

was shipped to the Canadian Wildlife Service in Ottawa.

"We band owls to find out where they go and how long they live," said Houston. Young Great Horned Owls will travel up to 1600 km (1000 mi) southeast as far as Minnesota, Iowa and Nebraska during winter; the older owls tend to remain in their breeding territory. Many of the 407 owls banded this year by Houston and his assistants were found in the Battleford to Yorkton area of the province.

This was an early nesting year. "I banded my first young owl in 1981 on April 26 — the earliest banding in 1313 nests over more than 30 years," said Dr. Houston. When rabbits, mice, pocket gophers and other prey populations are high, nesting of owls will be frequent and successful. "A pair of birds were found approximately every 2 mi (5.2 km)," he said. "Owls are very successful birds if they have suitable nesting conditions."

The 12 May banding was accomplished by Stuart Houston and Bill Barrie, a pathologist also interested in birds. Pete Sielski took them up the tower, guiding them around or away from the overhead wires and the 15 insulators below the nest.

"The mother bird didn't make an attempt to fly at us," said Pete. "She sat close and chattered away, snapping her beak. A few times she would shriek and fly off the tower, then closer to the tower when her young were being handled for banding." The gloves worn to reduce contact with static electricity that builds up within the magnetic field created around the tower were also good protection from the owl beaks and claws.

The late afternoon banding session at 1800 that day was photographed by Pete and by Chris Escott, a planner in Saskatoon. "It was really one of the most

exciting banding sessions I've been part of yet," said Chris.

The nest, now empty, remains on the bottom arm of the B2Q circuit side, or south side, of tower 377, home for an owl or two next year, perhaps.



Young Great Horned Owl. Kathy Morck

1981 SASKATCHEWAN CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

From Saturday, 19 December 1981 to Sunday, 3 January 1982, inclusive. Count area should be a circle, 24 km (15 miles) in diameter. This year, bird count forms will be sent to all compilers who submitted counts for Christmas 1980. Anyone else who wishes to send in a count, please write for a form to: Margaret Belcher, 2601 Winnipeg St., Regina, Sask. S4P 1H8.

Reports should be sent as soon as possible after the count (by 11 January 1982 at the latest) to the above address.