

## *Geobasileus hedleyi rosinae*.

By F. E. Parsons, R.A.O.U.

Few ornithologists have yet had an opportunity of studying this recent addition to the list of Australian "tit warblers." It was first described by G. M. Mathews in the Austral Av: Record Vol. 2, page 9 from specimens obtained by Captain S. A. White in the vicinity of St. Kilda, about 20 miles North of Adelaide.

No particulars of the habits or economy of this bird were published when it was described, and nothing has been written since, so that it will not be out of place to record a few personal observations though they be scanty.

The country where Capt. White collected his specimens is a strip of land bordering the coast, and consists of a large area of low lying land which is subject to inundation by high tides, and is thickly clothed with low bushes and samphire, with a margin of mangroves on the sea side of it. Similar country to this extends all the way north to Port Wakefield at the head of the Gulf, and then south for about twenty miles on the western side of St. Vincent Gulf; it was here that I came across these birds in large numbers.

This appears to be essentially a swamp tit, as it is never found away from the samphire swamp land, neither is it ever seen in the mangroves.

"*Acanthiza pusilla*" is fairly plentiful in the mangroves and "*Geobasileus chrysorrhous*" is found on the land border of

the swamps, but *G.h. rosinae* never was seen in either of these situations.

"*Geobasileus h. rosinae*" is a very quiet bird, and greatly resembles "*G. chrysorrhous*" in its manners; it has a somewhat similar faint but sweet warble, and procures its food while hopping about on the ground in a very sprightly manner. In June of this year they had congregated into flocks of about 40 to 60 birds, and in the early part of the morning or late in the afternoon they could be seen moving over the flats in search of food, and when so engaged they did not fly simultaneously from spot to spot, but each bird took short flights of about 30 or 40 feet and alighting in the bushes, at once hopped to the ground and searched for insects for a few seconds, then took another short flight in the same direction; thus at any moment there were always some birds on the wing.

I found it very easy to procure specimens by taking up a position ahead of them in their line of flight, they took little notice of me, but came on in their spasmodic flights, some birds alighting within six or eight yards of where I stood. At the report of the gun they would all rise in a flock and fly 200 or 300 yards then alight, and again continue their way in quest of food in their peculiar jerky fashion.

The legs, feet, and bill of "*G.h. rosinae*" are black, and the iris colored light cream.

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