

NOTES ON THE ACADIAN OWL (*NYCTALA ACADICA*)  
IN CAPTIVITY.

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By F. NORMAN BEATTIE, Guelph, Ont.

On the fourth of November, 1899, while strolling through a small swale near this city, I noticed an Acadian Owl with a field mouse in its claws, perched on a small bush. Thinking I might capture him, I sent my companion around in front to engage his attention while I sneaked up behind to grab him. The dodge worked, and I soon had him safely stowed in the pocket of my coat. He did not seem to mind being caught in the least, not even snapping his bill, but he objected when I took his mouse away. We took him home and let him loose in a small room which is not used for anything in particular. He immediately took possession, and now he started to puff himself up and snap his bill at anyone who went near. This wore off in a short time, though he always resented being handled. For some time he did not take readily to beef, leaving it strictly alone if he could get anything else, but sometimes I was forced to give it to him, and in the course of a few weeks he overcame his dislike to it and ate it freely. His favourite food was mice, which, unfortunately, I was not always able to give him. However, he was also fond of a squirrel or a small bird. His method of eating a bird was peculiar. First he would pounce down upon it as if it were alive and then, holding it down with one foot, would pull out a fist-full of feathers with the other. He would repeat this operation, changing feet each time, till most of the larger feathers were out; then he would pull off the head and swallow the body if small enough; if not, he would pull it apart, holding it with one foot and pulling with his beak. I never knew him to swallow a bird's head though he always did a mouse's. He invariably pounced down upon his food and seized it firmly in his claws as he evidently was in the habit of doing with live game.

He could gulp a surprisingly large piece of beef, in fact, when several pieces were given him he always chose the largest first. If too large to swallow whole he would take a few bites and then put down the remainder.