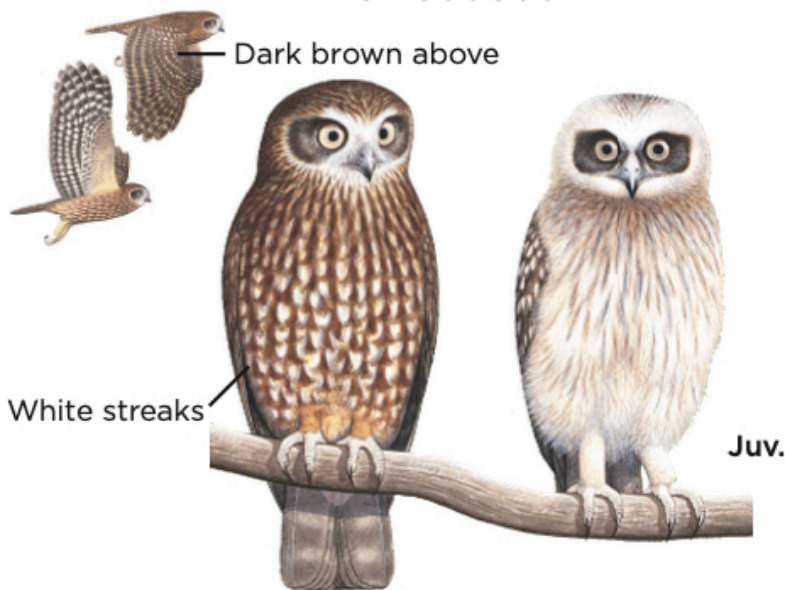


## SOUTHERN BOOBOOK

*Ninox boobook*

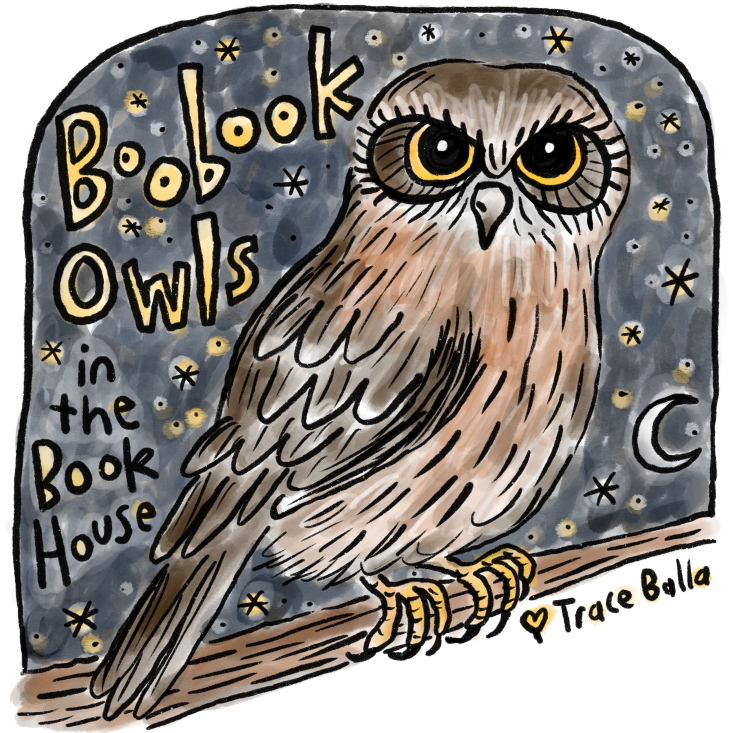


There are four subspecies of *Ninox boobook*.

-  Length 30-35cm. Wingspan 56-82cm. Weight M 250g; F 315g.
  -  Smallest and most common owl in Australia, with large head and otherwise compact appearance. Size and plumage may vary significantly, but typically dark chocolate-brown above and rufous-brown below, streaked and spotted with white. Distinctive 'spectacled' mask, with large yellowish eyes. Feet are grey or yellow, and bill is grey with a darker tip. Young Southern Boobooks are almost entirely buff-white below.
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-  Most habitats with trees.
  -  A perch-hunter, it takes insects and small birds or mammals, with the occasional invertebrate, amphibian or reptile. May forage during the day when nights are too cold.
  -  Mainly nocturnal and crepuscular. Daylight roosting is usually solitary, sometimes in pairs. Inconspicuous, but often heard calling with distinctive 'boobook' or rarer 'yow'.
  -  Monogamous. Both sexes prepare and defend nests, usually in tree hollows, and feed the young. The female alone incubates the eggs. Neighbouring fledglings sometimes found in nests.

## What's so wow about Boobook owl

- \* found - from rainforest to desert
- \* \* Call- distinctive “boo-book” or “mo-poke”
- \* often spend the day in the hollows of trees or in crevices of rocks
- \* acrobatic skills in catching invertebrate prey like moths, beetles, cockroaches, spiders and crickets.
- \* Also eats rodents, small bats, and birds. The entire prey is swallowed, and the indigestible parts like feathers and bones are regurgitated as a pellet
- \* lay 2-3 round white eggs, per clutch.
- \* nest is usually in a tree hollow and has a bed of chewed wood chips or leaves



- \* female incubates the eggs for around a month, and she is fed by the male
- \* seen near street lights which attract insects
- \* Predators and threats- cats and rats, humans destroying tree hollows they need for nests

**More about their calls** — The male's **hooting** is higher pitched and of shorter duration, and is heard much more commonly than that of the female. He uses it as a **contact call and to advertise his territory** to females, as well as when bringing **food to his mate or even before mating**. Birds give a harsher version of the call when **mobbing intruders**. Both sexes, though mainly the female, give a single monosyllabic hoot as an **alarm call or warning**. Australian boobooks also make a repetitive croaking or grunting call while **courting, mating, or greeting**, or as a response to other boobooks hooting. Males generally croak at the beginning of the evening, and when arriving at the nest with food. A **purring or braying** call is used by both sexes as a contact call **around the nest** and (more quietly) when bringing food to nestlings, or by the female to beg for food from the male. The female makes a low **trill** during courtship and nesting. Growls, high-pitched **yelps**, and screeches can be made when attacking intruders.

**Boobooks may also evict other birds like galahs to use their hollows, and have used sites abandoned by babblers, crows, and ravens.** The male does more of the site preparation, such as lining the base of the hollow with leaves. Nesting females **leave the nest at dusk for around half an hour, sometimes to bathe.** Newly hatched chicks are covered with whitish down, and are blind and largely helpless. Their **eyes begin to open on day 6** and are fully open by day 15. The juvenile feathers begin growing through the down from days 7 to 10, covering the baby owls by two weeks of age. Their mother broods them continuously for the first week, then only in the day until the third week. **Her partner brings food to the nest, which she tears into pieces before feeding the nestlings. The young regurgitate pellets and defecate in the nest, which becomes quite smelly.** They leave the nest 5–6 weeks after hatching, by which time they are fully feathered, with downy head and underparts and short tails. The tail reaches its adult length by 65 to 70 days. Young boobooks then live in their parents' territory for a further 2–4 months before dispersing, losing the remainder of their downy feathers by around 5 months of age.

Brushtail possums and cats and rats **raid the nests** for nestlings and eggs, and raptors such as the brown goshawk, grey goshawk, Australian masked owl and powerful owl seize young birds.

Using a fence, branch, or telegraph pole as a **perch** or vantage point from which **to hunt**, the Australian boobook **pounces on prey then retreats to a tree or to eat it.**