

1983

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### Recommended Citation

Walters, Philip M. (1983) "Notes on the Mist-netting of Seven Elf Owls (*micrathene Whitneyi*) and Two Western Screech-owls (*otus Kennecotti*) on 15 July 1982," *North American Bird Bander*. Vol. 8 : Iss. 1 , Article 6.

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# Notes on the mist-netting of seven Elf Owls (*Micrathene whitneyi*) and two Western Screech-Owls (*Otus kennecotti*) on 15 July 1982

Philip M. Walters

The 7 Elf Owls (862-67774, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 80) and 2 Western Screech-Owls (745-44899-900) in the photograph were mist-netted and banded on 15 July 1982 (except for 1 recaptured Screech-Owl banded 6 June 1982), at the Tanque Verde Guest Ranch located in the foothills of the Rincon Mountains east of Tucson, Arizona.

The 9 owls flew into 5 different nets between about 0415 (before dawn), when the 21 12-meter nets were opened, and approximately 0500 (sunrise at 0528), when the nets were first checked for birds. The 2 Screech-Owls were in 1 net and the 7 Elf Owls in 4 others (3, 2, 1, 1). The nets were closed at 0815 because of the heat; the temperature ranged from 76°F (25°C) to 86°F (30°C) over the 4-hour period. The nets taking the owls were in or adjacent to a mesquite bosk.

Both Screech-Owls were juvenals (HY) of unknown sex and showed no evidence of molting or feather edge wear. Weight: 100.2 and 124.7 g. Wing chord: 142 and 143 mm. Tail: 77 and 70 mm.

Of the 7 Elf Owls, 3 were adults (AHY), 2 being females with brood patches (1 of which was receding), and the 3rd of unknown sex; the remaining 4 were juvenals (HY) of unknown sex.

Neither adults nor juvenals showed evidence of molt. No feather edge wear was observed on the juvenals. However, all 3 adults showed slight feather edge wear of the primaries; 2, slight wear of the rectrices; and 1 individual additional slight wear of the secondaries and moderate wear of the rectrices.

The average weight of the adults was 37.5 g (min. 35.4, max. 39.8) and of the 4 juvenals 41.4 g (min. 39.2, max. 42.6). The average wing chord length of the adults was 106 mm (min. 105, max. 108) and of the juvenals 99.5 mm (min. 96, max. 103). The average tail length of the adults was 51.3 mm (min. 48, max. 54) and of the juvenals 45 mm (min. 42, max. 47). These data are generally consistent with those reported by the author for 20 Elf Owls banded in 1979-1980 (1981. *No. Am. Bird Bander* 3:104).

Mist-netting, banding, and photographing the 9 owls together, all in less than 2 hours, is unique in the 4 years (1979-1982) that weekly, year-around banding has been done at the Tanque Verde Ranch. During these years a total of 28 Elf Owls have been banded there by Charles E. Corchran and the author.

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