

GREAT HORNED OWL PREDATION OF GRAY PARTRIDGE.—During the fall and winter of 1974, pen-reared gray partridge (*Perdix perdix*) were maintained in natural cover runs at a facility adjacent to the Souris River approximately 19 miles southwest of Towner, North Dakota (facility formerly owned and operated by Pheasants Unlimited, Minot, North Dakota).

To ensure protection from predation, the perimeters of the natural cover runs were encircled with double-strand electric fence. The runs originally were constructed of one inch wire mesh sides with a two inch wire mesh ceiling. In addition, one inch wire mesh sides were buried two feet in the ground to restrict entry by burrowing mammals.

No losses from predation occurred during the fall, but in December seven gray partridge were found beheaded in their snow covered runs during a three-week period. The cause(s) of death were not apparent at first. After the fifth incident, however, a casting was found near the victim indicating possible raptor predation. The predator was subsequently determined to be a great horned owl (*Bubo virginianus*) and was captured after the seventh kill.

The partridge apparently were frightened by the owl and persisted in attempting to escape through the top of the enclosure, thus exposing their heads with the result being decapitation by the owl.

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