

A FIRST LIST OF THE BIRDS OF MARIA ISLAND.

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Of late years much has been added to our knowledge of the local distribution of birds in Europe and Asia by the publication of "Lists of Birds" in such journals as the "Ibis," "Stray Feathers," and the Proceedings of the Zoological Society, and the information afforded by such papers has proved of the greatest advantage to authors in the publication of recent works. The "Distribution of Birds" is not, however, solely a matter of interest when dealing with large continental areas, for there is much to be learnt by attention to it in connection with comparatively small insular regions, in which food, climate, and topographical aspect exercise a considerable influence on the movements and the permanent or temporary location of the feathered creation; and it has therefore occurred to me that something might be done in the pages of our journal towards increasing our knowledge of the distribution of Tasmanian birds. The large islands round our coasts appear to furnish the most interesting fields of observation, and in the present instance Maria Island has been chosen as being a place to which no little attention has of late been drawn in connection with settlement and fertilisation, and where there may some day be a considerable population. The geographical features of the island are such as to be favourable in a large degree to bird life. Its climate is mild, and it is for the most part forest-clad, with a consequently abundant food-supply. A lofty range of mountains, attaining, at its northern end, an altitude of 3,000 feet, runs from north to south of the larger half, which shelters the east and west coasts from the opposite blowing winds, and in the gullies of this range there is ample room for our forest-loving species. The western shores are flat and intersected here and there by lagoons, the home of water birds; and round the isthmus or "neck" there are extensive beaches such as are frequented by shore species. Beyond the isthmus lies the southern portion of the island, sparsely timbered, but no doubt containing a good many birds, although the information I have obtained does not extend beyond the "neck." Unable to visit the island myself, I sent my son, who is an enthusiastic young collector, to spend his Easter holidays there, and he succeeded in observing a fair

number of species which, combined with those concerning which Signor Bernacchi, his kind host, gave him information and a few additional species on which Mr. Morton has obligingly given me notes, make up a list of sixty-four. This is comparatively small, owing to the absence of the large family of *Procellariidæ* (petrels) from the list, and the season of observation occurring after the return migration of our summer visitants.

As is usual in framing distribution lists, I have taken the opportunity of making remarks on the various species which may be of value to ornithological readers of the paper at Home, as well as to those who make a study of our species here.

The letters "L" and "B" in brackets indicate the authority: my son or Signor Bernacchi, and the letter "M" denotes that the curator of the Tasmanian Museum supplied the information.

ACCIPITRES.

1. *UROÆTUS AUDAX*, *Latham*.

Found in the forests, and rather numerous. Three or four have been seen together (B). The forest-clad range in this island forms a secure home for this grand eagle, but its destructiveness will lead to a great reduction in its numbers as the island becomes populated. It is abundant in the ranges of the opposite mainland.

2. *HALLÆTUS LEUCOGASTER*, *Gmelin*.

Found sparingly round the coast (B). My son saw one at the settlement. This widely-spread Sea Eagle is not so common about the indented coast of the south of Tasmania as I should have expected. During the last three years only three examples have been seen by me in the Derwent. It builds occasionally on the Actæon islands, on one of which Mr. Joseph Graves found a nest in November, three years ago. It was made on the ground among the rank vegetation and low scrub. Gould draws attention to its habit of building on the ground in the islands of Bass Straits where the structure is formed of the "twigs and branches of the Barilla bush." In Ceylon, where it is far more abundant than in these latitudes, and where every inland tank of any size has one or two pairs frequenting it, this eagle always builds on a lofty tree. Gould speaks of the Sea Eagle being very common in D'Entrecasteaux Channel. I know of one pair building there, but I fancy its numbers have decreased before the efforts of the wild fowler.

3. *HIERACIDEA ORIENTALIS*, *Schlegel*.

One example seen near the settlement (L).

The open sheep runs and plains of the Midland Districts are the great home of this bird. It has the habit of another well-known member of the *Falconinæ*, the Kestrel, of hovering poised in the air, over a coveted object on the ground and then descending on it, very similarly to the Kestrel. These weak-legged, round-winged falcons, represented by the two so-called Brown Hawks of the Australian region, are very interesting members of this sub-family. To the typical bill of falcon they unite the wing and leg, to some extent, of the goshawk, and they have the ignoble habits of the Harrier with the hovering propensity of the long-winged Kestrels.

