

Notes for Identification of the Winking Owl.—With reference to the note on "Daylight Killing by Winking Owl" (*The Emu*, Vol. XXXIII, part 1, July, 1933) and to the editorial comment to the effect that *Ninox connivens* is difficult of distinction from *N. boobook* in the field, there are several points by which the two species may be distinguished, and which might aid observers not familiar with the birds. Apparently Mr. W. Heathcote was fairly close to his Owl when it proceeded to devour the Starling, for he could hear the breaking of bone whilst the sternum and limb bones were being eaten. At such a distance it should be possible to establish the identity of *Ninox connivens* without a doubt if one knows the points of difference to look for. Although the fine Winking species is given a length measurement not exceeding that of *Ninox boobook*, it is usually by far a bigger and stouter Owl in actual life, and on an average birds which I have handled were from two to three inches longer than the Boobook. In fact, two Winking Owls which I have had in captivity were small editions of *Ninox strenua*—the Powerful Owl.

At once the yellow-irised eyes, yellowtoes, and large talons, combined with the greyish plumage, marked them off from any possibility of confusion with the Boobook, which, apart from its smallness, possesses greenish eyes and white toes. Near Violet Town (Vic.), the Winking Owls have been seen perched by day with Black-backed Magpies clutched in their talons, and one of my captive birds killed and devoured a Tawny Frogmouth with which it was caged by mistake. Again, Mr. Heathcote mentioned that when flying from tree to tree his Owl kept its kill held well up under its breast, so that it was difficult to see that it carried anything. My past experience of Boobooks (see *The Emu*, Vol. XXVI, part 2, 1926) seems to indicate that this fits in very much more closely with the sturdy Winking Owl than the Boobook. Also the diurnal raid indulged in by Mr. Heathcote's particular bird, though certainly not an exclusive habit of any one species of *Ninox*, is much in accord with the habits of this bold bird, which frequently attacks intruders in the vicinity of its nesting hollow, and young. On several camping trips during which the birds were about, particularly at King's Flat (Gibbo River, Vic.), I was struck by the remarkable habit of these Owls sitting out on limbs as late as 6 a.m. on summer mornings, and uttering, in broad daylight, their rapid double-syllabled "Wook-hoo" calls.

Finally—just by the way—is it known why this species was "honoured" with the term "Winking Owl" when its solemn unblinking gaze is quite as regular and unbroken as that of any of its fellow-species in the genus *Ninox*?—

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