

1-1989

UTAH ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

## VERIFICATION OF UNUSUAL SIGHT RECORD FOR UTAH

1-1989

Common Name: Great gray Owl

Scientific Name: Strix nebulosa

Date: January 28, 1989

Time: Mid-afternoon

Length of time observed: Approx. 20 minutes

Number: 1

Age: Assume adult

Sex: ?

Location: Garden City, Utah (near turn off to  
Logan Canyon)

Lat/long: 3

Elevation (if known): Approx. 5,900 feet (shore of Bear Lake)<sup>NEAR</sup>

Distance to bird: Approx. 200 feet (?)

Light conditions: Bright sun

Optical equipment: Tasco 7x35 binoculars / two different scopes belonging to Jeanne LeBer, Margy Halpin

Weather: Clear and cold (single digit temperature)

Description: (Write a detailed description of the bird's appearance, including size, shape, plumage pattern, color, and any unique features.)

The bird was perched on a narrow, horizontal limb about 12-15 feet up. It had its back toward us. Its back, from head to long tail, was a mottled gray - it blended in well with surrounding trees. The tip of its tail seemed to be a lighter colored band. It turned its head toward us several times and I could see its facial markings very well. Its yellow eyes were set within prominent, concentric circles - alternating dark, thin lines and lighter circles. Its bill was yellow. It had white feathering between its eyes, above and to the sides of its bill. There was white feathering below and to the sides of its bill which resembled a goatee. It lacked ear tufts. I was unable to see its breast. It was a large owl and was obviously larger than the great horned owl observed approximately an hour before this sighting.

David Jensen

116' B St. #3

SLC, UT 84103

(Submitted February 7, 1989)

Voice or call notes and method of delivery: NONE

Behavior: It perched on a limb and was probably sleeping when first seen. It occasionally turned its head around to look at US.

Habitat: In small group of mixed deciduous trees, mostly Cottonwood, surrounded by a few houses and open country.

What similar species might it have been and how were these eliminated:

- Great horned owl / This bird lacked ear tufts, was gray, and had very different facial pattern.
- Barred owl, spotted owl / This bird had yellow eyes & was larger.

Also, a great gray owl had been seen in the same area within the same week.

What experience have you had with this and similar species: First sighting of this owl.

Books, illustrations, and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:

I looked at Golden Field guide after looking at the owl thoroughly.

Significance of record in this area or the state: Rare sighting. This area in Utah closest to its normal range.

Additional material: (attach drawing, photograph, tape recording if available)

Description from notes taken at time of sighting \_\_\_ notes made later \_\_\_ from memory X

Observer: DAVID JENSEN

Signature:

David Jensen

Address: 116 'B' Street #3  
SLC, UTAH 84103

Other observers who independently identified this bird:

Date prepared: 2/7/89

Return this form to: Ella Sorensen  
3868 Marsha Drive  
West Valley City, Utah 84120