
GRAY—Notes on Eastern Swamphen and Banded Landrail.

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Landrail.

By James T. Gray, Orroroo.

Porphyrio melanotus, Eastern Swamphen (Blue Bald Coot).

4th July, 1934.—This bird was caught on a farm ten to twelve miles north of Orroroo, near a swampy area into which our creeks empty. It is quite at home in an aviary with other large birds, and is not shy of people. 6th August, 1934. The measurements were taken on the bird, which had to be held.

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Beak and legs were quickly used in defence if free for a moment. Wing-spread could not be taken, and it is possible that the length is not quite accurate. The face is to be noted. This bird is definitely—top half of face black, lower half purplish blue. No blue is around the eyes. I was struck with the line of feathers (purplish blue) on the top edge of the otherwise entirely black wing. 29th October, 1934. I had a look at the bird this week-end. It is still very lively, and appears healthy. The owner says it is a "tremendous" eater (meat, bread, and grain). It holds its food up with one foot, and eats like Cockatoos do when given large seeds—picking pieces off the lump held in the foot. So far the colouring has not altered. The feet are still green. On 5th December, 1934, all colouring was still the same.

Description.—General colour above black—similar to that of the Coot (*Fulica atra*). There is no "glossing with olive-brown" (described by North) anywhere on the bird. Scapulars, median, and upper wing-coverts, black, except for a thin line of tiny feathers along the edge of the skin from body to end of humerus. I considered this a single line of tiny feathers of purplish blue colour. Except for this line the whole of the rest of the wings, inside and out, is black, the inside of wing not being so dense a black. Tail, black. Forepart of head, *upper* side of face, crown of head, and nape, black; *lower* side of face, purplish blue. The purplish blue of chest extends around to back at hind-neck below the nape. Front of neck and chest, purplish blue, but at base of bill and top of chin is a small patch of black. Centre of abdomen and tips of long flank-feathers, black. With wings lifted the body is front-half, purplish blue; back-half, black. Under tail-coverts, white. Bill and frontal plate, dark wax-red. Legs and top of feet, *green*; soles and toe-joints, almost black. Iris, dark wax-red. Length, 51 cm.; length of wing from body to tip, 41 cm.; length of leg, 36 cm.

Hypotaenidia philippensis, Banded Landrail.

Orroroo, 29th October, 1934.—I have now seen the Banded Landrail three times here. I think this rather remarkable, as we have very little sheltered creek here, and nearly all the land is open, with very little cover of low bush. The first specimen was shot in the creek, where there are only a few yards of reeds for shelter. The second was caught and killed by a cat in a garden on the outskirts of the town. The third was flushed from grass in a street on the edge of the town. It flew into some wire-netting, was caught, but died a few hours afterwards. All were clean-plumaged, and plump, healthy birds.