

NOTES ON THE FAUNA OF THE GULF OF CARPENTARIA.

BY

C. W. DE VIS, M.A.

(Read on the 12th September, 1884.)

IN July last Mr. K. Broadbent, during his progress in the north, paid a visit to Kimberley, at the mouth of the Norman River: a locality which, some years ago, he examined for novelties with success. On the last occasion, he unfortunately found the country around suffering much from drought, the nearest water being twenty miles away. Circumstances so untoward forbade a long stay: but, at the same time, made the collection found of greater interest, since we may reasonably suppose, that its contents represent no small portion of the permanent inhabitants of the neighbourhood at that season. A few mammals, some sixty kinds of birds, and two or three lizards, were procured or observed. The importance of recording the present distribution of animal and vegetable life in our country urges me to ask a place in the Society's Proceedings for the following list:—

MAMMALS.

Mus delicatulus, *Gould*. A solitary example which, on account of the inconsistent differences in its proportions, might have been considered as new; with the same length of body (6.4 c m), it has a much longer tail (7.0), longer ears (1.2), a shorter head (2.15), and shorter hind foot (1.8). But, in colouring, it is fairly well represented by Mr. Gould's description, and I therefore hesitate to distinguish it.

Mus sp.

These small rats, apparently undescribed, I propose to bring under notice on a subsequent occasion.

Perameles bougainvillei, *Q and G*.

Onychogalea annulicada, *n.s.* (*Pg.* 157.)

BIRDS.

Nisaetus morphnoides, *Gld.* a pair. Of the male, Mr. Broadbent says 'I found him eating a rat on the ground in a small scrub:' the female was 'found camped in a small white gum on a sand ridge, in the early morning.

Pandion leucocephalus *Gld.* parents, and newly hatched young from a nest in a dead tree on a sand ridge.

Hieracidea orientalis. *Schl.*

Falco lunulatus, *Lath.*

Cerchneis cenchroides, *Vig and Hors.*

Ninox boobook, *Lath.*

„ *connivens*, *Lath.*

Caprimulgus macrourus, *Hors.*

Lagenoplastes ariel, *Gld.*

Dacelo cervina, *Gld.*

Artamus superciliosus, *Gld.*

„ *personatus*, *Gld.*

„ *albiventris*, *Gld.*

Pardalotus uropygialis, *Gld.*

Grauculus melanops, *Lath.* The only species seen.

Campephaga humeralis, *Gld.*

Pachycephala rufiventris, *Lath.*

„ *lanoides*, *Gld.* A rare bird received by Mr. Gould from the north-west coast. Two males and a female in fine plumage were obtained. Mr. Gould's description of the bird in his "Handbook," p. 215, is correct, his original diagnosis (*Proc. of Zool. Soc.* pt. VII. p. 142), alone given by Mr. Sharpe, (*Brit. Mus. Cat. of Birds* V. 8. p. 224) contains an important error.

Collyriocincla harmonica, *Lath.*

Seisura inquieta, *Lath.*

Rhipidura tricolor, *Vieill.*

Rhipidura phasiana *n.s.* (*Pg.* 159.)

Micræca pallida *n.s.* (*Pg.* 158.)

Gerygone mastersii, *Masters-Sharpe.* Agreeing with Mr. Ramsay that this is a good species, I adopt Mr. Sharpe's suggestion as to the name it should bear.

Gerygone albogularis, *Gld.*

Eoposaltria pulverulenta, *Bp.*

Malurus lamberti, *Vig. and Hors.*

Anthus australis, *Vig. and Hors.*

Cisticola exilis, *Lath.*

Cinclorhamphus cruralis, *Vig. and Hors.*

Zonæginthus bichenovii, *Vig. and Hors.*

Chlamydodera nuchalis, *Jar. and Selb.*

Corone australis, *Gmel.*

Corvus coronoides, *Vig. and Hors.*, much less common than *australis*. Mr. Broadbent observes on these specimens "there are no hackles to speak of."

Glyciphila ocularis, *Gld.*

Ptilotis sonora, *Gld.*

„ *unicolor*, *Gld.*

„ *plumula*, *Gld.*

Acanthochæra ruficularis, *Gld.* "Small gums on sand ridges."

Melithreptus lætior, *Gld.* The honey-eater described by Mr. Gould from a collection made in the Northern Territory and regarded by Mr. Sharpe as a very old male of *M. gularis* in full breeding plumage, is a good species; eight examples male and female, all with the specific characters, are conspicuously distinct from *gularis*.

