

Note on *Platycercus* (*haematogaster*), Gould.

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The recent acquisition of the second part of "The Birds of Australia and the Adjacent Islands" drew my attention to the inaccurate determination of *Platycercus haematogaster* (Gould). On the seventh plate this species is figured and there described. The bird has no red on the wing coverts and has the under tail coverts yellow. In the letterpress Gould states that he had only seen three specimens, two being collected by Major Mitchell on the Darling River. These he diagnosed as males, and his own bird, on account of its duller coloration, he considered a female. He states also that Major Mitchell has presented his specimens to the Linnean Society of London and the British Museum. He also mentions that Major Mitchell has given birds to the Australian Museum at Sydney, New South Wales. These, of course, Gould had not seen, and are only referred to as confirmatory evidence. In Mitchell's "Three Expeditions into the Interior of Australia, Vol. I., P. 236," we find the following account:—"June 20th, 1835. On the low hills which we crossed a new species of parrot was shot, having scarlet feathers on the breast, the head and wings being tinged with a beautiful blue, the back, &c., being of a dark brownish green. A footnote reads:—"This bird has since been named by Mr. Gould *Platycercus haematogaster*." At this date Mitchell was at a place about 31.18 S. by 144.15 E.

Through the negligence of this figure and description it is obvious that name has been misapplied.

In the Proc. Zool. Soc. (Lond.) 1837, P. 89, Gould described *Platycercus haematogaster*, and there included some remarks which seem applicable to the bird commonly called *P. haematogaster*, but he noted "*lateribus tectricibus inferioribus pallide flavis*." When Stone drew up his "List of . . . Australian Birds," described by John Gould &c. (Austral.

Av. Rec. Vol. I. pp. 129-180, 1913). On P. 149 he wrote, "*Platycercus haematogaster*, Gould Proc. Zool. Soc. (Lond.), 1837, P. 89, 1838.

"22907 (254). New South Wales—*Type*.

"Gould's original description applies as well to the red-vented form as to the yellow, and by figuring the former he fixed the name definitely upon it, notwithstanding his later remarks in the handbook. All the specimens are the red-vented bird."

The figure Stone alluded to is the one in "The Birds of Australia," Vol. V., pl. 33, 1845, where a bird is given with red on the wing and red under tail coverts. Accepting this figure as depicting *Platycercus haematogaster* Gould, Bonaparte (Comptes Rendus Sci (Paris), Vol. XXX., P. 133, 1850) separated the bird with the under tail coverts yellow, under the name *xanthorrhoea*. This erroneous identification has been accepted up to the present time, but it must now be corrected. I have therefore given to the red-vented bird the name

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in the Austral Av. Rec., Vol. II., P. 75, 1913, and

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must be used for the yellow-vented form, of which *P. xanthorrhoea* Bonaparte becomes an absolute synonym.

Stone recorded that no yellow-vented bird was included by Gould in the Philadelphia collection. It may be that the bird Gould considered a female was the one from which the partial description of the red-vented bird was made up. The specimens Gould records as being presented to the Linnean Society of London and the British Museum are the basis of the original plate, and I have searched for these. The former has apparently fallen into decay, as when the Linnean Society's birds passed into the British Museum many not regarded as types were rejected. The other bird, however, is still preserved in the British Museum, and was catalogued by Salvadori as a specimen of *P. xanthorrhoea*. This must now be regarded as type of *Platycercus haematogaster* Gould, and it agrees very well with Gould's figure.

It should be noted that the Proc. Zool. Soc. (Lond.) 1837, P. 89, was not published until February 13th, 1838, while the second part of "The Birds of Australia and the Adjacent

Islands bears the date February, 1838. In the latter place Gould refers to the former description, but as he gave the pagination wrong (P. '88, not 89) he probably wrote from paged proof. In any case the figure and details of his specimens given by Gould settle the matter in an uncontradictable manner.

Regarding the distribution of these forms I have not sufficient data to delimit their ranges. My specimens show that 33 deg. S. by 147 deg. E. is the furthest south attained by the red-vented bird, but specimens must be continually collected to fix such ranges. Flight observations are quite valueless.

At this time I would note that the **Type** of *Euphema bourkii* Gould Birds Austr., Vol. V., pl. 43, 1841, is in the Australian Museum, Sydney, and not at Philadelphia, as recorded by Stone (C.c. P. 150). This is noted in the letterpress accompanying the plate.
