

35. *Athene connivens* Vol. I. Pl. 34.
Buteo connivens, Vieill. Nouv. Dict. d'Hist. Nat., tom. iv. p. 481.
36. *Athene strenua*, *Gould* Vol. I. Pl. 35.
37. *Athene rufa*, *Gould* Vol. I. Pl. 36.

Order INSESSORES, *Vig.*Family CAPRIMULGIDÆ, *Vig.*Genus ÆGOTHELES, *Vig. & Horsf.*

The known species of this genus are two in number, both of which, so far as has yet been ascertained, are confined to Australia. In many of their actions, and in their nidification, they are very owl-like, depositing, like those birds, their four or five round white eggs in the hollows of trees, without any nest.

38. *Ægotheles Novæ-Hollandiæ* Vol. II. Pl. 1.
 Inhabits the whole of the southern parts of Australia and Van Diemen's Land.
39. *Ægotheles leucogaster*, *Gould* Vol. II. Pl. 2.
 Inhabits the northern or intertropical parts of Australia, where it represents the *Æ. Novæ-Hollandiæ*.

Genus PODARGUS, *Cur.*

With no one group of the Australian birds have I had so much difficulty in discriminating the species as the genus *Podargus*. It is almost impossible to determine with certainty the older species described by Latham; could this have been done satisfactorily, even in a single instance, it would have greatly facilitated the investigation of the remainder. Messrs. Vigors and Horsfield regarded the specimens in the Linnean Collection as referable to three species, and have described them under the names of *Stanleyanus*, *humeralis*, and *Cuvieri*; Latham's description of the species named by him *megacephalus* accords so well with the *P. Stanleyanus*, that I suspect both those terms have been applied to one and the same species, an opinion strengthened by Latham's remarks as to the great size of the head and mandibles of his bird, the total length of which he states to be thirty inches, which is evidently an error.

After examining a large number of specimens comprising individuals of all ages, I have come to the conclusion that the Australian members of this genus constitute six species; four of which, namely, *P. megacephalus*, *P. humeralis*, *P. Cuvieri*, and *P. brachypterus*, are most closely allied to each other; and two, namely, *P. plumiferus* and *P. Phalænoides*, which present specific characters that cannot be mistaken. We have then in Australia a large group of nocturnal birds of this form destined, as it would seem, to keep in check the great families of *Cicadæ* and *Phasmidæ*, upon which they mainly subsist; but they do not refuse other insects, and even berries have been found in their stomachs. They are an inanimate and sluggish group of birds, and do not procure their food on the wing so much as other *Caprimulgi*, but obtain it by traversing the branches of the various trees upon which their favourite insects reside; at intervals during the night they sit about in open places, on rails, stumps of trees, on the roofs of houses and on the tombstones in the churchyards, and by superstitious persons are regarded as omens of death, their hoarse disagreeable voice adding not a little to the terrors induced by their presence.

In their nidification the *Podargi* differ in a most remarkable manner from all the other *Caprimulgidæ*, inasmuch as while the eggs of the *Ægothelæ* are deposited in the holes of trees, and those of the members of the other genera of this family on the ground, these birds construct a flat nest of small sticks on the horizontal branches of trees for the reception of theirs, which are moreover of the purest white.

Although I have no satisfactory evidence that these birds resort to a kind of hybernation for short periods during some portions of the year, I must not omit to mention that I have been assured that they do occasionally retire to and remain secluded in the hollow parts of the trees; and if such should prove to be the case, it may account for the extreme obesity of many of the individuals I procured, which was often so great as to prevent me from preserving their skins. I trust that these remarks will cause the subject to be investigated by those who are