Upper surface tawny yellow, each feather broadly terminated with brown and a small white spot at the tip, or brown with a white terminal spot and tawny at the base; primaries and secondaries fulvous yellow, distinctly barred with brown, freckled on their outer margins with pale or greyish brown, and fading into white on the margins of their inner webs; tail buffy yellow, fading into white on the outer feathers, or white crossed by four dark brown bars and freckled with a lighter tint at the tip; facial disk whitish or buffy white, with a dark brown spot at the inner angle of the eye; ruff or margin of the disk dark fulvous; under surface yellowish white, with a small spot of brown at the tip of each feather; irides very dark brown; bill horny; legs yellowish.

In the youthful state the facial disk and markings are deep tawny; the body is clothed in a lengthened greyish buff down; and the feet and claws are dull flesh-colour.

The Plate represents an adult and a young bird, of the size of life.