4. *NINOX MACULATA*, *Vig. and Horsf.*

The Spotted Owl is recorded by Signor Bernacchi. Probably both species of Hawk-owl are found in Maria Island. These owls are variable in their choice of abode—woods, plantations near houses, and even localities in the heart of towns are chosen as dwelling places, in support of which I may state that recently I observed a fine example of the spotted owl sitting at dusk on a conservatory in Macquarie-street.

5. *STRIX CASTANOPS*, *Gould*.

Found occasionally near the settlement (B).

PSITTACI.

6. *CALYPTORHYNCHUS XANTHONOTUS*, *Gould*.

Found in the forests on the hills (B).

7. *PLATYCERCUS FLAVIVENTRIS*, *Temminck*.

Common on the West Coast, and observed close to the rocky shore (L).

N.B.—From all accounts the “Rosella” appears to be singularly absent from this island, as Signor Bernacchi has not observed it. This species is likewise not found on the N.W. Coast about Circular Head. Its favourite habitat has always doubtless been the sparsely timbered country, and its translation to the cleared districts where once the virgin forest reigned is evidently a matter of some time.

8. *PEZOPOROUS FORMOSUS*, *Latham*.

The Ground Paroquet is common on the West Coast. Observed on the swampy, marshy lands near Long Point, near the “Neck,” and on Penguin Island near the settlement (L).

9. *LATHAMUS DISCOLOR*, *Shaw*.

A small flock seen near Long Point so early as the month of August (M).

The Swift Paroquet appears in great numbers when the blue gums are in blossom (B).

10. *TRICHOGLOSSUS PUSILLUS*, *Shaw*.

The Little Lorikeet is recorded by Gould as found on the island, but there is some doubt about the locality, as he says "On Maria Island, near the entrance of Storm Bay."

PICARIÆ.

11. *CUCULUS FLABELLIFORMIS*, *Latham*.

Several examples seen along the coast in lightly timbered country not far from the sea (L).

One seen in August in the vineyard near the homestead (M).

NOTE.—The season for cuckoos had passed when my son visited the island, and so the above was the only species seen. The pallid cuckoo, and probably the bronze cuckoo (*C. plagosus*), are no doubt found here throughout the migratory months, September to March. The occurrence of the Fan-tailed Cuckoo so early as August is remarkable, and would almost indicate that the individual had not migrated.

12. *PODARGUS CUVIERI*, *Vig. and Horsf.*

The "More-pork" is found near the settlement (B).

PASSERES.

13. *CORONE AUSTRALIS*, *Gould*.

The White-eyed Crow is abundant (L).

It is a disputed point among Australian observers whether there are, or are not, two species of *Corvidæ* in this region, an idea being prevalent that the *brown-eyed* birds are the young. Sharpe, however, in his catalogue, classes the brown-eyed crow as a raven, having larger nasal bristles and a longer first primary, with the nostrils placed in a groove. The type bird of the species presented by the Linnæan Society to the British Museum has these characteristics. The feathers of this latter species, also, are quite white at the base. In my "Systematic List" I entered it on the authority of a specimen in the British Museum presented by Mr. Ronald Gunn, who was a thoroughly reliable collector, but I have not yet had an opportunity of examining a series of Brown-eyed Crows and satisfying myself as to the validity of the species in Tasmania.

14. *STREPERA ARGUTA*, *Gould*.

Observed near the settlement (L).

It is probable that both species of Black Magpie are found on the island. The Hill Crow-shrike is an early breeder in the South, where I have found full-grown young at the end of November.

15. *GRAUCALUS PARVIROSTRIS*, *Gould*.

A visitant to Maria Island, departing in March (B).

My son did not observe this species in April; it probably leaves the East Coast early in the autumn, though I have seen it in the Domain at Hobart as late as the first week in May.

16. *COLLYRIOCINCLA RECTIROSTRIS*, *Jard. and Selby*.

Observed in the scrub about Bernacchi's Creek, near the settlement (L).

17. *PACHYCEPHALA GLAUCURA*, *Gould*.

Found on the West Coast; a specimen procured in peppermint bush on the hills south of the settlement (L).

18. *RHIPIDURA SATURATA*, *Sharpe*.

The Tasmanian Fantail was observed in numbers near the settlement, frequenting briar bushes and scrub near the creek with the same tame habits which always characterise it (L).

