

Text extracted from Gill B.J.; Bell, B.D.; Chambers, G.K.; Medway, D.G.; Palma, R.L.; Scofield, R.P.; Tennyson, A.J.D.; Worthy, T.H. 2010. *Checklist of the birds of New Zealand, Norfolk and Macquarie Islands, and the Ross Dependency, Antarctica*. 4<sup>th</sup> edition. Wellington, Te Papa Press and Ornithological Society of New Zealand. Pages 264 & 266.

### Order STRIGIFORMES: Owls

Regarding the following *nomina dubia*, see under genus *Aegotheles* Vigors & Horsfield:  
*Strix parvissima* Ellman, 1861: *Zoologist* 19: 7465. *Nomen dubium*.  
*Strix parvissima* Potts, 1871: *Trans. N.Z. Inst.* 3: 68 – Rangitata River, Canterbury. *Nomen dubium*.  
*Athene (Strix) parvissima* Potts; Potts 1873, *Trans. N.Z. Inst.* 5: 172. *Nomen dubium*

### Family STRIGIDAE Leach: Typical Owls

Strigidae Leach, 1819: *Eleventh room. In Synopsis Contents British Museum 15th Edition, London*: 64 – Type genus  
*Strix* Linnaeus, 1758.

### Subfamily BUBONINAE Vigors: Hawk-owls and Allies

Bubonina Vigors, 1825: *Zoological Journal* 2: 393 – Type genus *Bubo* Dumeril, 1805.

### Genus † *Sceloglaux* Kaup

*Sceloglaux* Kaup, 1848: *Isis von Oken*, Heft 41: col. 768 – Type species (by monotypy) *Athene albifacies* G.R. Gray, 1844 = *Sceloglaux albifacies* (G.R. Gray). As a subgenus of *Ninox*.

A monotypic genus endemic to New Zealand. König *et al.* (1999) noted that the laughing owl and the fearful owl *Nesasio solomonensis* of the Solomon Islands were very similar species but whether this is due to a relationship or convergence is unknown.

#### † *Sceloglaux albifacies* (G.R. Gray)

#### Laughing Owl

Extinct. Known from North and South Islands and Stewart Island / Rakiura. Fossils of this owl, especially at sites where they accumulated food remains, are abundant in drier eastern regions of both main islands (Worthy & Holdaway 2002). Its reported fossil occurrence on Chatham Island has been discounted (Dawson 1960, Millener 1999). For a review of the species, see Williams & Harrison (1972). Gill (1996a) found significant size differences between North and South Island samples and favoured subspecific distinction.

#### † *Sceloglaux albifacies rufifacies* Buller

#### North Island Laughing Owl

*Sceloglaux rufifacies* Buller, 1904: *Ibis* 4 (8th ser.): 639 – Wairarapa District.  
*Sceloglaux albifacies rufifacies* Buller; Mathews & Iredale 1913, *Ibis* 1 (10th ser.): 422.

North Island only. Extinct. Only two recent specimens were taken (Buller 1905–06, Oliver 1955), both now lost (Worthy 1997c): near Mount Egmont / Mount Taranaki (1856) and Wairarapa (“about 50 miles from Wellington”, 1868–69, holotype). Only two early sight records seem reliable: Waikohu near Te Karaka (1889) and near Porirua (before 1892). Fossil at numerous sites, including swamps, caves, dunes and in a few middens (Gill 1996a).

#### † *Sceloglaux albifacies albifacies* (G.R. Gray)

#### South Island Laughing Owl

*Athene albifacies* G.R. Gray, 1844: in Richardson & J.E. Gray (eds), *Zool. Voy. ‘Erebus’ & ‘Terror’*, *Birds* 1(3): 2, pl. 1 – Waikouaiti, Otago.

*Ieraglaux albifacies* (G.R. Gray); Kaup 1852, *Trans. Zool. Soc. London* 4(6): 219.

*Athene (Sceloglaux) albifacies* G.R. Gray; G.R. Gray 1862, *Ibis* 4: 216.

*Strix haasti* Buller, 1865: *Essay N.Z. Ornith.*, reprinted 1869, *Trans. N.Z. Inst.* 1 (2nd edition): 219 – Canterbury.

*Athene albifrons* Taylor, 1870: *Te Ika a Maui* (2nd edition): 612. Unjustified emendation.

*Athene ejulans* Potts, 1871: *Trans. N.Z. Inst.* 3: 63 – Lindis Pass, Otago.

*Sceloglaux albifacies* (G.R. Gray); Buller 1873, *History of the Birds of N.Z.*, 1st edition: 21.

*Strix haastii* Potts, 1882: *Out in the Open*: 123 – Unjustified emendation.

*Sceloglaux albifacies albifacies* (G.R. Gray); Mathews & Iredale 1913, *Ibis* 1 (10th ser.): 422.

South Island (Nelson, Canterbury, Otago, Fiordland) and Stewart Island / Rakiura. Declined rapidly after about 1880; almost certainly now extinct. Last specimen obtained July 1914 (Blue Cliffs, South Canterbury). It apparently preferred rocky areas in open country or at the forest edge. Late Pleistocene

and Holocene fossil bones and midden records widespread, including Stewart Island / Rakiura (Gill 1996a).