

NINOX FORBESI, *Sclater*.

Forbes's Hawk-Owl.

Ninox forbesi, Sclater, Proc. Zool. Soc. 1883, p. 52, pl. xi.

THE present species, which has been named in honour of Mr. H. O. Forbes, who discovered it in the Tenimber Islands, belongs to a little group of Hawk-Owls which have the head uniform. *N. squamipila* of Ceram has many points of resemblance to the subject of our present article, but is altogether of a darker rufous colour, has the toes scantily feathered, the upper tail-coverts barred with white, and not more than seven broad blackish bars on the tail-feathers. Below, both species are similar, but *N. forbesi* does not have the under wing-coverts barred as in *N. squamipila*.

The nearest ally of *N. forbesi* is undoubtedly *Ninox hantu* of Wallace from Bourou; but this bird, though agreeing in the paler and more cinnamon-rufous colours of the plumage, is distinguished by its scantily feathered toes, which have only a few hair-like bristles. Both species have the under wing-coverts uniform like the breast; but *N. hantu* is a much darker bird, with broader bars on the tail-feathers and no white on the wing-coverts; the under surface also is more uniform cinnamon-rufous, and does not show the white bars which distinguish *N. forbesi*.

Mr. Forbes informs us that he only met with this species on one occasion in Timor Laut, and this was during an excursion to the mainland on the 9th of August, 1882. While conducting a palaver with the natives to obtain permission to shoot near the village of Loetoe, his native hunters managed to procure a pair of this Owl while they were awaiting the result of Mr. Forbes's negotiations with the villagers. The birds were sitting in a thick bushy tree at no great height from the ground.

The following is a description of the typical specimen figured by Dr. Sclater:—

Adult male (type of species). General colour above reddish brown, rather more rufous on the upper tail-coverts; scapulars barred with white or yellowish buff, with narrow cross bars of dusky brown; wing-coverts like the back, the greater series barred with dusky brown and fulvous or white; bastard wing like the other coverts; primary-coverts nearly uniform dark brown, with slightly indicated reddish-brown cross bars; quills reddish brown barred with blackish, the interspaces being paler and either fulvous or whitish, the inner secondaries less barred; tail-feathers light rufous-brown, with eleven bars of dusky blackish on the centre ones, sixteen on the outer feathers, which show whitish interspaces for more than half of the length of the outer web; head and hind neck more dingy rufous-brown than the back, with the colour of which it is in slight contrast; base of forehead and lores white, extending above the fore part of the eye and having black shaft-lines; feathers below the eye and ear-coverts dingy reddish brown, like the head; base of cheeks and base of chin white; throat and breast tawny rufous, the latter slightly mottled with paler cross bars of fulvous or narrower ones of dusky; abdomen and flanks barred broadly with white and more narrowly with dusky brown, the latter with a conterminous line of tawny buff; thighs and under tail-coverts tawny rufous, the latter barred with dusky and with broader bands of yellowish white; under wing-coverts and axillaries tawny rufous, the edge of the wing white, the greater series of coverts and the quills below paler and more yellowish buff, more reddish brown towards the end of the quills, which are barred across with blackish brown; "bill pale corneous; feet pale yellow, covered with bristly hairs, soles of feet nearly orange; iris rich golden" (*H. O. Forbes*). Total length 11·5 inches, culmen 1·05, wing 7·4, tail 4·5, tarsus 1·1.

The female bird, which was brought over by Mr. Forbes on his return from Timor Laut (too late for us to figure on the Plate, which had unfortunately been printed off before Mr. Forbes's arrival), only differs from the male in being paler and in having the breast barred with pale cinnamon like the abdomen, but not so broadly.

The Plate is drawn from the type specimen, which Dr. Sclater was kind enough to lend us, and portrays the adult male, of about the full size, in two positions.

[R. B. S.]