

Order Ardeiformes, Family Ardeidae,
Genus *Notophoxyx*.

Notophoxyx novaehollandiae (White-faced Heron)

Description—All upper surface, slatey grey, the wings being somewhat darker tinged with brown, the primaries as well as the tail-feathers being a deep slate colour, crown of the head and back of the neck rich slaty blue, sides of the neck, slaty grey. Face, throat, and forehead, white; elongated feathers on the breast, rich brown; under surface having a rich brown or rufous tinge; passing down the lower part of the neck is a stripe of deep buff brown; iris, yellow; bill, top mandible and tip of lower, black; base of lower mandible, yellowish white; feet and legs, yellow, a line down front, greenish brown.

Distribution—Found over the whole of Australia and the adjacent islands including Tasmania.

Habits—They are found on the banks of water courses, swamps, tidal flats, and reefs, around the shores of lakes and even small dams and waterholes. They wade through the water and over muddy flats in search of food, but do not stand motionless and watch for their prey to come to them, like the common European Heron; they are expert mouse catchers, and are to be often seen stalking about in dry grass, and stinkweed some distance from water in search of mice.

Flight—Straight, with slow heavy flaps of the wings. In flight the head is bent back until the back of the head rests between the shoulders, the legs are carried straight out behind.

Food—Tadpoles, frogs, crickets, small fish, crabs, yabbies (*Astacopsis*), mice, grasshoppers, and other insects.

Nest—Merely a rough platform of coarse sticks with a few smaller twigs to form a lining placed on a horizontal fork of a large tree from 20 to 50 feet from the ground, the nesting tree being generally selected near water, but sometimes a mile or more from water. They do not nest in colonies.

Note—When nesting, a harsh cry is made when upon the wing, generally when passing to and from nesting tree to feeding ground; **General Note**—A harsh croak-like sound, but not often uttered.

Eggs—Three to five in number, usually four, in a clutch, of a uniform light blue colour; average measurements of thirteen eggs—48.5 m.m. x 35.5 m.m.; Largest egg—49.0 m.m. x 38.0 m.m.; smallest egg—46.0 m.m. x 34.5 m.m.

Measurements of the bird in the flesh—Total length, 698 m.m.; wing, from body to tip, 469 m.m.; spread of wings, 1,168 m.m.; bill, 86 m.m.; tarsus, 107 m.m.
