

NOTE ON THE GRASS-WREN (*Amytornis textilis*).

BY H. L. WHITE, M.B.O.U., R.A.O.U.

RECENTLY I had an opportunity of cursorily examining, with Mr. A. J. Campbell, the series (11 skins) of this species in the "H. L. White Collection," National Museum, Melbourne.

Two pairs (♂ and ♀) from Shark Bay, W.A., and collected by Mr. F. L. Whitlock, appear to agree with three skins from the East Murchison district (also collected by Mr. Whitlock) and with the description of Milligan's *gigantura* (*Vic. Nat.*, xviii., p. 28), except that the Shark Bay birds may be a little lighter underneath, while the tail of one specimen is 110 mm.—fully $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch longer than that given, as its chief feature, for *gigantura*. Further east a pair collected by Mr. C. G. Gibson in the region of Kalgoorlie answers Gould's plate of *macrura* (No. 30, iii., "Birds of Australia")—a darker variety of the true *textilis*, while the darkest birds are a pair taken by Capt. S. A. White still further eastward—at the Everard Mountains, which birds are apparently Mathews's *purnelli* from Central Australia (see *A. A. R.*, vol. ii., p. 99).

The interesting question arises, What bird is figured by Gould in his plate (No. 29) as *textilis*, of which he stated "I killed and dissected many examples"? Except for the absence of the dark cheek stripe the picture is suggestive of the eastern form of *A. striata*. However, it is not the typical *textilis*, which has been well represented above the name *Diaphorillas carteri* by G. M. Mathews in the *Austral Avian Record*, vol. iii., pl. 5, with full letterpress description on page 87. The original was collected by Mr. Tom Carter on Dirk Hartog Island, 1916.

It should be mentioned that, as recorded in *The Ibis* (1917), p. 605, Mr. Carter also obtained a single specimen (♂) of *textilis* on the Peron Peninsula (mainland), near the locality where Whitlock secured his two pairs.

Thus, after a lapse of a century, Quoy and Gaimard's species—" *Malurus textilis* "—has seemingly been confirmed.

A NEW SPECIES OF PTILOTIS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

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Ptilotis geraldtonensis, n. sp. Geraldton White-plumed Honey-eater.

General Appearance.—A yellow form of *P. penicillata* (Gld.), with clearly-defined streaks on throat and breast; face lemon chrome (yellow) (plate iv., Ridgway's "Colour Standards"); eyelids edged with black; ear-plume black tipped with white; forehead and crown washed with bright yellow, streaked; neck, back, and wings similar in tone to specimens of *P. penicillata* from northern parts of South Australia, but outer webbing of wings brighter; tail—outer web primaline yellow, inner web of centre feathers

between yellow ochre and buckthorn brown (Ridgway's "Standards," pl. xvi.); upper tail coverts are mustard yellow (*loc. cit.*), under tail coverts pale yellow; abdomen tinged with yellowish-buff.

Measurements of dried specimen:—Total length, 155 mm.; tail, 7 mm.; wing, 78 mm.; culmen, 12 mm.; tarsus, 22 mm.; iris black.

Differs from *P. carteri* (Campbell) in being less yellow on forehead and crown of head and much darker generally, also has a larger proportion of black and less white in the ear-plumes. Differs generally from *P. flava* (Gould) in being less yellow, and *flava* has no white in the ear-plume. Differs widely from *P. keartlandi* (North) in having a yellow face, forehead, and crown, which *keartlandi* has not. Differs from *P. penicillata* (Gould) in having a brighter yellow face, brighter yellowish wash on forehead and crown, pale yellow under tail coverts, and brighter yellow upper tail coverts, has more black and less white in the ear-plumes, and has bright yellow streaks on chin, neck, and chest, these being absent in *penicillata*.

Habitat.—Numerous in the creek beds at Geraldton and Dongara, Western Australia.

There is no difference between the male and female.

The credit of the discovery is quite as much due to Mr. J. W. Mellor as to myself, as we observed several specimens each while we were working together, and I found them later at Dongara.

NOTE.—Mr. Mellor suggests that it may be Mr. Mathews's *Ptilotis ladasi*; this is quite possible, but we have had no opportunity to compare the skins.

Stray Feathers.

Clutches of the Bustard in Western Australia.—Referring to Mr. A. H. Chisholm's paper on the breeding of the Australian Bustard, I append notes from my old diaries as to the number of eggs laid in North-West Australia:—

2nd October, 1887.—One egg (Murchison River).

6th August, 1897.—Two nests, each with two eggs.

1st August, 1898.—One nest, with two eggs.

4th June, 1900.—One nest, with one egg.

(8th June, 1900.—Saw young birds that could fly.)

5th August, 1900.—Two nests, each with two eggs.

1897 and 1900 were hurricane years, with heavy rains, the rainfall registered by me at Point Cloates being $23\frac{1}{2}$ inches in 1900 and $11\frac{1}{2}$ in 1897. 1898 was also an exceptionally good year, with 14 inches. The above records of eggs found refer to Point Cloates district, excepting, of course, the first one, and are in favour of two eggs being the usual number. I have seen Bustards, with their wings expanded, driving away sheep from the vicinity



Ashby, Edwin. 1921. "A New Species of Ptilotis in Western Australia." *The Emu : official organ of the Australasian Ornithologists' Union* 20(3), 190–191.
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