

and a line passing over the eye and root of the ear pale fawn, with a darker mesial stripe (conspicuous in spirits) running forward to the muzzle. Eyelid and around the eye dark brown in a patch extending a little forwards on the face. Edge of the ear internally, and anterior half externally dark grey. Hinder half of the ear white. A dark brown streak runs down the side of the neck and expands on the fore part of the arm. On the back of the thigh is a less distinct patch of similar colour. Upper surface of manus and pes brown. All the lower surface yellowish-white. This extends over the upper lip, to the back of the ear, over the edge of the lateral fold and around the distal end of the leg.

The fur is short and silky and terminates at the rump. The base of the tail is contracted and sparsely covered with hair; it consequently appears lighter in colour than the rest of the tail on which the hair is moderately close, long and of a dark brownish grey above, recumbent, with a distinct tendency to form a fringe on either side. The under surface of the tail is more scantily clothed with shorter white hair continued centrally to an eighth of an inch from the tip, and laterally nearly to the tip. The ear is short, rounded and broad at the base, well clothed externally and fairly well internally with short hair. The muzzle is broad and obtuse. The hair on the hinder part of the face is elongated and spreads vibrissæ-like over the root of the ear. The claws are well-developed and exserted. The fleshy pads of the manus and pes are nearly smooth, the central pad of the manus and terminal pads of the pes being alone slightly striated longitudinally.

The length of the head and body is 1.7 inch (43 mm.), of the tail 1.65 inch (42 mm.).

NINOX BOOBOOK, var. LURIDA.

Taking due heed of the possibility that the little owl to be noticed may be a dwarfed variety of *N. boobook*, the writer refrains from giving it a specific name; at the same time he is induced to point out its distinctive features by a wish to maintain the usefulness of Mr. Sharpe's key to the genus.

Synoptical characters.

Breast spotted.

Head uniform, brown.

Belly chestnut-brown, densely spotted.

Adult males—head and all the upper surface, including wing and tail-coverts, deep smoky brown ; uniform or tending to coffee-brown on the hind neck and scapulars—the latter with a large white spot on each outer web and frequently a smaller one on the inner. One or two small buffy spots on each side of the hind neck. Primary coverts dark brown. Quills dark brown washed with rufous on the inner edge as far as the notch, and imperfectly barred on the inner web with more or less distinct and elongated spots not reaching the edges. Inner secondaries with a series of white or buff spots on the inner webs, outer secondaries not or very indistinctly barred with buff on the outer web. Forehead grey ; loral pencils whitish with black shafts and tips. Fore part of cheeks and chin impure white ; ear-coverts brown ; a narrow eye-brow and post-auricular are rufous ; middle of throat rufous, each feather with a blackish central streak. Rest of the under surface chestnut brown, uniform or fading to buffy white around and before the vent. Each feather with a spot of white on either web, the spots diminishing in size but remaining distinct as far forwards as the hinder edge of the throat. Leg feathers short, fawn or coffee-brown. Under tail-coverts similar in colour with a spot of white on each web most distinct on those of the basals. Under wing-coverts rufous, the outer mottled and streaked with dark brown. Edge of the wing buffy white. Bill black to a very variable extent from the base, lead-colour in life. Feet dusky, white in life. Total length 11 inches, wing 8·25, tail 5, tarsus 1·25, middle toe 1·33.

Hab.—Dark thick scrubs, a few miles from Cardwell.

Two specimens.

NINOX RUFA, *Gould.*

Three adult examples of this fine owl occur in the collection. It is difficult to conceive its identity with *N. strenua*, Gld., and until connecting forms present themselves it is more convenient to name both in our lists.