This interesting genus of fly-catchers has an almost exclusive oceanic distribution and numbers a great many species (53), some of which are peculiar to small islands in the Pacific. The most northerly species are the two "Fantails" of India, one of which is the pretty little Ceylonese bird, *R. Albifrontata*, which extends to the N.W. Himalayas. Sharpe has recently separated the Tasmanian bird from the Australian *R. Albiscapa*, on account of its larger size, darker head and throat-collar, and richer under surface. He gives the wing of two specimens as 2.9 against 2.75 in the Australian bird. An example in my collection in the adolescent stage measures only 2.7. The back is dark olive-brown, with broad rufescent tips to the back feathers, and narrower margins of the same on the hind neck and nape; the tippings of the lesser wing coverts are also fulvous. A series of these birds from the North Coast, King's and Flinders Islands would be valuable, in order to determine the question of the gradation or otherwise of our species into the Australian form.

19. *PETRÆCA LEGGII*, *Sharpe*.

The Scarlet-breasted Robin was not uncommon along the West Coast, and observed near the settlement (L).

20. *PETRÆCA PHENICIA*, *Gould*.

This Robin is numerous in the western part of the island (L).

This is the most *saxicoline* of the robins in Tasmania, reminding one forcibly of the wheatear in England, and even the stonechat. In its little, quick flights from stone to stone in the open fields, then flitting off to the post of a fence and quickly alighting therefrom on the ground, where it will snap up an insect or fly and devour it on an neighbouring clod, it shows the habits of a true chat.

21. *PETRÆCA RHODINOASTER*, *Drapiez*.

Seen near the "Fossil Cliffs" (M).

22. *PETRÆCA VITTATA*, *Quoy et Gaimard*.

The Dusky Robin is as common on the island as elsewhere; observed about the settlement and in the open bushland along the coast (L).

23. *GEOCICHLA MACRORHYNCHA*, *Gould*.

One example procured in the scrubs on the west side (M).

This fine Thrush will, no doubt, be found to be common in the mountain ranges of the island. It is probably as numerous on the slopes of Mount Wellington and in the spurs of the range as anywhere in the eastern half of the island.

Mr. Seebohm, our chief authority on thrushes, has united all those species which have a white underwing bar under the genus, *Geocichla*, the type of which is Kuhl's Ground thrush, *G. interpres*, from Java, Sumatra, and Lombok. The genus is a widely-spread one, but not represented in Europe. In Asia it has an Oriental distribution, ranging from Eastern Siberia through Burmah to India and Ceylon, and thence through the Malay Archipelago, where it is well represented, to Australia, in which region it is the only Thrush found, and there exists in the form of three species—*G. Heinii* (North Australia and Queensland), *G. lunulata* (N.S. Wales to South Australia), and *G. macrorhyncha* (Tasmania). Africa is a stronghold of the genus, eleven species being found in that continent. Our bird is at best a sub-species or insular variety of the continental bird, from which it chiefly differs in the large size of the bill; but even in this organ the dissimilarity lies in its stoutness, for the difference in length is scarcely appreciable. The length from tip to gape, straight, varies in eight specimens in my collection from 1.38 to 1.45, and in three continental specimens of *G. lunulata* it is 1.37 and 1.38. The tinting of the underwing bar is almost as buff in the continental as in the insular species, but

in the latter the upper surface is darker and the crescentic dark markings broader, particularly on the upper tail coverts. The lesser wing coverts are more conspicuously tipped with ochraceous white in the continental species, and the wing is slightly shorter than in our bird. The wing measurements in the respective series above alluded to are 5.3—5.4 inches, and 5.1—5.3 inches.

The Tasmanian Ground Thrush is an early breeder. Mr. Chris. Adams of the Lower Piper having found a nest with two eggs in that district on the 4th of August this year. A nest was also found on Mount Wellington this year at the end of July.

24. EPHTHIANURA ALBIFRONS, *Jard. and Selby.*

This interesting little bird was observed on marshy ground near Long Point, a small flock were frequenting reedy ground near a lagoon (L). Mr. Morton likewise observed it near the settlement in the beginning of August.

