

FLAMMULATED OWL NESTING IN A SQUIRREL BOX

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On 1 July 1977 an adult and two downy young Flammulated Owls (*Otus flammeolus*) were discovered in an artificial nest box in southeastern Utah. The nest box was 1 of 12 placed at various heights and exposures in selected Ponderosa Pines (*Pinus ponderosa*) to determine if Abert Squirrels (*Sciurus aberti*) would use artificially constructed nest sites. The boxes measured 30.5 cm × 30.5 cm × 50.8 cm, were constructed of pine, had a hinged, sloping roof and a 6.4 cm diameter entrance hole positioned 6.4 cm from the top of the box (Pederson et al., Habitat requirements of the Abert Squirrel on the Monticello District, Manti-LaSal National Forest of Utah, Utah Div. of Wildl. Res. Publ. No. 76-9, 108 p.). The occupied nest box was placed against the trunk of the Ponderosa at a height of 12.5 m and faced northeast. The tree, one of a clump of three left after the harvest, had a height of 19.8 m and a diameter at breast height of 35.6 cm. Examination of this box in 1974-1977 showed use by Abert Squirrels, Red Squirrels (*Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*) and Common Flickers (*Colaptes auratus*). When the box was examined again on 17 October 1977, no evidence of the adult or young was found. Successful fledging of the young is assumed.

The box was in Ponderosa Pine and Gambel Oak (*Quercus gambelii*) habitat approximately 9.6 km west of Monticello, Utah. This section of forest had been selectively harvested to open its canopy in the fall of 1973 and spring of 1975. The occurrence of the species in the forest of Ponderosa Pine conflicts with Karalus and Eckert's statements (The owls of North America, Doubleday, Garden City, NY, 1974:160) that the Flammulated Owl "avoids forest of Ponderosa Pine and areas of extensive forest cutting," but agrees with Winter's findings (West. Birds 5:25-44, 1974) of close association of these owls to Ponderosa Pine and Jeffrey Pine (*P. jeffreyi*) forests, including second growth forest.

This constitutes the fourth record of this species nesting in Utah. Hayward (Wilson Bull. 49:303-305, 1937) reported a female taken from a nest containing two downy young at Mule Flat, Mount Timpanogos, Utah County, on 3 July 1937. Bee and Hutchings (Great Basin Nat. 3:61-85, 1942) reported a female taken from a nest containing fresh eggs at Mutual Dell, Mount Timpanogos, 3 June 1934. Mosher and Wolfenden (Ph.D. Thesis, Brigham Young Univ., Provo, Utah, 1975) listed the third record of Flammulated Owls breeding in Utah, but did not give the location of the nest.

To our knowledge, the only other use of an artificial nest structure by Flammulated Owls was in Bear Canyon in Arizona's Santa Catalina Mountains. A pair of Flammulated Owls was observed making feeding visits to a nest box at dusk. The box was attached about 7 m from the ground on the southern side of a Ponderosa Pine, (Steven M. Speich pers. comm.).

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