

The genus *Imbricaria* was first described by Schumacher in 1817, since then Swainson has caused great confusion by the use of the following generic names:—

Conoelix, Swainson, Proc. Zool. Soc., London, 1833, p. 197.

Conœhelix, Swainson Malacology, 1840, p. 127, 128, 129, 133.

Conœlix „ „ „ p. 318, 321.

Conohelix, Callow and Reeve, Conchologists, Nomenclator, 1845, p. 296.

„ Gray, Proc. Zool. Soc., London, 1847, p. 142.

Conohœlix, Sowerby, Thes. Conch., vol. 4, Mitra p. 14.

Remarks on the large number of Game Birds which have of late been offered for sale in Sydney—by E. PIERSON RAMSAY, F.L.S., Curator of the Australian Museum, Sydney.

During the last month or so the amount of game exhibited in the Sydney markets, and at the stalls of the various dealers and poultrymen throughout the city, is somewhat remarkable, especially when we are so accustomed to hear the oft-repeated, hackneyed expression that there is “little or no game to be found in Australia.” People were beginning to believe this, as they did the absurd statements that our Australian flowers had no scent, and our birds no song. It is gratifying to find that such large quantities of game *can* be found when there is a sufficient demand for it. I find that most of the game has been obtained from Melbourne side, having been shot on the extensive lakes and lagoons in the neighbourhood of Ballarat, &c., and from whence they are forwarded per rail to Melbourne. Lake Burrumbeet and some lagoons in that vicinity are at present swarming with wild fowl; but, nearer home, we find Lake George and Lake Bathurst equally well stocked, the lakes and extensive swamps and lagoons in the Illawarra district also, particularly about Shoalhaven, are supplying Sydney with large quantities, while a few come from the Hunter and Paterson districts. The game birds usually

offered for sale consist of chiefly the Black Duck, Teal, the Brown or "White-eyed" Duck, and Blue-winged Shovel-bills; but latterly several other kinds have been obtained, including species not frequently met with. The following is a list of the species which I have observed lately.

1. Black Duck, *Anas superciliosa*.
2. Maned Goose, *Chlamydochen jubata*.
3. Teal, *Anas punctata*.
4. Blue-winged Shoveller, *Spatula rhynchotis*.
5. Pink-eared Shoveller, *Malacorhynchus membranaceus*.
6. "White-eye," White-winged, or Brown Duck, *Nyroca australis*.
7. The Black Swan, *Cygnus atratus*.

These species are found tolerably plentiful throughout the whole of New South Wales, and the supply for the Sydney market is generally obtained from Illawarra. As an article of diet, they rank as enumerated. The Maned Goose is seldom found on the lakes, but prefers the grassy slopes in the vicinity of Creeks and rivers. They are usually known under the name of the Wood Duck, from their habit of settling on the trees, the thicker boughs of which afford them a secure footing. They lay from eight to ten eggs, of a pale cream colour, in the hollow boughs of trees. The Black Swans are found often in immense numbers, but as an article of food are not in much demand.

Among the scarcer kinds which occasionally find their way into poulterers' hands are—

- No. 8. The Grey or Freckled Duck, *Anas naevosa*, not a very palatable bird.
- No. 9. The Mountain Duck or Shieldrake, about equal in flavour to the last, but one of the finest and most beautiful of the family, as well as the largest of our Australian Ducks.
- No. 10. The Musk Duck, *Biziura lobata*, is sometimes offered for sale, but, being about as good to eat as a Black Shag or Cormorant, is not eagerly sought after by epicures.

Why this bird has such a rank flavour I can hardly tell, its food consists of fresh-water molluscs, *Physa*, *Lymnea*, small *Unios*, and *Cyclas*, with the soft fleshy stems of water-weeds and flags, which they pull up with their powerful bills, and bite the ends off near the roots. The eggs of the Musk Duck are two in number, about three inches in length, of a pale greenish ground colour, and rough to the touch. The nest is made of water-weeds, and placed amongst the flags and sedges in the lagoons and lakes, often at a considerable distance from the land.