Melithreptus vinitinctus *n.s.* (*Pg.* 159).

Zosterops lutea, *Gld.*

Sitella leucoptera, *Gld.*

Cacatua galerita, *Lath.*

„ *sanguinea*, *Gld.* "One flock seen going south, July 9th."

Ptistes coccineopterus, *Gld.* This and several honey-eaters were observed feeding amongst the red flowers of the Cork Tree. *Erythrina indica*.

Melopsittacus undulatus, *Shaw.* "Seen going south, July 10th."

Stictopelia cuneata, *Lath.*

Lobivanellus miles, *Bodd.*

Himantopus leucocephalus, *Gld.*

Numenius uropygialis, *Gld.*

BIRDS SEEN BUT NOT PROCURED.

Falco subniger, *Gld.*

Gypoictinia melanosternon, *Gld.*

Haliæetus leucogaster, *Gmel.*

Strix delicatula, *Gld.*

Halcyon sanctus, *Vig. and Hors.*

Grallina picata, *Lath.*

Malurus brownii, *Vig. and Hors.*

Oriolus viridis, *Lath.*

Eupodotis australis, *Gr.*

SNAKE.

Pseudechis australis, *Gr.*

TORTOISE.

Elseya dentata, Gr.

LIZARDS.

Monitor gouldii. The only 'guana' seen.

Cedura fracticolor, n.s. (Pg. 160.)

DESCRIPTION OF THE NEW SPECIES REFERRED TO IN
THE ABOVE LIST.

ONYCHOGALEA ANNULICAUDA, n.s.

It was with no small interest that the only Macropod in the collection was found to be a fourth species of the Nail-tailed Wallabies (*Onychogalea*), undoubtedly a natural group. The alliance characters of the three long known species, the nail-like tip to the tail and the peculiar shoulder marking differentiating them from all others, are present in our new acquaintance, but in the one case exaggerated, the nail resembling the broad head of an arrow, in the other partly effaced. The example of the new species is unfortunately but one and that a young female. The adult male is probably somewhat smaller than *O. lunulata*.

Fur moderately long and rather adpressed. Habit slender. Head rather short with a convex profile. Ears moderately pointed. Tail long, compressed, well clothed on the sides, with a dorsal crest of stiffer hairs beginning at about the fore third and increasing in length towards the tip on which it forms a brush scarcely hiding the nail. Nail broad, spear-shaped, with a low culmen towards the tip. Tarsi long, the fourth toe extending much beyond the outer and inner ones. General colour fawn grey, of a lighter and duller tint beneath. Fore part of the snout nearly black: upper surface of head grizzled with black and rufous, fading to buff on the eye brows and base of ears. Behind the ear a small patch of very short dark hair: before it a dark patch extending about half way along the face. Side of face as the body but a little brighter. On the lower edge of the face a faintly darker stripe to the angle of the mouth. Behind the shoulders a faint trace of a curved pale stripe from the direction of the nape. Ears grey on the outside, black at the base on the inner, buffy towards the tip. A long faint pale stripe on the haunch directed toward the rump. A broad pale brown dorsal stripe from the occiput to the fore third of the tail. Middle part of the tail light grey with broad dark grey rings beginning faintly and distantly and becoming blacker and

closer till they form the rusty black posterior fourth and pure black tip of the tail. Fore limbs silvery grey, hind limbs as the body, claws black.

Total length ...	84.5	c.m.	Ear externally ...	5.2	c.m.
Length of tail ...	42.25	„	Hind foot ...	16.2	„
„ „ head			Distance from tip		
„ to outer base			of fifth to tip		
of ears... ..	8.4	„	of fourth toe	4.4	„
Length of snout					
from eye ...	4.3	„			

Resembles *unquifer* of the north-west coast rather than the two more ornate species *frænata* and *lunata*, but readily distinguished by its ringed tail, continuous dorsal line, black muzzle, and distinct trace of a shoulder stripe.

Concerning the habits of this animal, Mr. Broadbent remarks "that it frequents open plain country or salt-pans intervening between sand ridges where it is found usually solitary," and that "it makes a lair in the tussocks occurring in such situations, having similar habits in this respect to the kangaroo-rat. It is shy and difficult of approach."

