



LEPTOTARSIS EYTONI, *Gould.*

Eyton's Duck.

Leptotarsis Eytoni, Gould MS.—Eyton's Mon. of Anat., p. 111.

Dendrocygna Eytoni, List of Birds in Brit. Mus. Coll., Part iii. p. 132.

Now-ē-rāyen, Aborigines of Port Essington.

A SINGLE specimen of this very curious Duck was presented to me some years since by B. Bynoe, Esq., who procured it on the north coast of Australia. Perceiving at a glance that it differed in structure, particularly in the form of the nail of the bill, in the length and colour of the tarsi, and the diminished extent of the interdigital membrane, from all the previously established genera of the family to which it belongs, I immediately characterized it as the type of a new genus under the appellation given above, at the same time assigning to it the specific name of *Eytoni* as a just tribute of respect to T. C. Eyton, Esq., of Donnerville, a gentleman ardently attached to the science of ornithology, and well-known for his valuable "Monograph of the Anatidæ." Since that period several other examples have come under my notice, two of which were procured in South Australia and presented to the British Museum by C. D. E. Fortnum, Esq., of Adelaide, and others adorn my own collection.

The true habitat of this species appears to be the north-west coast of Australia, where, as Captain Stokes informs me, "it is one of the commonest birds of the country. When on the wing it makes a peculiar whistling sound that can be heard at a great distance, and which changes as it alights into a sort of chatter. The perching on trees is performed in a very clumsy manner, swinging and pitching to and fro. We subsequently often found it on the rivers of the north coast, but not within some miles of their mouths, or near their upper waters, from which it would appear that it inhabits certain reaches of the river only; we never found it in the swamps. The farthest south it was afterwards met with was on the Albert River, in the Gulf of Carpentaria, in lat. 18° S., which gives it a range of six and a half degrees of latitude over the northern part of the continent. Its nest never came under our notice, consequently we are not aware either of the size or colour of the eggs; neither did we see any young birds during the period of our observation, ranging from July to November."

Crown of the head and back of the neck dark sandy brown; sides of the head and neck and the breast fawn-colour; throat and forepart of the neck brownish white; all the upper surface greyish olive-brown; rump and tail brownish black crossed by a band of buff; primaries and secondaries deep sandy red; tertiaries dark brown; across the upper part of the abdomen a broad band of purplish sandy red, each feather crossed by several narrow bands of black; feathers immediately before and beneath the insertion of the wing chestnut-red, crossed by several broad bars of black; flank-feathers buff, broadly and distinctly margined with black; lower part of the abdomen and under tail-coverts buffy white; feet flesh-colour; irides dark orange.

The Plate represents the bird of the natural size.



Gould, John. 1848. "Leptotarsis Eytoni, Gould., Eyton's Duck, [Pl. 15]." *The birds of Australia* 7, -. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.313421>.

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