

## Birds of the Cairns District, Queensland.

### No. I.

BY GREGORY M. MATHEWS, F.R.S.E., F.L.S., M.B.O.U.

The following birds were collected by the late Captain Bowyer Bower between Cairns and Herberton in 1884-5. The numbers on the left hand are those pages of my "List of the Birds of Australia, 1913."

Captain Thomas Henry Bowyer-Bower was born at Brighton, England. His father was Captain Bowyer-Bower, of the 73rd Regiment. He died at Palmerston, Northern Territory, on the 22nd December, 1886, at the very early age of 24 years. This young naturalist made two scientific visits to Australia. On the first he went to Cairns, Queensland, and collected the birds in the list to follow. On the next occasion he went via Queensland, Thursday Island, and Palmerston, to Derby in North-West Australia, where he collected the birds that will be dealt with later on.

### 3. CASUARIUS CASUARIUS JOHNSONII. Australian Cassowary.

No. 149—Male.—Barron River, July 10, 1884.

No. 150—Male.—Barron River, July 16, 1884.

No. 151—Male.—Gordan's Camp, Cairns, October 21, 1884.

On 23rd June, 1884, we started at 5.45 a.m. to hunt for Cassowaries, but saw none, though we could clearly see where they had been that morning.

On 19th August, 1884, two small Cassowaries, about the size of a Bantam, were caught. The old bird was seen with five chicks. The birds caught had the bill yellow; forehead and top of head to over the eyes hard and of a bluish horn-colour, becoming tinged with green on the edge and of a pink colour at the top; irides light slate, pupils black. The general colour of the birds was dirty white; head light rufous; upper surface striped, a broad brownish-black band down the centre of the back about an inch wide; three stripes on each side, the lowest one of which runs down the thighs. These stripes are about half an inch wide; the under surface dirty white, tinged with rufous and unmarked; the legs and toes light yellow, the claws white. The caruncles on the throat were clearly developed.

On Saturday, the 18th of October, two eggs were obtained, but on the 28th of August egg shells were found, out of which the young had just emerged. No nest was made. These birds are by no means rare, but very shy. The breeding season is from June to October.

5. *MEGAPODIUS DUFREREYI ASSIMILIS*. Eastern Scrub-Fowl.

Nos. 148—Female—167.—Gordan's Camp, Cairns, October 12, 1884.

Length, 17 inches. Bill, dark brown; legs and feet greenish yellow, tinted with orange.

These birds are very numerous in some places.

6. *ALECTURA LATHAMI ROBINSONI*. Allied Brush-Turkey.

No. 146—Female.—Barron River, July 19, 1884.

No. 147—Male.—Gordan's Camp, Cairns, October 12, 1884.

Length 27 inches. Head livid red, with a ring round the lower part of the neck light orange; feet dusky yellow, tinted with green.

Rather plentiful, but difficult to obtain without a good dog. On June 23 a nest was observed and the eggs were taken by the blacks.

12. *PTILINOPUS REGINA REGINA*. Red-crowned Fruit-Pigeon.

No. 143—Male.—Cairns, June 17, 1884.

Length 9.25 inches. Not common.

12. *LAMPROTRERON SUPERBA*. Purple-crowned Pigeon.

Plentiful, but difficult to get, for while they are all round one the thickness of the leaves prevents one from seeing them. A nest of *Macropygia* was found and the bird shot off it. A few days afterwards this beautiful little Pigeon had taken possession of the old nest and laid one egg.

13. *MYRISTICIVORA BICOLOR SPILORRHOA*. Nutmeg-Pigeon:

No. 144—Female.—Gordan's Camp, Cairns, October 13, 1884.

Length 15.75 inches. Bill yellowish white at the tip, becoming horn-blue at the base; feet of the latter colour, but more vivid.

Very numerous at certain seasons, when their favourite trees are white with them. The young are very good eating.

14. *MACROPYGIA PHASIANELLA ROBINSONI*. Northern Pheasant-Pigeon.

A common and stupid bird. Fourteen birds were shot out of a flock of eighteen, without their flying more than fifty yards between their two favourite trees. One, shot on June 9, 1884, measures 15.75 inches. In June they were in bad plumage, but very fat. They looked splendid as they flew through the dense scrub. The specimen saved had no secondaries and could hardly fly. On the 19th of December a nest with one egg was found, and a few days later the young one was hatched. At two days old it was covered with down of a tan-colour.

15. *CHRYSAUCHENA HUMERALIS HUMERALIS*. Eastern Barred-shouldered Dove.

One was killed on June 15, 1884, at Cairns.

