

## BIOLOGICAL LEAFLET No. 5

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### SUPPLEMENT TO A KEY TO SPECIES OF AMERICAN OWLS.

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*Bubo nudipes* Vieillot, Ois, Am. Sept., Vol. I, 1807, p. 53, pl. 22, was described and figured in life size from a specimen in the possession of the describer. This specimen is not known to be in existence at the present time.

The describer stated that this owl was found in Porto Rico and Santo Domingo. No owl seeming to fit the description or plate has since been found in those places. A screech owl found in the mountains of Costa Rica and Panama was thought to be the bird described by Vieillot and has borne the specific name *nudipes* ever since. (Lawrence, Ann. Lyc. N. Y., Vol. IX, 1868, p. 132; Sharpe, Cat. Bds. Brit. Mus., Vol. II, 1875, p. 121.)

Whatever the likelihood of Vieillot obtaining the bare legged screech owl of Central America, the fact remains that the bird figured and described is not exactly like it. The *Bubo nudipes* of Vieillot differs from a series of 5 specimens of the Central American owl known as *Otus nudipes* in the following particulars:

1. It is  $8\frac{1}{2}$  in. long while the specimens are 9 to  $10\frac{1}{2}$  in. long.
2. The head is narrower, measuring 4 cm. from tip of bill to side of face instead of 5.5 cm.
3. The pattern of dark markings on the upper parts consists only of fine lines, cross bars and vermiculations. In all specimens it consists mostly of broad mesial streaks and spots of black, 3 mm. or more across.
4. The greater primary coverts are mostly of a light color, narrowly barred with brown or black, instead of being almost entirely blackish with narrow incomplete bars or spots of deep cinnamon, tawny or rusty.

5. The ear tufts are thicker and more conspicuous.
6. The throat and foreneck are finely streaked and barred instead of broadly streaked and finely barred.
7. The streaks on the breast and abdomen are regular and less ragged.
8. The bars are arranged opposite each other along the shaft, are more evenly spaced and run straighter across the feather.
9. The tarsi are more feathered.
10. The tail shows only 4 dark bars instead of 7, and there are no fine mottlings of lighter color.
11. The light spots on the outer webs of the primaries are half or less than half as broad as the darker interspaces, instead of being nearly as broad.

There are other facts to consider. Vieillot's bird may yet be found in Santo Domingo, rarity and the difficulty of finding owls in tropical forests having hitherto prevented its rediscovery. It may have become extinct since the coming of the white man as have many other species of island birds.

It seems likely that the bird described by Vieillot actually came from Santo Domingo or Porto Rico, and that the owl now known as *Otus nudipes* was unknown to him. The latter is therefore given a new name.

*Otus clarkii*, new name.

*Characters* (emendation for Key, p. 22):

- f. Tarsus not feathered nearly or quite to the toes, at least the lower third bare of feathers.
  - u. Upper parts conspicuously spotted and streaked with black; under parts irregularly barred and streaked with black; length 9 in or more. . . . . *O. clarkii*.
  - u. Not as above. . . . . *O. nudipes*.

*Type*: From Calobre, Panama, collected by Enrique Arce. (Sharpe, l. c.).

The species is named after Harry M. Clark of Gretna, Kansas, who was of great help to the senior author at the beginning of his studies.

Part of the characters were taken from the senior author's previously published Key, and constitute his portion of the paper.

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