All the other species before mentioned, from No. 1 to 6 inclusive, are considered very palatable.

In the northern parts of the colony a large quantity of game birds abound, but there, every one who cares for it, seems to be his own caterer, and few are ever seen offered for sale in the townships. In the Rockhampton district I noticed large flocks of the Pigmy Goose, *Nettapus albipennis*; the Whistling Duck, *Dendrocygna vagans*; and Eyeton's Wood Duck, *Leptotarsus eyetoni*; also, the beautiful white-headed Shieldrake, *Tadorna rajah*, one of the most beautiful species known. I found all these species and *Bernicla jubata* plentiful also, on the lagoons near the mouth of the Burnett river. The Pigmy Goose, and the large semi-palmated goose, *Anseranas melanoleuca*, are also found tolerably plentiful in the Clarence and Richmond River Districts. The latter is occasionally offered for sale in the city, but is not very palatable. On the other hand, the Pigmy Goose is considered quite equal to the Teal and Black Duck, which are looked upon among the best for the table.

In addition to the various species of the Anatidæ which are exposed for sale as articles of food, and looked upon as game birds in Australia, are several species of Plover—

The Spur Wing, *Lobivanellus lobatus*.

The Black-breasted Plover, *Sarciophorus pectoralis*.

The Stilted Plover or Australian Stilt, *Himantopus leucocephalus*.

The Avocet, *Recurvirostra rubricollis*; and

The Banded Stilt, *Chlororhynchus pectoralis*.

The last mentioned is a very rare bird in New South Wales, and I only know, at present, of one instance, brought under my notice by our President, W. Macleay, Esq., of its having been offered for sale in Sydney. In Melbourne, however, it is sometimes met with in the markets. The White-headed Stilt Plovers are more often seen here, and sometimes the Avocets, both of which have been obtained from the Illawarra districts. I believe the Banded Stilts aforementioned had been sent up from Melbourne. None of these, excepting the Spur-wing and Black-breasted Plover, are at all palatable, and it seems a pity that such fine birds should be slain, but I suppose purchasers are found for them, otherwise they would not be sent for sale. There is no accounting for tastes !

The Golden Plover, *Charadrius longipes*, occasionally visits New South Wales in the winter time in large flocks ; they are frequently so very fat and oily that it is with great difficulty decent looking skins can be made of them, even by expert taxidermists ; at this time of the year they are only fit for the table, and numbers of them find their way there every year. We next come to the Land Rails and Water Hens : the Land Rail, *Rallus* or *Hypotaëidia philippensis*, is by far the most delicate flavoured ; they arrive here in considerable numbers during August and September, remaining to breed among the long grass and bushes in swampy places, all over the country, and are not unfrequently found nesting in the wheat fields and lucerne paddocks. This species is found all over the continent of Australia, and also in the Fiji and South Sea Islands. The Long-billed Rail, or Lewin's Rail, *Rallus brachypus*, Swain, is by no means rare in some of the swamps about Sydney, but is seldom found in the market ; like the preceding, it is a very delicate-flavoured bird. The Red Bill, or Porphyrio (*P. melanotus*), and the Water Hen, *Gallinula tenebrosa*, are more often seen, and lately, numbers of Coot (*Fulica Australis*), have been forwarded from Melbourne. Quail are seldom seen offered for sale, but occasionally they may be obtained. The species found about Sydney are *Turnix varius*, the Forest Quail, and the Swamp Quail, *Synoicus*

australis—the former has been rather more plentiful this year than usual, and seems to prefer the open forest country, or the rocky slopes and ridges near the coast.

Snipe (*Scolopax australis*) are sometimes obtainable, but, although the rare painted snipe is sometimes found near Sydney, but more often on the swampy flats about Lake George, I have not met with an instance of its finding its way to the Sydney markets, but I have seen specimens, said to have been obtained in the Melbourne markets.