These valuable observations prove that this pretty little chat, which has hitherto been thought to be migratory to Tasmania, is, to a certain extent, resident here, and that Maria Island is one of its winter localities. It is likewise found in the winter on the eastern shores of the Derwent, for my son observed a small flock feeding on the shores of the inlet at Muddy Plains in the latter part of June, and on the 21st of May met with a flock close to Bellerive township. In the summer they are found in many localities along the Derwent where the ground is marshy and covered with rushes, rank tussocks, and small bushes, in which places it builds. In former years, Mr. Edward Swan informs me that it used to make its appearance at Cornelian Bay and bred where the cemetery is now situated. I found it breeding near South Bridgwater in October last, and observed it plentiful at South Arm Neck in November, and in this secluded locality it is doubtless resident. The probably correct hypothesis is that it moves about the country in the breeding season, and is therefore more noticed then than in the winter, its numbers being also increased in the summer by a partial migration from the mainland.

25. CINCLOSOMA PUNCTATUM, *Lath.*

Observed by Mr. Morton in bush on the West Coast.

This pretty bird is erroneously styled a thrush in the colony, but it differs from that family in the structure of its wing, leg, and bill. It is again called a "dove," a terrible misnomer, when we think of the beautiful ground doves that exist in tropical regions. It is no more unorthodox, however, than christening the magnificent bustard of Australia a *Turkey*! The genus *Cinclosoma* is a Papua-Australian one,

consisting of ten species, the most northerly ranging of which finds a home in New Guinea, and another, the handsome chestnut-backed ground thrush is a well-known inhabitant of the Murray districts.

The stoutly scaled tarsus, short rounded wing, with lengthened first primary, graduated tail, and conical-shaped bill, distinguish the genus *Cinclosoma* from the thrushes and denoted to be strictly a *Timaline* bird.

26. *STIPITURUS MALACHURUS*, *Shaw*.

The Emu-wren was seen by Mr. Morton.

This pretty little bird is more widely distributed than the ordinary observer imagines, for its skulking habits lead to its being passed over in many districts which it inhabits. A favourite locality for it is the vicinity of damp fern brakes which intersect the open, sparsely-covered wastes near the sea coast.

27. *SERICORNIS HUMILIS*, *Gould*.

The Bush-tit is common about the creeks in the bush, a locality in which it is usually found all over the island (L). Mr. Morton likewise found it about rocks near the sea coast.

The inquisitive nature of this little bird renders it very familiar, and in the unfrequented districts of the West it is so tame that I have had it alight close to my feet and hop about, peering into my face in a charmingly fearless manner. The wing in the male measures 2·4 to 2·5 inches, and in the female 2·2

28. *ACANTHIZA DIEMENENSIS*, *Gould*.

The Brown-tail is common about the creeks along the West Coast of the island (L).

29. *ACANTHIZA CHRYSORRHÆA*, *Quoy. et G.*

The Yellow-tail was very common in all suitable localities on the West Coast (L).

30. *ACANTHORHYNCHUS TENUIROSTRIS*, *Jard*.

This handsome Honey-eater is found in the heath-covered wastes near the lagoons on the sea coast (L).

The "Spine-bill" wanders from its ordinary haunts when honey-bearing plants are in flower. It is often to be seen in gardens in the heart of the city, hovering about flowers, and flitting actively from branch to branch, its graceful form clinging to a twig while it adroitly inserts its long bill into the heart of the blossom which affords it its favourite food.

31. *MELITHREPTUS MELANOCEPHALUS*, *Gould*.

Abundant not far from the settlement (L).

This species is one of the most gregarious of our honey-eaters. I have seen it in the Domain in large flocks during the autumn, the members of which keep up a constant repetition of their cheerful, chirping notes. It is plentiful in the lake district, and on the Western Mountains, and I have seen it at Lake St. Clair and along the track to the King River, where I met with it in numbers in the Valley of the Collingwood.

32. *MELITHREPTUS VALIDIROSTRIS*, *Gould*.

The Strong-billed Honey-eater is numerous in the bush (L).

33. *PTILOTIS FLAVIGULA*, *Gould*.

Common in the gum "bush" of the island (L).

34. *MELIORNIS AUSTRALASIANA*, *Shaw*.

Found in abundance in the island (L).

I noticed this honey-eater in vast numbers in the scrub lining the shores of the lower part of Lake St. Clair. Like most of the smaller birds in the West Country it was very tame, flying about in the young honeysuckles near Boathouse Bay within a few feet of the observer.

35. *MELIORNIS NOVÆ HOLLANDIÆ*, *Lath*.

This showy Honey-eater was seen in the scrub in the creeks running into the West Coast (L).

