

SOME UNEXPECTED FINDINGS IN THE
STOMACH OF PREDATORY BIRDS
AND MAMMALS

Ed Crabb, 1920.

The stomach of three screech owls (*Otus asio asio Linnaeus*) collected during January, contained a great number of insects, chiefly grasshoppers (locusts) and beetles. In addition one had eaten a large white grub which was probably the larva of the

May beetle (*Lachnosterna fusca*) and another had added a small rodent to its diet.

While it is very common to find grasshoppers in the stomach of the screech owl, one would hardly expect to find this insect playing an important part in its mid-winter menu.

The stomach of a broad-winged hawk, *Buteo platypterus Viellot*, collected at Yukon, Oklahoma, in August, 1913, contained only cicadas and grasshoppers.

A parallel case is that of the stomach and crop contents of a red-shou'dered hawk, *Buteo lineatus lineatus Gemelin*, collected in the same locality in September, 1916, which was composed of a black cricket, one carabid beetle, and the remains of 288 short-horned grasshoppers.

The stomach of an adult female bobcat, *Felis (lynx) rufa baileyi*, Elliott, caught in the Wichita Mountains, December 25, 1919, contained a double hand-full of small sticks. This animal had attempted to cross a creek on a pile of drift when the drag to which the trap was tied became entangled in the driftwood. This bobcat chewed and swallowed the quantity of sticks in the frenzy of vain attempts to free herself.

The stomachs of five skunks (*Mephitis mesomelas Elliott*) collected in the Wichita Mountains, in December, 1919, contained parasitic round worms. In addition to the parasites two stomachs were well filled with large grasshoppers. The stomachs of the other three skunks were empty of food; two, however, had gnawed off the foot and that part of the leg which projected through the jaws of the steel trap and had swallowed shreds of the skin, hair, and bits of the bone. One of these had also swallowed an appreciable quantity of the coarse sand in which the trap had been set.

These observations demonstrate that the public over-estimates the damage done by our predatory birds and animals. It is therefore, evident that man underestimates the good that they do. This is especially true relative to most of our predatory birds.

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