

## FIRST RECORD OF THE BROWN HAWK-OWL *Ninox scutulata* FROM AUSTRALASIA

On 6 January 1973 a carcass of a Brown Hawk-Owl *Ninox scutulata* was found on Ashmore Reef, an Australian Territory on the edge of the Australian continental shelf about 300 kilometres north-west of Admiralty Gulf, Kimberley Division, Western Australia. Identified as a 'Boobook', it was given to the Australian National Wildlife Collection, CSIRO, Canberra, via the Australian Museum, Sydney, for preparation as a skeleton. When checking its identity before preparation, we realized that the bird was a new species for Australia and the Australasian Region and sent it to Mrs M.K. LeCroy for comparison with material of *Ninox scutulata* in the American Museum of Natural History. She confirmed our provisional identification. It has now been preserved as a mummy, registration number 36762.

Its characters are: a uniform brown dorsum with reduced white spotting on scapulars, white ventral surface with dark-brown drop-like streaks,

contrastingly barred tail and barred under wing-coverts. With a wing of 226 millimetres, primaries 7 and 8 longest and sub-equal, and primary 6 slightly shorter than 9 but much longer than 5, it appears to be of the eastern Asian subspecies, *N.s. japonica* (Temminck and Schlegel) *sensu lato*, which migrates to the Indonesian and Philippine archipelagos during the boreal winter (Hartert 1918, *Vögel palaäarkt. Fauna II*: 993; Peters 1940, *Check-list Bds World IV*: 141) and has been known to reach Buru and Wetar. Hartert and Peters refer the migrants to the nominate subspecies but as Eck and Busse (1973, *Eulen, die rezenten und fossilen Formen*: 140) point out, that name applies to a sedentary form in the Indonesian archipelago.

This record was submitted to the RAOU Record Appraisal Committee, considered by it as Submission No. 17 and unanimously accepted on 21 July 1980.

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## SITE-FIDELITY IN SOME BIRDS OF THE UNDERSTOREY IN KARRI FOREST

Earlier work (Wooller and Brooker, 1980, *Emu* 80: 165-166) has suggested that the composition of the bird community found in the understorey of Karri forest in south-western Australia is largely unaffected by controlled burning and that many individuals remain in an area after fire. A further study was undertaken to examine whether this sedentary behaviour was also characteristic of small birds in a forest fairly undisturbed by fire or logging for over forty years.

Birds were caught in mist-nets placed along an overgrown track off House Brook Road in the Big Brook State Forest near Pemberton in south-western Australia. Twenty nets were used for six days between 7 and 17 May in 1979 and 1980; the weather was very similar in both years. The main large trees present were Karri *Eucalyptus diversicolor* with small numbers of Marri *E. calophylla* and understorey dominated by *Casuarina decussata*, *Bossiaea laidlawiana* and *Trymalium spathulatum*.

Nine of the twelve different species caught in each year were the same in both years (Table 1). These nine species were caught most often and, apart from one Grey Fantail, were the only species recaptured, which suggests that they compose a fairly stable community within the understorey. All these species were insectivores, apart from one honeyeater (probably also insectivorous) and a finch. Many of the remaining species were caught only as itinerant groups (e.g. silver-eyes and cuckoo-shrikes).

Of those birds banded in 1979, fifteen were recaptured within that ten-day period and eleven were recaptured the following year, which suggests that many individuals of the most common species are sedentary. In particular, the recapture rates of White-breasted Robins and White-browed Scrubwrens indicate a high degree of site-fidelity in these species, a trend also apparent in the earlier study (Wooller and Brooker, *op. cit.*). It is clear from other sources (e.g. 'Re-