

body when taken out of the skin and feathers. It is always a matter of surprise to see the small body of all owls as compared to the apparent large bulk of the birds, but the great gray owl beats the other owls, like the barred, great horned and the snowy, all to pieces in this respect. During our last cold season three of these owls, shot near Ottawa, have come to my notice. One was shot last November by a farmer in South March, the second about February 1st, near Templeton, Quebec, and the third about the end of March, locality unknown. All three found their way to a local taxidermist, from whom I procured the second one. Being familiar with the small size of owls' bodies, still I was not prepared for anything like this proved to be, when it was prepared and mounted. The great gray owl is in appearance our largest owl, it measures in length 25-30 inches, extent (wings spread) 54-60 inches, tail 11-13 inches. Its large facial disk, much larger than in other owls, heightens the impression of largeness, besides making it appear somewhat solemn, mysterious and uncanny. The body taken out from this owl, i.e. the trunk, without skin, head and wings, measured only, length 6 1-2 in., depth, i.e., from breastbone to back 3 3-8 in., width across thorax 2 1-2 in., weight 8-10 oz. It was much smaller than the body of the great horned and even barred owls; as large as a half grown ruffed grouse and then not as wide. Of course this specimen was extremely emaciated, but that would not decrease the size of the skeleton. It was so thin as to be transparent in the abdominal region; of intestines there was not much to be seen and the stomach was empty. It is hard to understand how such a tiny body compared to the bulk of the bird could keep up the huge wings, heavy claws and enormous head, whose circumference measures 20 inches, the facial disk alone, 6 inches! There was so little flesh on it, that it did not decay, but only dry up in the winter air. This seems to show also that this owl can eat very little only of a rabbit, if it catches them at all, and it seems much more likely that it confines itself to small birds and small mammals, like mice, for food. No wonder the books express astonishment at the relatively small size of their eggs which are hardly any larger than those of the barred owls, a much smaller bird in appearance. The egg of the latter, as figured in Bendire, measures 2x1-75 in., that of the former 2.125x 1.73 inches. While this seems small when compared with the eggs of birds smaller in appearance, like ducks, grouse, etc., it