

Genus ULULA.

GEN. CHAR. *Bill* nearly straight at the base, the tip hooked, with a rounded culmen, cutting margin of the upper mandible having a small lobe or sinuation near the middle. Facial disk large and complete; auditory conch rather large, and defended by an operculum. *Wings* short, rounded, concave; the first quill-feather very short; the fourth the longest in the wing, with the third and fifth nearly equal to it. *Tail* reaching beyond the closed wings, rounded, bent, and concave beneath. *Legs* having the tarsi plumed, and the toes more or less so. *Claws* moderately curved, long, short, all more or less grooved beneath.

BARRED OWL.

Strix nebulosa, Linn.

Ulula nebulosa, Cuv.

La Chouette nébuleuse.

IN the regions of the Old World the Barred Owl scarcely ever extends its migrations further south than Norway, Sweden, and Russia, in which countries it is so sparingly distributed as rather to be regarded as an accidental visitor than a native species. The northern and temperate portions of America appear to be its true habitat, for it is dispersed over the whole of the United States, where, Mr. Audubon informs us, its peculiar cry of *Whah, whah, whah-aa*, may be heard towards evening proceeding from every part of the forest. According to this diligent observer of nature, the flight of the Barred Owl is smooth, light, and noiseless, and capable of being greatly protracted. Mr. Audubon further remarks that its powers of vision during the day seem to be of an equivocal character, he having seen one alight on the back of a cow, which it left so suddenly, on the animal moving, as to leave no doubt in his mind that the Owl had mistaken the object upon which it had perched for something else: at other times he has observed that the approach of the Grey Squirrel intimidated it, if one of these animals accidentally jumped on the branch close to where it was sitting, although the Barred Owl destroys numbers of this species of Squirrel during the twilight. It is a well-known fact that the eyes of those Owls whose habits are strictly nocturnal differ both in colour and construction from those which feed partially by day, or rather whose greatest powers of vision are developed in the twilight and during dark and gloomy days. Had we not been acquainted with the habits of this bird and the colour of its eyes, we should probably have assigned it a place among the Owls forming the genus *Surnia*, to which division it bears a strong resemblance both in the colour of its plumage and in its general contour. The noiseless flight of the Barred Owl may be attributed to the peculiar nature of its plumage, which, like that of all other nocturnal species, is extremely soft and yielding, enabling it to steal quickly upon its victim without exciting observation or alarm.

Its food consists of young hares and rabbits, mice, small birds, frogs, lizards, &c.

Its eggs are deposited in the holes of decayed trees or the deserted nests of Crows and Hawks; they are round, of a pure white, and from four to six in number.

The male and female differ somewhat in size, the males being the smallest; and they are also subject to considerable varieties of plumage, some specimens, particularly those found in Europe, being of a very dark colour, while others are very light.

The plumage of the generality of specimens may be thus described:

The face light ash encircled with lines of brown; the upper part of the plumage, together with the quills and tail, is of a brownish grey, transversely rayed with white and yellowish bars; the front of the neck and chest transversely barred with greyish ash and yellowish white markings; the lower part of the breast and flanks yellowish grey with longitudinal stripes of brown; feet and toes covered with short grey feathers; beak yellow; irides blackish brown.

The Plate represents an adult male, rather less than the natural size.