

URAL OWL.

Surnia Uralensis, *Dum.*

Strix Uralensis, *Linn.*

Le Hibou de l'Oural.

THE obscure and almost untraversed regions which this fine Owl habitually frequents must be deemed not only the cause of its great scarcity, but also of the little that is known respecting its habits and manners. Although the large size and the remarkable development of the facial disk of this bird readily distinguish it from the more typical species of the present genus, nevertheless we have inserted it in this place, believing that in general habits and manners it will be found to agree in a great measure with the other species of the genus.

The Ural Owl is a native of the northern regions of Lapland and Siberia; it is also found, but very sparingly, in the North of Sweden and Norway. In Hungary and Livonia, according to M. Temminck, it is somewhat more abundant; we must, however, regard it as one of the rarest of the European Owls, our own specimen being, we believe, the only one in England, nor does it occur in many of the largest collections on the Continent. Though a native of the arctic circle in the Old World, it does not appear to have been hitherto discovered in the parallel latitudes of America, and we have every reason to believe it to be a stranger to that continent.

Like the rest of the larger owls its food consists of small mammalia, such as leverets, rats, and mice, and not unfrequently the Ptarmigan and other birds.

It is said to construct its nest in the holes of trees, and to lay two white eggs.

The sexes are alike in plumage, but the young of the year differ in having the ground colouring of a pale greyish brown; the upper parts irregularly spotted with brown and light red, varied with blotches of white; the wings and tail barred with grey, and the whole of the under parts longitudinally streaked and blotched with brown.

The adults have the whole of the face greyish white, the rim of the facial disk consisting of white feathers spotted with black; the whole of the upper surface longitudinally blotched with brown and white; the under surface dusky white, every feather having a brown streak down the centre; the wings and tail barred with brown and yellowish white, the latter being of considerable length and remarkably graduated; beak yellow; tarsi covered with greyish white hairs; nails brown; irides brownish yellow.

The Plate represents a male rather less than the natural size, the adult bird being two feet in length.