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THE DISTRIBUTION OF *BUBO VIRGINIANUS PINORUM* NORTH AND WEST TO WASHINGTON

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Dickerman and Johnson (2008) described subspecies *Bubo virginianus pinorum* of the Great Horned Owl, designating a type specimen from the Sandia Mountains of north-central New Mexico and outlining the range as "plains of the Snake River of Idaho, south ... at increasing elevations, to Arizona and New Mexico." *Bubo v. pinorum* is darker dorsally and more heavily barred ventrally than the pale *B. v. pallescens* of the desert Southwest or *B. v. subarcticus* of the Canadian prairie parklands but paler and more lightly barred than in *B. v. lagophonus* or *B. v. saturatus* to the northwest or in *B. v. pacificus* of coastal California. Here I trace the distribution of *B. v. pinorum* further, extending it north and west to central and northern Washington.

Oberholser (1904) resurrected the name *B. v. occidentalis* Stone (a synonym of *B. v. subarcticus* Hoy; Dickerman 1991) for the Great Horned Owls of south-central Canada and the U.S. from Montana, northeastern California, and Nevada east to eastern Minnesota and south to central Kansas (AOU 1957) because they just did not fit his other subspecies. His action was in large part a result of not recognizing migration in this species in the West (Oberholser 1904, Dickerman 2002, Dickerman and Johnson 2008). The name soon became entrenched in the literature (e.g., AOU 1910, 1931, 1957, Linsdale 1936, Grinnell and Miller 1944), and museums used the name *occidentalis* in arranging specimens. Thus in my search for specimens of *pinorum* I first looked for specimens identified as *occidentalis*.

In 1991, when I began my studies of New Mexico's Great Horned Owls, I visited the Utah Museum of Natural History, before my concepts were established. I scored specimens there as "pj" (pinon/juniper = *pinorum*) or as "pall." (*B. v. pallescens*). In later visits to other collections, I distinguished the five subspecies that occur in the Rocky Mountain region, *B. v. pinorum*, *pallescens*, *lagophonus*, *subarcticus*, and *saturatus*.

I identified over 46 specimens of *B. v. pinorum* from Washington, Oregon, California, Nevada, and Utah; those from Washington, Oregon, California, and Nevada are plotted in Figure 1. Some dots in Washington and Oregon represent birds that are not on their nesting grounds, so Figure 1 does not reflect exact nesting range, but it does reflect the overall range of the subspecies. *Bubo v. pinorum* is largely sedentary; specimens from nonbreeding sites presumably represent only local movement.

The type specimen of *B. v. lagophonus* Oberholser is one of four Great Horned Owls collected by Charles Bendire at Walla Walla, Washington, in the winter of 1881–1882. These four specimens, at the U.S. National Museum of Natural History, include two of *B. v. lagophonus* and two of *B. v. pinorum*; *lagophonus* is a migrant at its type locality. I have seen 11 Great Horned Owls taken by Bendire at Walla Walla, and six of them represent *pinorum*. There are, scattered through several museums, at least 14 specimens of *pinorum*, including almost fledged juveniles, from Walla Walla County, Washington, and adjacent Umatilla County, Oregon. The dots from Nevada and California all represent birds collected in the nesting season, so Figure 1 represents the nesting range of *pinorum* in those states. *Bubo v. pinorum* probably occurs in southeastern British Columbia as well, although to date I have seen no specimens from there.

A similar study is needed to outline the northeastern portion of the range of *pinorum* in Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming, and possibly western North and South

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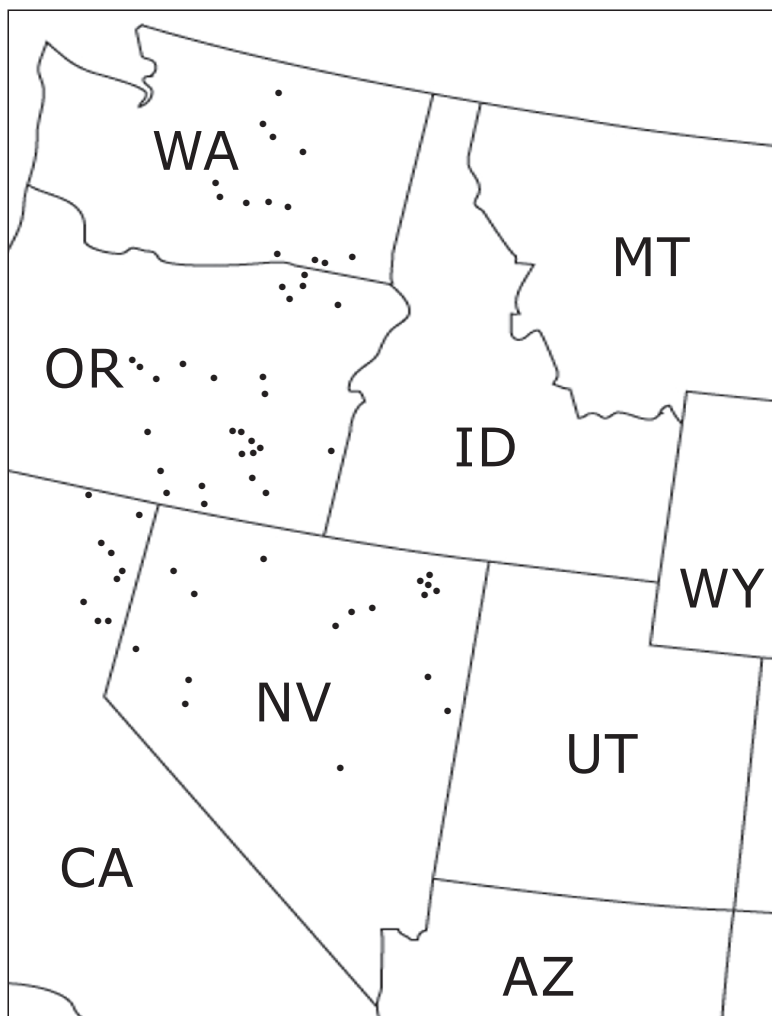


Figure 1. Distribution of specimens of *Bubo virginianus pinorum* in Washington, Oregon, California, and Nevada.

Dakota, but there are far fewer specimens from those areas, and they are far more scattered. Salvage of specimens by state game departments is to be encouraged.

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