This species is far less numerous in the south than the aforementioned; but on the North and on the East Coasts it is more plentiful. Its favourite resort appears to be honeysuckle scrub and ti-tree thickets when there are honey-bearing shrubs in their vicinity. In 1868 I procured an interesting Albino of this bird on Mount Nicholas. The yellow parts of the plumage were slightly more extended than in normal examples, and the only dark part was the head, which was pale earth-brown; the throat and chest stripes were paler still, and the back-feathers grey, edged with white; iris, white; bill, pinkish white; legs and feet, vinous brown.

36. *ANTHOCHÆRA INAURIS*, *Gould*.

The Wattle-bird is abundant (L).

NOTE.—Though the brush wattle-bird was not observed, it doubtless inhabits the island in company with its congener.

Signor Bernacchi informed my son that the Miner was not found on the island. That the commonest form of honey-eater in Tasmania should be absent from an island only separated from the mainland by seven miles of water is a noteworthy fact in connection with the distribution of this species. Like the magpie it is not found in wild districts covered with

virgin forest. I saw nothing of it after leaving the part of the Native Tier on the Ouse and Lake St. Clair Road, nor is it found, according to Dr. Holden, at Circular Head. Its absence from the Bass Straits Islands is also probable. Information on this point is very desirable.

37. *PARDALOTUS PUNCTATUS*, *Shaw and Nodder*.

The Diamond-bird was observed about the open bush lands of the West Coast (L).

38. *ESTRELLA BELLA*, *Latham*.

The "Firetail" was seen not far from the settlement (L).

39. *ANTHUS AUSTRALIS*, *Vig. and Horsf.*

The Tit-lark is found sparingly along the West Coast (L).

This bird is found sparingly on the button-grass plains of the west, in which region I observed it in the Cuvier Valley, the Derwent and Navarre Plains, and the Valley of the Collingwood. It was also met with in the King William Plateau, at an elevation of 4,400 to 4,600 feet. It is also found on the Ben Lomond Plateau, which is still higher. In its alpine proclivities it resembles others of its congeners, notably the Indian and Ceylonese pipit, *A. rufulus*, which is found on the highest "patnas" in the island of Ceylon.

40. *ARTAMUS SORDIDUS*, *Latham*.

The Wood-swallow is not uncommon in the summer (B).

The latter end of September appears to be the time of the wood swallow's arrival in the south of Tasmania, and its departure takes place at the end of April.

COLUMBÆ.

41. *PHAPS CHALCOPHTERA*, *Latham*.

The Bronze-wing was observed by Mr. Morton on the West Coast, near the homestead.

The Brush Bronze-wing is doubtless found on the island as well as the larger species.

GALLINÆ.

42. *SYNOICUS DIEMENENSIS*, *Gould*.

The swamp quail is common on the west side of the island (B).

43. *SYNOICUS AUSTRALIS*, *Latham*.

The Brown Quail of Australia, or the smaller of our two species of "brown quail," is also said by Signor Bernacchi to be found on the island. I have not as yet been able to ascertain properly the distribution of this bird in Tasmania. Most of the quail

I have seen killed in the south of the island up to the present time are of the larger species, known as the Swamp Quail, and they have been in all probability shot in damp, rushy localities; and those I have seen in the Longford district on similar tracts of land have been the same. The smaller Brown Quail is usually found in fern brakes, and grassy, open bush-land.

44. *HYPOTÆNIDIA PECTORALIS*, Cuvier.

A Rail answering to this species is stated by Signor Bernacchi to be found on the lagoons at the "Neck," and Mr. Morton observed it in the same locality.

Very little appears to be known of the distribution of the rails and water crakes in Tasmania, for their skulking habits render them difficult of detection so far as the casual observer is concerned, and it is only those who lay themselves out for systematically collecting birds, who succeed in finding them.

GRALLÆ.

45. *GALLINAGO AUSTRALIS*, Latham.

The Australian snipe is found in suitable localities on the island during the season of its visitation to Tasmania (B).

It is a singular fact that the snipe is decreasing in numbers in Tasmania; the country is doubtless not as suited to its habits as in former years, when swamps and favourite marshy feeding grounds were in their primeval state; but there are many tracts of land fit at the present time to hold numbers of snipe, and to which one would think that they would stray on their arrival. Nevertheless they fail to appear in them, and the common lament of the sportsmen is that the snipe are getting scarce.

