

The Rockwood Review.

shape of droppings, and their skulls and skeletons in the owls' castings, were numerous all over the tundra. During that season we saw but few fowls. On the other hand, in 1882, lemmings were exceedingly plenty all around the station and owls were proportionately abundant; scarcely a day passed without one or more being seen sitting on the tundra, generally on the top of a bank or small knoll, on the lookout for lemmings." (Expedition to Point Barrow, Alaska, 1885, p. 107.)

Of the ten or twelve specimens which Dr. Leonhard Stejneger secured on Bering Island, all except one contained the remains of arvicoline mice. The largest number found in the stomach of one individual was six, but in another the stomach was spoken of as "crammed with arvicolæ," so that probably it contained at least ten or fifteen mice. The extent of the dependence of this Owl upon mice is shown by a very interesting fact relative to the recent increase of the Owl on Bering Island, which the latter author records. Prior to 1870 there were no mice, and very few Owls ever visited the island. About this date the house mouse (*Mus musculus*) was introduced from ships and the Redbacked Mouse (*Evotomys rutilus*) in some unknown way. Twelve years afterwards he found the island swarming with mice and an abundance of resident Owls, affording a striking demonstration of the perfect workings of nature, for with the undue increase of any one species there occurs a corresponding increase of its natural enemies.

Dr. Stejner says: "From * * * the contents of the stomachs, it would seem as if *Arvicola* was almost their only food. But it is only fair to state that I have seen this Owl chase sea ducks, especially *Histrionicus histrionicus* out at the reef, very much in the same manner as does the falcon. (Bull. U. S. Nat. Mus., No. 29, 1885, p. 223)

Mr. Thomas McIlraith, in "The Birds of Ontario," mentions one which made several attempts to capture a wounded duck, in which effort it probably would have succeeded had it not been killed. On the Mackenzie River, Richardson relates that one of the Owls was seen to fly over a cliff and carry off a full-fledged Duck Hawk in its claws, with which it alighted on the opposite bank of the river. The parent Hawk followed, uttering loud screams, and darting down struck the Owl, killing it instantly. Wilson and Audubon, who knew the bird only during its short winter visits, speak of its food as follows:

Wilson says: "The usual food of of this species is said to be hares, grouse, rabbits, ducks, mice, and even carrion. * * * I met with this bird on the Oswego River, New York State, a little below the Falls, vigilantly watching for fish." While according to Audubon, "Its usual food, while it remains with us, consists of hares, squirrels, rats, and fishes, portions of all of which I have found in its stomach. * * * In one of them I found the whole of a large brown rat, in pieces of considerable size, the head and tail almost entire."

Although most of the Owls will