

TAWNY OWL

Strix Aluco Linn.

Strix Aluco Scop.

La Chouette hulotte

We have followed *Strix Aluco* in writing, or at least in adding to our names of this bird, the generic appellation of *Strix*, who separated this species from the more typical *Otus* on account of the short and curved beak, the large size of the facial disk, and the two feathers to the crown.

This bird measures from fourteen to fifteen inches in length, and with the exception of the Tawny Owl is the most common of the British species. It is to be found generally throughout most of the well-wooded districts of Great Britain, and inhabits in abundance the large forests of the European continent. According to M. Temminck it is rather a rare bird in Holland.

In this country the Tawny Owl takes up its abode in woods and old plantations, preferring such as are thickly set with holly and fir, and well grown over with ivy. Here it remains quiet and secluded during the day, but at nightfall becomes clamorous and hoarse about. In the breeding season it searches for a hole in a tree, or in default of finding such a convenience takes possession of the deserted nest of a Hawk or Crow, in which its eggs are deposited. These are of large size, measuring 11 inch in length by 11 inch in width, equally rounded at both ends and perfectly white. The female begins to sit as soon as they have laid their first egg, and the young for a considerable time after incubation are a chocolate brown to grey-brown. The parent birds attend their young, brood with great assiduity, and supply them plentifully with water, worms, moles, and the young of various other mammals of larger size.

The beak in this species of Owl is yellowish-white, short and curved; irides dark blue; the feathers forming the facial disk light brown; the feathers surrounding the disk marked with numerous dark spots; head, neck and back reddish yellow brown, spotted and streaked with dark brown in the direction of the shaft of each feather; on the scapulars and wing-coverts are large white spots forming conspicuous rows; under surface reddish white with brown bars; wing- and tail-feathers reddish brown, barred with very dark brown, under sides reddish ash, with lighter-colored bars, outer edges of the quill primaries beautifully serrated; legs and toes covered with short downy feathers of reddish grey, with brown spots. Claws nearly black, long, curved and sharp. The female when compared with the male are larger in size and darker in colour, approaching to deep red brown. It is mistaken the word *Strix* instead of *Otus* was pointed out to me.

Plate

We have figured a bird of the female sex.