



DACELO CERVINA: Gould.

## DACELO CERVINA, *Gould.*

### Fawn-breasted Kingfisher.

*Dacelo cervina*, Gould, Birds of Australia, Part II. cancelled.

*Lá-rool*, Aborigines of Port Essington.

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THE northern and north-western portions of Australia constitute the true habitat of this species; it was observed in tolerable abundance by Captain Grey during his expedition to the latter part of the country, and specimens of it have also formed a part of every collection of any extent made at Port Essington. In disposition it appears to be more shy and wary than the *Dacelo gigantea* of New South Wales, of which it is a representative. Mr. Gilbert, whose observations were made on the Cobourg Peninsula, states that it "inhabits well-wooded forests, generally in pairs, is extremely shy and very difficult to procure; it is very fond of perching on the topmost dead branch of a tree, where it has an uninterrupted view of every thing passing around, and pours out its loud discordant tones. Sometimes three or four pairs may be heard at one time, when the noise is so great that no other sound can be heard.

"The natives tell me that it breeds in the honey-season, which is during the months of May, June and July."

The food of this Kingfisher is doubtless similar to that of the *Dacelo gigantea*. The stomachs of those examined by Mr. Gilbert were tolerably muscular, and contained the remains of coleopterous and other kinds of insects.

When fully adult the male differs from his mate in having the tail-feathers of a deep and splendid blue instead of brown; a feature which will be readily perceived on reference to the accompanying Plate.

The male has the feathers of the head buffy white, with a central stripe of dark brown, the latter colour becoming most conspicuous on the occiput; throat white; cheeks, ear-coverts, back of the neck, chest and all the under surface sienna-yellow, crossed on the flanks with very minute irregular zigzag bands of brown; primaries black at the tip, white at the base; the base of their external webs, the secondaries and spurious wing rich china blue; greater and lesser wing-coverts, lower part of the back and upper tail-coverts shining light blue; tail and the longest of the upper tail-coverts rich deep blue, the former broadly tipped with white; irides greenish white; upper mandible blackish brown, the cutting edges greenish white; lower mandible greenish white, the base dark brown on the sides, and blue on the under surface; tarsi and feet emerald green; claws black.

The female has the feathers of the head, cheeks, and ear-coverts buffy white, with a central stripe of dark brown; throat white; back of the neck, chest and all the under surface sienna-yellow; the chest, flanks and abdomen crossed by fine zigzag lines of brown; upper part of the back and scapularies umber-brown; primaries blackish brown at the tip and white at the base; the basal portion of their external webs, the secondaries spurious and the wing rich china blue; greater and lesser wing-coverts and upper tail-coverts light shining blue; tail and the longest of the upper coverts rich chestnut brown, which passes into buff at the tip, the whole transversely marked with eight or nine bands of rich blue black.

The figures are those of the two sexes of the natural size.



Gould, John. 1848. "Dacelo cervina, Gould., Fawn-breasted Kingfisher, [Pl. 20]." *The birds of Australia* 2, -. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.312947>.

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