

THE BURROWING OWL (*CUNICULARIA HYPOGÆA*).

This interesting bird is at the time of writing very rare in this district, although some ten or twelve years ago it was to be found in certain spots, living in pairs as a rule, although I knew of one colony of some dozen individuals living together in an assemblage of burrows on the edge of a tract of barren prairie land, the soil of which was so strongly impregnated with alkali that the only vegetation was a few scattered tussocks of coarse grass and stunted shrubs, among which the owls had taken up their quarters. The birds might be seen walking about among the mounds at the entrance of their underground dwellings, taking short flights over the prairies, and on the approach of danger retreating into the safety of the burrows.

These owls are abroad at night as well as during the day, and at that time utter a peculiar cry, of two notes repeated at intervals. The sound may be heard for a considerable distance in the darkness, but if one attempts to catch sight of the performer by creeping up to the spot from which the sound comes, it ceases suddenly, the bird no doubt seeking safety underground.

I dug up the residence of a pair of these birds and found a tunnel running in a sloping direction to the depth of some three feet at the end of which was a chamber roughly oval in form, with no lining of grass or other material, and on the floor of this lay the bodies of four mice, the head of each one had been devoured, the bodies we must suppose were being kept against days of scarcity. This seems to me a peculiar habit, for a carnivorous bird, especially as there were no young to provide for.

This interesting colony has been long extinct, and the solitary pair which had their home near the spot for a few years, have long since deserted it, owing to the ploughing up of their building—or perhaps I should say, digging site.

Sometimes in the evening the call note may still be heard, but it comes from a long distance, and is a rare sound.

E. P. VENABLES, Vernon, B.C.

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MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL.

January 26th—The following members in attendance: the President, Mr. A. E. Attwood, Miss Q. Jackson, Miss E. E. Curry, Rev. G. Eifrig, Messrs. A. Halkett, A. McNeill, H. H. Pitts, L. H. Newman, and T. E. Clarke.

The following were elected to membership:—