

## ATHENE MACULATA.

### Spotted Owl.

*Noctua maculata*, Vig. and Horsf. in Linn. Trans., vol. xv. p. 189.

*Athene maculata*, Gould in Syn. Birds of Australia, Part III.

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THIS species is very generally distributed over Van Diemen's Land; it also inhabits South Australia and New South Wales, but in far less numbers. It generally takes up its abode in the thickly-foliaged trees of the woods and gulleys, and usually selects those that are most shielded from the heat and light of the sun.

Little or no difference is observable in the habits and economy of this species and those of the diurnal Owls of Europe. The whole day is spent in a state of drowsiness bordering on sleep, from which, however, it can be easily aroused. Its visual powers are sufficiently strong to enable it to face the light, and even to hunt for its food in the day-time. Like other members of the genus it preys chiefly upon small birds and insects, which, from the more than ordinary rapidity of its movements, are captured with great facility.

The sexes are precisely alike in colour, and differ but little in size; the female is however the largest.

The drawing in the accompanying Plate was made from a pair of living examples which I kept for some time during my stay at Hobart Town, and which bore confinement so contentedly, that had an opportunity presented itself I might easily have sent them alive to England.

Facial disc white, each of the feathers immediately above the bill with the shafts and tips black; head and all the upper surface brown, the scapularies and secondaries numerously spotted with white; tail brown, crossed by irregular bands of a lighter tint, which become nearly white on the outer feathers; chest and all the under surface brown, blotched and spotted with tawny and white; primaries brown, crossed with bands of a lighter tint; thighs tawny buff; bill dark horn-colour; irides yellow; feet yellowish.

The figures are of the natural size.