

THE IDENTITY OF THE POWERFUL OWL *NINOX STRENUA* FROM FULHAM, SOUTH AUSTRALIA

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Records of the Powerful Owl *Ninox strenua* for South Australia, reported by Condon and Cleland (1942. *S.A. Orn.*, 16 : 36) and in subsequent lists of the birds of South Australia (Terrill and Rix, 1950. *S.A. Orn.*, 19 : 53-100; Condon, 1962. *S.A. Orn.*, 23 : 85-151; Condon, 1969. *A Handlist of the Birds of South Australia*, ed. 3. S.A. Orn. Assn.) rest on a single

specimen in the S.A. White collection from the Reedbeds, near Adelaide. The Powerful Owl lives in dense wet sclerophyll forests along and flanking the Great Dividing Range in south-eastern Australia as far west as the Grampians and Portland district in western Victoria. Such habitat is extremely limited in South Australia, to parts of the South-East, summit-ridges of

the Mt. Lofty Range and western Kangaroo Island; it is and always was absent from the Reedbeds at the mouth of the Torrens River where open woodlands of *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* provided the only shelter for arboreal owls. As pointed out by Mees (1964. Zool. Verhandl. 65 : 11), it is unlikely that the Powerful Owl would occur there other than as the most accidental of vagrants.

Through the courtesy of Mrs. M. B. White, I have been able to examine the supposed Powerful Owl from Fulham in the S.A. White collection, labelled as being taken by J. W. Mellor in July 1892. It has proved in fact to

be a large female Barking Owl (*Ninox connivens*), in the darker grey coloration characteristic of eastern Australian populations (Mees, op. cit.). Sexed as a female, it has the measurements of wing 315 mm and tail 165 mm (S. A. Parker, pers. comm.), which puts it within the size range of female nominate *connivens*. There thus remains only one apparently authentic observation of the Powerful Owl in South Australia, at Mt. Burr in July-August 1968 in the South-East (Bird Report, 1968-69, compiler B. Glover, 1971, *S.A. Orn.*, 25 : 229).

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