16. *GEOPHELIA PLACIDA PLACIDA*. Northern Ground-Dove.

No. 145—Male.—Cairns, June 2, 1884.

Length 8.5 inches. Numerous, and always very tame. Sometimes they will enter the tent for food.

28. *PORPHYRIO MELANOTUS NEOMELANOTUS*. Northern Bald Coot.

No. 159—Female.—Scrubby Creek, January 17, 1885.

Length 18.75 inches. Irides brownish red; legs and feet pink, except the joints and under parts of the toes, which are

of a lilac-grey; bill and frontal plate bright red. Quite common in the swamps round Scrubby Creek.

29. *FULICA ATRA TASMANICA.* Eastern Coot.  
Common on the lagoons. Two were shot on February 2, 1885, near Cairns; they were excellent eating.
54. *HÆMATOPUS OSTRALEGUS LONGIROSTRIS.* Eastern Pied Oyster-catcher.  
No. 152—Male.—Gordan's Camp, July 2, 1884. Common.
73. *IRENIPARRA GALLINACEA NOVÆHOLLANDIÆ.* Eastern Comb-crested Jacana.  
No. 160—Male.—Scrubby Creek, January 18, 1885. Common.
74. *STILTIA ISABELLA.* Australian Pratincole. June 15, 1884.
81. *EGRETTA GARZETTA IMMACULATA.* Lesser Egret.  
No. 157—Female.—Barron River, August 2, 1884.  
Irides light greenish yellow, base of bill and space round the eye yellow; legs and feet black. Common.
82. *NOTOPHOYX NOVÆHOLLANDIÆ.* White-fronted Heron.  
No. 156—Male.—Barron River, August 10, 1884.
82. *MYOLA PACIFICA.* White-necked Heron.  
No. 153—Male.—Cairns, August 23, 1884.  
No. 154—Female, 155.—Cairns, August 7, 1884.
83. *NYCTICORAX CALEDONICUS AUSTRALASIÆ.* Night-Heron.  
No. 158. Barron River, August 4, 1884.  
Common. Length 24.75 inches.
91. *ANAS SUPERCILIOSA ROGERSI.* Black Duck.  
No. 161. Peterson's Pocket, December 12, 1884.  
Common. Length 23.5 inches.
93. *NYROCA AUSTRALIS.* White-eyed Duck.  
No. 162. Cairns. The only specimen obtained.

97. *MICROCARBO MELANOLEUCOS*. Little Cormorant.  
Nos. 163-164. Barron River. August 25, 1884.  
Length 23.5 inches. Common.
101. *PELECANUS CONSPICILLATUS CONSPICILLATUS*. Eastern Pelican.  
Common.
103. *ASTUR CLARUS COOKTOWNI*. Northern Grey Goshawk.  
No. 7—Male.—Barron River, September 4, 1884.  
Length 16.75 inches. Irides brown, eyelid yellow; cere yellow, orange on top; legs and feet yellow.
103. *ASTUR NOVÆHOLLANDIÆ ALBOIDES*. Northern White Goshawk.  
No. 8—Female.—Dry Creek, October 14, 1884.  
Length 18.5 inches. Irides dull orange, cere bright yellow; feet the same, but not so vivid.
104. *ACCIPITER CIRROCEPHALUS CIRROCEPHALUS*. Collared Sparrow-Hawk.  
No. 9—Male.—Gordan's Camp, October 15, 1884.  
Length 12.25 inches. Irides yellow; legs yellow.  
The specimen obtained had caught a small bird close to the camp. It flew in the scrub; some time afterwards it again appeared, and went into a tree and was easily shot. Seen about Cairns and Herberton.
105. *EUROÆTUS AUDAX AUDAX*. Wedge-tailed Eagle.  
Observed on two occasions on the tablelands over the Cairns-Herberton Range, which is about 2,000 feet above sea-level.
107. *CUNCUMA LEUCOGASTER*. White-bellied Sea-Eagle.  
No. 1—Male (immature).—Peterson's Pocket, December 2, 1884.  
Length 31.5 inches, from tip to tip of wing 6 feet 8 inches.  
Frequently seen round Cairns and on the Barron River. The one obtained was sitting on a tree about fifty yards from the camp and its sharp cry called attention to it.

107. HALIASTUR INDUS LEUCOSTERNUS. White-headed Sea-Eagle.

No. 2—Male.—Cairns, June 23, 1884.

Length 18 inches, 46 inches from tip to tip of wing. Irides clear brown; cere yellow, bill bluish horn-colour, becoming yellowish white at the tip.

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