RHIPIDURA PHASIANA *n.s.*

Above brownish grey, becoming slightly rufous on the mantle. Feathers of the head minutely tipped with pale grey; those of the back narrowly edged with rufous. Upper tail coverts brown; a few of them with lighter tips. A large white spot above the eyes, continued as an indistinct rufous band to the side of the occiput. Lore, side of the head and ear coverts dark brown; the latter edged with white. Throat and lower part of the side of the neck white. Upper part of breast grey; lower part buff, fading into buffy white on the lower part of the abdomen and under tail coverts. Wings brown. The inner secondaries broadly edged with white. All the feathers of the shoulder and the wing coverts largely tipped with white. Primaries with dark brown shafts. Tail, dark brown; all but the two middle feathers, with entirely white shafts. The external feather with the outer web, tip and apical half of inner web white. The next brown on the outer web; white on the tip and web; the rest gradually losing the white portion. Middle feathers wholly brown. Legs, feet, and bill very dark brown. Total length 1.49 c.m. Tail 1.2. Wing 6.3. Length of gape 1.2. Culmen. 9. Breadth of bill at base. 6.

Locality, Kimberley, collected by Mr. K. Broadbent.

I should have regarded this bird, a spirit specimen in indifferent condition, as very probably an example of Mr. Ramsay's *R. episcopus*; but I presume that the tail feathers of that species have brown shafts, as it is associated by its describer with *R. pectoralis* *H. and J.*; and *R. maculipectus* Gr. It is not unlike *R. cervina*. *Ram.* from Lord Howe's island, but differs in the distinctly spotted character of its wing markings and in being less in all its dimensions.

MICRÆCA PALLIDA n.s.

Head and all the upper surface of the body light brownish grey; wings dark brown; the primaries very narrowly edged and tipped with white, the secondaries more broadly. Tail dark brown; the two central feathers uniform; the two external on each side white; the next brown on the basal half, or rather more, of the inner web; the next white tipped: the subcentrals narrowly white edged. Lore, and a line over the eye white. All beneath white, tinged on the chest and sides, with very pale brown. Length 11.2 c.m. Tail 5.7. Tarsus 1.35. Culmen 0.95. Breadth of bill at gape 0.85. Wing 7.7.

Locality, Kimberley.

MELITHREPTUS VINITINCTUS.

Upper surface vinous grey, becoming darker on the head; olive green on the mantle, rump, and upper tail coverts. A blackish brown stripe on the side of the head, commencing narrower on the base of the culmen, expanding over the ear coverts, and continued thence faintly down the side of the neck. A narrow white lunate occipital band from orbit to orbit. Wings and tail brown. Edges of primaries, outer webs of secondaries, and lateral tail feathers, and whole of central tail feathers, olive green. All beneath silky white. Under wing coverts white. Primaries and secondaries, with their inner webs edged with greyish white. Beak brown, with the tip black; basal half of lower mandible yellow. Feet light brown. Iris brown. Total length 10.3 c.m. ($4\frac{1}{5}$). Culmen 1.5. Wing 6.2 (2.45). Tarsus 1.45 (5.51).

Locality, Kimberley. Found by Mr. K. Broadbent feeding on the small eucalyptuses fringing the plains. This, the smallest and most delicate form of the group, seems to have its nearest ally in the *M. breviceps* of New South Wales.

ŒDURA FRACTICOLOR n.s.

Labials 9/8. The snout is $2\frac{1}{4}$ in the length of the head, and equals the interorbit. The chevron plates, on the outer toes, in six, on the other toes in nine pairs. No tubercles on the base of tail. Grey; a darker grey stripe runs from the angle of the mouth to the shoulder: above it, a second from the middle of the orbit to and along the side of the back: a third from the upper part of the orbit goes to the nape, and is continuous with its fellow of the opposite side. The lateral stripes are joined by backwardly curved transverse bands, which alone are continued on the tail. All these are linear, and in the brightest specimens are edged posteriorly with white spots, most evident on the tail, which is thus crossed by pairs of short black and white bars. In most examples the spots are obsolete, and the lines are broken up into irregular streaks and spots. In some the grey ground colour is by the disappearance of the lines, almost uninterrupted. Total length 9.3 c.m. Tail 4. Head 1.4.

Locality, Kimberley, collected by Mr. K. Broadbent.



De Vis, Charles Walter. 1884. "Notes on the Fauna of the Gulf of Carpentaria. With descriptions of the new species." *The Proceedings of the Royal Society of Queensland* 1(3), 154–160. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.244203>.

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/138530>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.244203>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/244203>

Holding Institution

American Museum of Natural History Library

Sponsored by

BHL-SIL-FEDLINK

Copyright & Reuse

Copyright Status: Public domain. The BHL considers that this work is no longer under copyright protection.

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.