

ATHENE? CONNIVENS.

Winking Owl.

Falco connivens, Lath. Ind. Orn. Supp., p. xii.—Shaw, Gen. Zool., vol. vii. p. 186.

Winking Falcon, Lath. Gen. Syn. Supp., vol. ii. p. 53.—Ib. Gen. Hist., vol. i. p. 221.

Athene? fortis, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., Part V. p. 141; and in Syn. Birds of Australia, Part III.

Goora-a-gang, Aborigines of New South Wales.

Wool-boo-gle, Aborigines of the mountain district of Western Australia.

THE range of this fine Owl appears to extend over the whole of the southern coast of Australia. I have received it from Swan River and from nearly every part of New South Wales; specimens from these distant localities differ a little in their plumage; those obtained in Western Australia being rather lighter in colour, and having the markings less clear and defined than those from New South Wales. There is no difference in the plumage of the sexes, but the female is somewhat the largest in size.

Brushes, wooded gulleys, and the sides of creeks are its favourite places of resort; it is consequently not so restricted in the localities it chooses as the *Athene strenua*, which I have never known to leave the brushes. It sallies forth early in the evening, and even flies with perfect use of vision during the mid-day sun, when roused and driven from the trees upon which it has been sleeping. I have frequently observed it in the day-time among the thick branches of the *Casuarinæ* which border the creeks.

It will be seen, on reference to the synonyms, that I described this bird in the "Proceedings of the Zoological Society," and figured it in my "Synopsis" under the specific name of *fortis*; but I have since ascertained, through the kindness of the Earl of Derby in affording me the use and inspection of the three volumes of drawings of Australian Birds, formerly in the possession of the late A. B. Lambert, Esq., that it is identical with the Winking Falcon of Latham; any seeming inattention on my part in describing an apparently new Owl without consulting that author will I hope be readily excused, as few ornithologists would think of looking for the description of this bird under the genus *Falco*.

Face and throat greyish white; crown of the head and all the upper surface dark brown, tinged with purple; scapularies, secondaries and greater wing-coverts spotted with white; primaries alternately barred with dark and greyish brown, the light marks on the outer edges approaching to white; tail dark brown, transversely barred with six or seven lines of greyish white, the extreme tips of all the feathers terminating with the same; the whole of the under surface mottled brown and white, the latter occupying the outer edges of the feathers; tarsi clothed to the toes, and mottled brown and fawn-colour; irides bright yellow; cere yellowish olive; bill light yellowish horn-colour; toes long, yellow, and covered with fine hairs.

The figure is about four-fifths of the natural size.