MOONLIT BIRDS
DRAWN BY 30 JAPANESE ARTISTS
Introduction

In Japanese art three types of birds appear more often in moonlight scenes than in daylight scenes; namely, owls, geese and cuckoos. Most owls search for food at night, aided by moonlight, so it is not surprising that Japanese artists chose to depict owls in moonlight scenes. In contrast, both geese and cuckoos hunt for food during the day so their pairing with the moon is unexpected. According to Katherine Ball\(^1\), the pairing of the moon with geese in Japanese art is due to the fact that migrating wild geese arrive in Japan in the autumn when the moon is most beautiful. As for the pairing of the cuckoo with the moon, Katherine says that “the cuckoo is a bird of nocturnal habits, but only when the moon is visible just before dawn is its presence known, and then by its cry, for its flight is so swift that it is rarely seen”.

Thirty examples of moonlit owls (pictures 1-12), geese (pictures 13-24) and cuckoos (pictures 25-30) are included in this virtual exhibition. Each picture was drawn by a different Japanese artist. These thirty art prints are part of the Reader Collection of Japanese Flower-and-Bird Art. The following information is provided for each picture: names of the bird and artist, picture or book title (if any), date (if any), printing method and picture size.

1 Ural owl (*Strix uralensis*) by **Hiroshi Abo**, woodblock print entitled **still of the night**, 230 x 290 mm

2 Scops owl (*Otus* sp.) by **Shinji Nagashima**, 1996, woodblock print, 115 x 150 mm
3 Blakiston’s fish owl (*Ketupa blakistoni*) and scops owl (*Otus scops*) by Kōji Ikuta, intaglio print entitled Blakiston’s fish owl and scops owl, 2008, 460 x 260 mm

4 Scops owl (*Otus sp.*) by Kan Kozaki, woodblock print entitled moonlight, 370 x 285 mm
5  Ural owl (*Strix uralensis*) by Kōzō Onishi, woodblock print, 125 x 110 mm

6  Ural owl (*Strix uralensis*) by Keisaburō Tejima, woodblock print, 130 x 110 mm
7  Scops owl (*Otus* sp.) by Kōhō Ōuchi, woodblock print, 145 x 125 mm

8  Scops owl (*Otus* sp.) by Morikazu Maeda, woodblock print, 150 x 125 mm
9  Scops owl (*Otus* sp.) by **Masasuke Chiba**, screenprint entitled autumn, 300 x 600 mm

10  Scops owl (*Otus* sp.) by **Gessō Yoshimoto**, woodblock print, 80 x 340 mm
11  Ural owl (*Strix uralensis*) by **H. Aihara**, woodblock print, 215 x 240 mm

12  Scops owl (*Otus* sp.) by **Yoshiharu Kimura**, woodblock print entitled *morning stars*, 1991, 305 x 375 mm
13 White-fronted goose (*Anser albifrons*) by Ryōmi, woodblock print, 240 x 270 mm

14 White-fronted goose (*Anser albifrons*) by Chikanobu Kanō, woodblock print, 260 x 315 mm
15 Goose (*Anser* sp.) by **Hokusai Katsushika**, woodblock print, 175 x 385 mm

16 White-fronted goose (*Anser albifrons*) by **Shōtei Takahashi**, woodblock print, 90 x 245 mm
17  White-fronted goose (*Anser albifrons*) by **Rinsai Shiba**, included in *Shinsen Sanjūroku Kachō* (i.e., Thirty-six Newly Selected Flowers and Birds), 1880s, woodblock print, 360 x 240 mm

18  White-fronted goose (*Anser albifrons*) by **Kiyoshi Takizawa**, included in *Senryūdō Gafu Kachō no Bu* (i.e., Picture Album of Senryūdō Flower and Bird Part), 1905, woodblock print, 330 x 235 mm
19 White-fronted goose (*Anser albifrons*) by Sōzan Itō, woodblock print, 175 x 380 mm

20 White-fronted goose (*Anser albifrons*) by Bairei Kōno, included in Bairei Kachō Gafu (i.e., Picture Album of Flowers and Birds by Bairei), 1899, woodblock print, 250 x 370 mm
21 Goose (*Anser* sp.) by Reika Iwami, woodblock print entitled water fantasy E, 1983, 510 x 345 mm

22 White-fronted goose (*Anser albifrons*) by Ōkyo Maruyama, woodblock print, 350 x 220 mm
23  White-fronted goose (*Anser albifrons*) by **Eisen Ikeda**, woodblock print, 260 x 190 mm

24  Goose (*Anser sp.*) by **Rei Morimura**, woodblock print entitled migrating birds, 2005, 135 x 155 mm
25 Lesser cuckoo (*Cuculus poliocephalus*) by Shōun Yamamoto, woodblock print, 90 x 210 mm

26 Lesser cuckoo (*Cuculus poliocephalus*) by Hiroshige Utagawa, woodblock print, 120 x 355 mm
27 Lesser cuckoo (*Cuculus poliocephalus*) by Kunisada Utagawa, woodblock print, 105 x 155 mm

28 Lesser cuckoo (*Cuculus poliocephalus*) by Keibun Matsumura, included in Keibun Kachō Gafu Köchitsu (i.e., Picture Album of Flowers and Birds by Keibun, Sequel), 1894, edited by Gessai Fukui, woodblock print, 205 x 275 mm
29  Lesser cuckoo (*Cuculus poliocephalus*) by Ryōtai Tatebe, included in Mōkyō Wakan Zatsuga (Miscellaneous Pictures of Japan and China by Mōkyō), 1772, woodblock print, 390 x 265 mm

30  Lesser cuckoo (*Cuculus poliocephalus*) by Koson Ohara, woodblock, 285 x 275 mm

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