It is possible that the partial spoliation of their feeding grounds all along the line of their migration on the East Coast of Australia, may tend to divert the "stream" from its original course, and Tasmania, lying at the end of that course, would naturally suffer. The breeding grounds of the species, as at present known, are the islands of Japan, and its migratory course is past the Coast of China and the Phillippine Islands to Australia, and thence down to Tasmania, a distance of 5,000 miles. It is no wonder, therefore, that any change in the features of the country which forms the extreme limit of its wanderings should tend to make it stop short of it, and perhaps content itself by seeking new feeding grounds *en route*.

The snipe procured by Gould at Port Essington, and which he alludes to as being smaller than the Tasmanian bird, with eighteen tail feathers and the four lateral ones on each side attenuated appears to be the Chinese snipe, *S. Megala*, which breeds during the northern summer in S.E. Siberia, and winters in the Malay Archipelago (Celebes and other islands),

probably extending to the North Coast of Australia. The above are the characteristics of this snipe, which is smaller than the Australian snipe (wing, 5·6 inches against 6 to 6·7 inches), though very similar to it in plumage, while the latter bird has only two narrow feathers on each side of the tail.

46. *NUMENIUS CYANOPUS*, Vieillot.

Found on the coast of the island (B).

The Curlew appears to remain in small numbers through the winter in the South of Tasmania, for my son saw an example at Muddy Plains in July last.

47. *ÆGIALITIS MONACHA*, Geoffrey.

The hooded Dottrel was obtained in Oyster Bay on the Five-Mile Beach (L).

This species is doubtless as common on the island as on the shores of the mainland. The plumage of the young, which is cursorily referred to by Gould, is as follows:—Head and hind-neck, back, and wing coverts brownish-grey, the feathers of the head narrowly margined with whitish, the remainder of the feathers of the upper surface with crescentic margins of brown and a dark shaft mark; wings as in the adult, tail with the outer white feathers tipped black, and the centre black feathers tipped white; the dark longer upper tail coverts tipped with white; the entire under surface with the hind-neck collar, white; bill darkbrown, yellowish at the base; legs and feet paler yellow than in the adult (February specimen).

Gould says that the female has the crown mottled with black and white; but this stage of plumage is not a normal one, as it testifies to a change occurring in the coloration, and I have female specimens carefully sexed in the same dress as the male, and in one of which two eggs in the duct were half formed.

48. *ÆGIALITIS RUFICAPILLA*, Temm.

This Dottrel was observed on the beach at the Neck (L).

An early breeder. I found young birds on the 7th November at South Arm Neck, so that the eggs must be laid at the end of September. The foregoing species lays in December on the East Coast.

49. *ÆGIALITIS BICINCTA*, Jard. and Selby.

One specimen procured at the Five-mile Beach (L).

This Dottrel is apparently migratory to this colony. It appears in March, remaining until July, and perhaps later; and at the time of its arrival it is mostly in young plumage, or with the adult bands in an imperfect state, which seems to

indicate that there is a change of colouring after breeding. The dress is, however, so variable, that unless a large series of specimens were got together, shot at all times of the year, the changes could not properly be worked out.

The plumage of the young bird in April is as follows:—Head, hind neck, back, and wings, earthy brown, the feathers of the back with narrow rufescent edgings; the scapulars and wing coverts more conspicuously edged than in the adult; forehead whitish, grading into the brown of the head; throat and under surface white, tinged with buff more or less beneath the ear coverts; a more or less incomplete brown band across the upper part of the chest, in some only a brown wash; legs and feet dark olive-green. As time goes on the brown pectoral band becomes darker, and in May blackish feathers, tipped with white, are acquired; at the same time the surface feathers of the lower band begin to appear and may be found lying beneath the white plumage. In June specimens are procurable with the black band showing a want of uniformity on account of the feathers being pale tipped here and there, and the rufous band the same owing to the white tippings. At the end of July, by a change in the feathers the bands become uniform and well defined. During this time the forehead bar and the loreal stripe extending beneath the eye and down the neck to the band have been developing and becoming black. An examination of a large number of specimens has led to this diagnosis which, I think, in the main will be found correct, but it is probable that “birds of the year” never get the deep chestnut band in its completely uniform state.

The double-banded doterel frequents inland districts and is common at the Salt Pans on the Mona Vale Estate from March until July, and perhaps later. Wing in adult males 5·0 to 5·2 inches.

