

WHITE GREAT GRAY OWL

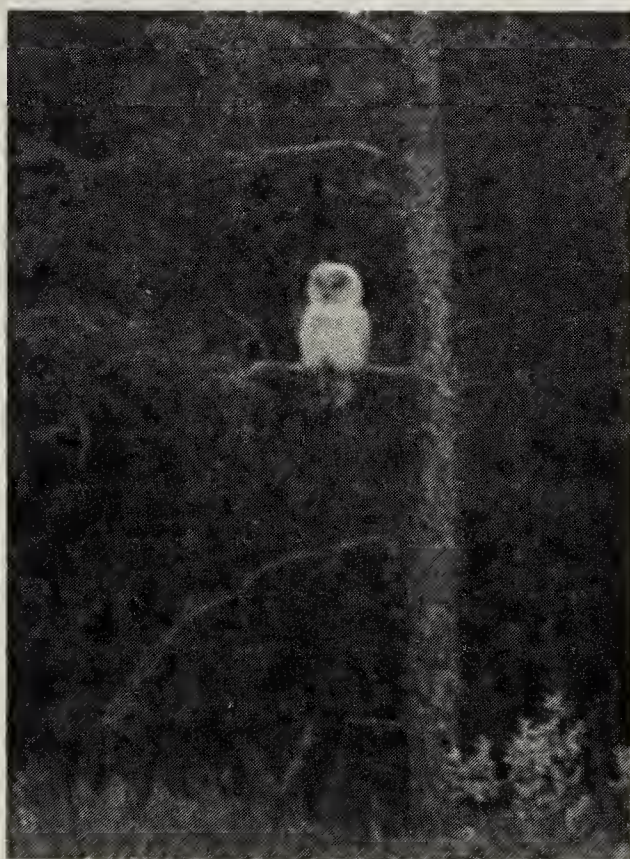
ROBERT W. NERO, Manitoba Wildlife Branch, Box 14, 1945 St. James Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba. R3H 0W9

These photos [and the cover photo] were taken by Constable Jim Stinson, RCMP, near Norway House, MB, on 21 June 1990. They were taken after sundown. The photographer waded through chest-deep cold ditch water in order to get close enough for a photo. This bird had been seen in this locality on three different occasions from 10-21 June. On one occasion it was being harassed by several crows and ravens from a nearby garbage dump. Some other normally-plumaged Great Gray Owls were seen during the period in the general area, including one seen within one-half km of the albino.

Inasmuch as the albino bird appears to be in full plumage (and in June it could hardly be a juvenile), it is safe to say that it could not have been less

than a year old when photographed. Hence, it has survived at least one year despite its conspicuous white plumage. Its dark eyes are apparently the result of enlarged pupils, presumably in response to the low light level at that time of day and in that forested site. Photos taken at another time show the yellow color of the iris. This means that the bird should have normal vision. Pigment appears to be totally lacking in the plumage, but the presence of normal eye color means that the bird should be considered an incomplete albino. Nothing like this bird was mentioned in the one note on albinism previously published in the *Blue Jay*.

1. SCRIVEN, R. 1984. A note on albinism in the Great Gray Owl. *Blue Jay* 42: 173-74.



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