a nomad performing invaluable service in reducing populations of those destructive rodents. Of necessity, in a land of midnight sun, it has learned to hunt by day.

Though many snowy owls win-

ter in their bleak homeland, there is a southward migration to northern United States each fall. Some years, as result perhaps of feed shortage, it is a veritable invasion. These owls are birds of the open country, being seen most often about the Great Lakes, the Saint Lawrence river and along the Atlantic coast. They appear irregularly in numbers to Virginia, Illinois, Kansas, Colorado and Washington, having wandered to the Gulf coast and Bermuda. Look for them on dunes, posts, hayricks, hummocks and muskrat houses—rarely in trees.

Since stuffed white owls are no longer the approved decoration of cigar stores and bars, says the National Wildlife Federation, the

future of this rapacious and beautiful birds seems secure

## Local News

A showing of the colored movies taken on their trip to oriental ports on the President Wilson, was recently shown to a group of friends by the Lyle Redfields and Mrs. Weber. Many beautiful souvenirs native to each port were also displayed and much enjoyed by all those seeing them.

Brookings Harbor Pilot 7  
THURSDAY, JANUARY 1, 1953

Mr and Mrs. Warren Smith and their daughter and family of Everett, Wash., are in Long Beach, Calif., to celebrate the holiday season.

Mr. and Mrs. Art Forsburg have lately visited a daughter in San Francisco

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