



ACCIPITER TORQUATUS *Vie & Horsf*

ACCIPITER TORQUATUS, *Vig. and Horsf.*

Collared Sparrow Hawk.

Falco torquatus, Cuv.—Temm. Pl. Col., 43 adult, 93 young.

Accipiter torquatus, Vig. and Horsf. in Linn. Trans., vol. xv. p. 182.—Shaw, Gen. Zool., vol. xiii. p. 30, pl. 33.—Gould, Syn. Birds of Australia, Part III. fig. 2.

Falco nisus, Lath. Ind. Orn. Supp., p. xi.?

New Holland Sparrow Hawk, Lath. Gen. Syn. Supp., vol. ii. p. 51?; and Gen. Hist., vol. i. p. 223?

Nisus australis, Less. Traité d'Orn., p. 61.

Bilbil, Aborigines of New South Wales.

Jil-lee-jil-lee, Aborigines of the lowland and

Min-min of the Aborigines of the mountain districts of Western Australia.

Little Hawk, Colonists of Swan River.

THIS species is especially abundant in Van Diemen's Land and New South Wales, and would appear to enjoy a wide extent of range, since I have either seen or received specimens of it from every part of Australia with the single exception of the north coast.

In its habits and disposition it has all the characteristics of its European ally, the *Accipiter Fringillarius*, whose boldness and daring spirit while in pursuit of its quarry have been so often described that they are familiar to every one; the sexes also exhibit the same disparity of size, the female being nearly as large and powerful again as her mate; hence the Swift-flying Quail and the numerous species of Honey-eaters upon which they feed, find in her a most powerful enemy. For rapidity of flight and unerring aim, however, she is even surpassed by her more feeble mate, who may frequently be observed at one moment skimming quietly over the surface of the ground, and the next impetuously dashing through the branches of the trees in fearless pursuit of his prey, which from the quickness of his abrupt turns rarely eludes the attack. Mr. Caley mentions as an instance of its boldness, that he once witnessed it in the act of darting at a Blue Mountain Parrot, which was suspended in a cage from the bough of a mulberry-tree, within a couple of yards of his door.

The nest is rather a large structure, composed of sticks, and lined with fibrous roots and a few leaves of the gum-tree; it is usually placed in the fork of a swamp oak (*Casuarina*) or other trees growing on the banks of creeks and rivers, but is occasionally to be met with in the depths of the forests. The eggs are generally three in number, of a bluish white, in some instances stained and smeared over with blotches of buff; in others I have observed square-formed spots, and a few hair-like streaks of deep brown: their medium length is one inch and six lines by one inch and two lines in breadth.

Head, all the upper surface, wings and tail deep brownish grey, the tail indistinctly barred with deep brown; on the back of the neck an obscure collar of reddish brown; throat, the under surface and thighs rufous, crossed by numerous narrow bars of white, the red predominating on the thighs; under surface of the wings and tail grey, distinctly barred with dark brown, which is deepest on the former; irides and eyelash yellow; cere and gape yellowish green; base of the bill lead-colour, tip black; legs yellow slightly tinged with green.

The young male has the cere and gape olive-yellow; irides and eyelash primrose-yellow.

The figures are those of a male and a female of the natural size.



Gould, John. 1848. "Accipiter torquatus, Vig. and Horsf., Collared Sparrow Hawk, [Pl. 19]." *The birds of Australia* 1, -. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.312910>.

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