50. *HÆMATOPUS LONGIROSTRIS*, Vieillot.

51. *HÆMATOPUS UNICOLOR*, Wagler.

Both oyster-catchers met with, the White-breasted at the Neck and near the Settlement, and the Black near the latter place (L).

GAVIÆ.

52. *STERNA POLIOCERCA*, Gould.

A single example seen near Penguin Island (L).

The so-called “Bass Straits” tern is common in the Derwent from August until midsummer. It breeds down the Channel and at the Little Actæon Islands, but it is apparently more abundant in the Straits than in the South, breeding on

many of the islands in the former. I have entered this tern in my systematic list as *S. poliocerca*, not with the idea of reversing my opinion given at page 1,027 of the "Birds of Ceylon," where I agreed with Mr. Saunders, our chief authority on these interesting birds, that it was identical with the Indian Ocean crested tern, *S. Bergii*, but in order to retain it *for the present* as a local race or sub-species under Gould's name, *S. poliocerca*. Terns of wide range vary much in size, and the Bass Straits tern is the smallest form of the Crested tern of Indian seas, the gradations in size, however, in specimens from various localities being so regular that the Southern bird is not considered by Mr. Saunders to hold its own as a distinct species. When examining the specimens in his collection I found *S. poliocerca* to range as low as 12.75 in the wing against 15.12 in the largest specimens from the Persian Gulf. Since coming to Tasmania I have procured a fully adult specimen with a wing of 12.0, and I find that the bird is different in its note and habits from the Indian tern, and that its plumage is beautifully suffused with rose colour on the under surface—a feature not observed in specimens of true *S. Bergii*. Should individuals from all parts of Australian seas show the same small size, I am of opinion that *S. poliocerca* may stand as a distinct species.

STEGANOPODES

53. SULA SERRATOR, *Banks*.

Observed and obtained between Spring Bay and the island (L).

It is a matter of conjecture where this gannet breeds. It is in the Derwent nearly all the summer, and is not known to breed anywhere on the south coast.

54. PHALACROCORAX LEUCOGASTER, *Gould*.

Common all along the coast (L).

This Cormorant breeds abundantly south of Hobart; large colonies nest at Cape Frederick Henry (Bruni Island), and at the Blanche Rock, near Southport.

55. PELECANUS CONSPICILLATUS, *Temm*.

Observed occasionally (B).

ANSERES.

56. CYGNUS ATRATUS, *Lath*.

Seen in Oyster Bay (L).

S. Bernacchi says the swan breeds in the lagoons, and is not uncommon in the island. Mr. Morton found it nesting in August on a lagoon on the Western side of the island. The

nest was composed of a mass of lily leaves and aquatic plants, collected together so as to form a vegetable island in the lagoon. The male bird kept guard a little distance off, while the female was occupied with the duties of incubation.

57. *TADORNA TADORNOIDES*, *Jard. and Selby*.

Found occasionally on the lagoons (B).

58. *ANAS SUPERCILIOSA*, *Gmelin*.

Abundant at the mouths of creeks on the West Coast and on the lagoons (L).

59. *SPATULA RHYNCHOTIS*, *Lath.*

Observed on the lagoon (M).

60. *ANAS CASTANEA*, *Eyton*.

The teal was also observed on the lagoons near the "Neck" (L).

61. *BIZIURA LOBATA*, *Shaw*.

The musk duck was seen on the lagoons at the Neck (L).

HERODIONES.

62. *ARDEA NOVÆ HOLLANDIÆ*, *Latham*.

Seen at the lagoons (L).

The White-fronted Heron frequents the foreshores of shallow salt water inlets as well as fresh water lagoons and rivers. The large fresh water mussel is a favourite diet of this bird; it appears to open the bivalve at the hinge, as the shells are found unbroken after the fish has been devoured.

63. *BOTAURUS POICILOPTERUS*, *Wagler*.

The bittern is not unfrequently found in the swamps on the West Coast (B).

IMPENNES.

64. *EUDYPTULA MINOR*, *Forster*.

The Little Penguin is abundant, and breeds at Penguin Island off the North Coast (L).

NOTE.—*EUDYTULA UDINA*, *Gould*. The Fairy Penguin is probably found here as on other parts of the Tasmanian Coast.



Legge, W. Vincent. 1887. "A First List of the Birds of Maria Island." *Papers and proceedings of the Royal Society of Tasmania* 1887, 83–97.

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