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OWL OF THE ARCTIC

In the far north when the winter winds swirl the snow across the wide tundra and pile it deep in the forests, the varying hare or snow-shoe rabbit slips on his fur coat of pure white. This is not so much a protection from the cold as a camouflage against the raids of the big Arctic or snowy owl. The latter is dressed in fluffy warm feathers clear to his toes. He has no fear of raging storms. His sole interest is in the winter's food supply. Every six or seven years, there seems to be a dearth of lemmings, ptarmigans and rabbits and then the white owls have to move south to new hunting grounds. Several have been reported recently in the Pacific Northwest. It is as large as a great horned owl, but his head is rounded without ear tufts. His whitish color, sometimes barred with gray, makes him a conspicuous visitor in the Oregon country. Because of his size and color and because he is thought to be a destroyer of game, few of these unusual visitors escape the hunter's gun.

This owl nests on the ground in the Arctic tundra. Sometimes the first eggs are laid in the snow. Contrary to the idea that an owl cannot see during the day, this dweller of the north hunts in broad daylight. With a wing spread of five feet, he moves silently and yet swiftly. His sharp talons are as deadly as a steel trap.

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