In addition to the species already enumerated, I may mention the following, which are occasionally found with the poulterers: The Australian Crane, or Native Companion, *Grus australasianus*; the Plain Turkey, or Bustard, *Eupodotis australis*; the Bittern, *Botaurus poiciloptilus*, and Green-shanks, *Glottis glottoides*. I heard of a bittern being sold yesterday as a "Bustard," or "Turkey," for the sum of 8s.

The following is a list of the game birds which have been offered for sale in Sydney during the last month, with the prices:—

- Black Duck, *Anas superciliosa*, 4s. to 8s. per pair.
- Teal, *Anas punctata*, 3s. 6d. to 6s. per pair.
- Freckled duck, *Anas nœvosa*, 4s. to 8s. per pair.
- Shovel-bills, *Spatula rhynchotis*, 4s. to 6s. per pair.
- Brown duck, *Nyroca australis*, 4s. to 6s. per pair.
- Pink-eared Shovel-bill, *Malacorhynchus membranaceus*, 4s. to 5s. per pair.
- Black Swan, *Cygnus atratus*, 6s. to 8s. each.
- Mountain Duck, *Casarca tadornoides*, 6s. to 8s. per pair.
- Musk Duck, *Biziura lobata*, 4s. per pair.
- Semipalmated Goose, *Auseranas melanoleuca*, 8s. each.
- Red-bill, *Porphyrio melanotus*, 3s. per pair.
- Galinules, *Galinula tenebrosa*, 3s. per pair.
- Coot, *Fulica australis*, 3s. per pair.
- Native Companion, *Grus australasianus*, 8s. each.
- Bittern, *Botaurus australis*, sold as a "turkey" or bustard, 8s. per pair.
- Stilted Plover, *Himantopus leucocephalus*, 3s. per pair.
- Banded Stilt, *Chladorhynchus pectoralis*, 3s. per pair.

Erismatura australis—some of these rare birds, at present the rarest of all our Australian ducks, have lately been obtained for the sum of 5s. per pair.

Since writing the above, the following species have occurred from N. S. Wales :—*Dendrocygna vagans*, and *Anseranus melanoleuca*.

Mr. Macleay also informs me that one of his taxidermists obtained a fine pair of Blue-billed Ducks, *Erismatura australis*, which had been sent from the Melbourne district among other game birds, and purchased of a poulterer in Sydney.

Erismatura australis was formerly supposed to be confined to the Lakes and Swamps of West Australia, but several pairs have been lately obtained in the Melbourne markets.

On some new forms of Arachnidæ, by H. H. B. BRADLEY, Esq.

SALTICUS MACLEAYANUS, N.S.—PLATE II.

Adult.—Total length, 3 lines ; to extremity of falces, $4\frac{3}{4}$ lines.

Cephalothorax elongate ; capul divided from the thorax by a strong constriction, leaving the former nearly square ; thorax not as high as caput, oval, highest in front, arched and marked by furrows corresponding to the legs ; colour black, with minute white shining hairs, particularly in the centre of the cephalothorax, thus giving the appearance of a longitudinal white band.

Eyes in three rows ; centre anterior eyes very large ; lateral anterior eyes and eyes of third line about equal in size (half as large as central anterior eyes), and placed at the four corners of the square ; eyes of the middle row, excessively minute, are as near to the posterior as to the anterior lateral eyes.

Legs rather long, slender, with a few minute white hairs ; relative length 4, 1, 2, 3, with but little difference between the 4th and 1st and the 2nd and 3rd pairs respectively ; color—first pair dark reddish brown, except the genual and coxal, which are yellow ; second pair light yellow, the coxal and exinquinial and the



Ramsay, Edward Pearson. 1877. "Remarks on the large number of game birds which have of late been offered for sale in Sydney." *Proceedings of the Linnean Society of New South Wales* 1, 215–220. <https://doi.org/10.5962/bhl.part.12406>.

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