

## SHORELINE VISITORS

In both the 1980/81 and 1991/92 flights, many Snowy Owls were discovered along Lake Michigan's shores. Last winter, observers spotted five along Lake County's shoreline and 19 along Cook County's shoreline. Eight Snowy Owls were recorded at Montrose Harbor in Chicago and five at the Meigs Field/Burnham Harbor/Shedd Aquarium breakwater area. Several birds that met with misfortune were also discovered. An Illinois state trooper found a Snowy Owl with a broken wing along I-57 in Champaign County. Another injured bird was discovered in Lee County.

Another bird that was thought to be injured was discovered by an Adams County Sheriff along highway 24 near Quincy. When he saw a Snowy Owl with blood all over its chest, the

concerned sheriff contacted wildlife rehabilitator Ed Adcox. What Adcox discovered was a perfectly healthy Snowy Owl with a duck in its talons.

Adcox observed the owl for five days during which time the bird enjoyed a meal of three ducks. The owl was then released not to be seen again.

Snowy Owls could not be relocated during this winter's invasion except for those in just a few areas such as Montrose Harbor, Meigs Field, and in Menard and Kankakee counties. Most of the birds were seen one day only and probably were immature females, which are not as prone to territory establishment as males, according to David Evans, an owl bander in the Duluth, Minnesota area.

During the 1980/81 winter invasion, many Snowy Owls stayed at the same locations for days, weeks, and even

months at a time, particularly along the Chicago lakefront and at the Lake Calumet region where sometimes five at a time could be seen. Last winter, only one bird was reported from the Lake Calumet area and that was for one day only.

The recent invasion was confined largely to the upper one-third of the state (see Figure 1), whereas, during the winter of 1980/81 quite a few Snowy Owls made it to the central part of the state and even lower with one recorded in Union County in southern Illinois. (See Figure 2)

Last winter's farthest south record occurred two counties to the north at Rend Lake in Franklin County. Another downstate sighting was at Clinton County at Carlyle Lake when an observer saw an individual Snowy Owl at night on top of a light post in a parking lot in late November.



*Snowy Owl, Montrose Harbor, Chicago, 27 November 1991. (Robert Hughes photo)*