

Genus OTUS.

GEN. CHAR. *Bill* bending, and forming an elliptic curve, the cere covering the basal ridge for nearly half the length of the bill; cutting margin of the upper mandible straight, the under one having the tip obliquely truncated and notched. *Nostrils* oval, obliquely placed. *Fascial disc* of moderate size and complete. *Conch* of the ear extending from the outer angle of the eye to behind the limb of the lower jaw, the opening defended by a flap or *operculum*. *Head* furnished with everts. *Wings* long; the second quill-feather the longest. *Tail* even, and scarcely showing any concavity beneath. *Legs* and *toes* feathered to the insertion of the claws. *Toes* rather short; the outer one reversible. *Claws* moderately curved, long, and very sharp; rounded beneath, except the middle one, which is grooved, and with a sharp inner edge.

LONG-EARED OWL.

Strix otus, *Linn.*

Otus vulgaris, *Flem.*

Le Hibou moyenduc.

THE habits of this Owl lead it to frequent thick woods, in the depths of which it lives retired from observation, concealing itself during the day amongst the foliage of the holly and ivy-clad trees, whence it emerges at the approach of evening in quest of food; and dissection confirms the opinion that small mammalia, such as mice, moles, and rats form its principal subsistence; in fact, as regards food, it agrees closely with the others of its tribe. Most of the woody districts, especially in the northern portions of England, and in Scotland, are the chief localities wherein it may be found in our own islands; it is, however, by no means so common as the Tawny Owl, which generally frequents the same situations. It has a wide range over the continent of Europe. The same species, and one so closely allied to it as to render it difficult to say whether it can be fairly separated, is found in the United States and the northern regions of America as far as the sixtieth degree of latitude.

Unlike the Tawny and Barn Owls, which breed in hollow trees, the present species evinces a partiality for the deserted nests of the Crow, Raven and Magpie for the purpose of nidification: it lays about four white eggs; the young are covered with a full coat of white down, which lasts for a considerable time, and disappears gradually as the feathers advance.

The sexes offer little or no external difference either in size or in the colour of the plumage.

The head is ornamented with two everts, consisting each of several feathers of a pale yellow colour at the edges, with broad central dashes of black; the whole of the upper surface is of a tawny yellow clouded with grey, each feather having its centre black, and the whole being checquered with zigzag bars and dots of brown and black; the under surface is pale tawny with longitudinal dashes of black; tail barred; facial disc light grey, clouded with tawny brown; irides orange; beak black.

Our Plate represents a male of the natural size.