

THE WHITE-BREASTED CORMORANT*(PHALACROCORAX FUSCESCENS)*

The White-breasted Cormorant is a marine species which is confined to South-eastern Australia. It is met with only in the vicinity of islands and along the coast. It ranges from New South Wales through Victoria and Tasmania to South Australia and is a common bird about Kangaroo Island and in Spencer Gulf. It is rarer in St. Vincent Gulf, generally, although numerous along its western shores (Yorke Peninsula). Its habits are similar to those of other species of Cormorants, and it usually gathers in flocks. These birds sit low in the water, with neck held erect and snakelike, and the bill pointing upwards at an angle. When perched on some rock or buoy over the water, the body is

upright. Cormorants are expert divers, and the flight is straight and characteristic. It alternates between a quick flapping and a gliding, and enables an observer to distinguish them from other birds even at a great distance. The White-breasted Cormorant is about the same size as the more widespread Pied Cormorant (*P. varius*) from which it is distinguished by its blackish lores and smaller bill. The female is slightly smaller than the male. The iris is bright emerald green.

The illustration shows an adult male in breeding plumage—long white feathers are developed on the hind neck which are entirely absent at other seasons.—*H.T.C.*