

NESTOR HYPOPOLIUS.

Ka-ka Parrot.

Psittacus hypopolius, Forst. Icon., 50.

——— *Meridionalis*, Gmel. Edit. Linn. Syst. Nat., tom. i. p. 333.—Dieff. Trav. in New Zeal., vol. ii. p. 193.

——— *Nestor*, Lath. Ind. Orn., vol. i. p. 110.

——— *Australis*, Shaw, Mus. Lever., pl. at p. 87.—Bonap. Consp. Gen. Av., p. 8, *Nestor*, sp. 1.

——— (*Kakadoe*) *Nestor*, Kuhl, Consp. Psitt. in Nov. Act. &c., pp. 12, 86.

Nestor hypopolius, Wagl. Mon. Psitt. in Abhand. &c., pp. 505 and 696.—Selby in Jard. Nat. Lib. Parrots, p. 121, pl. 12.—Gould, Syn. Birds of Aust., pl. . . fig. 2.—Bonap. Rev. et Mag. de Zool., 1854, p. 155.—De Souancé, Rev. et. Mag. de Zool., 1856, p. 222.—G. R. Gray, List of Spec. of Birds in Coll. Brit. Mus., part iii. sec. ii., *Psittacida*, p. 99.

Southern Brown Parrot, Lath. Gen. Syn., vol. i. p. 264.—Shaw, Gen. Zool., vol. viii. p. 522.—Lath. Gen. Hist., vol. ii. p. 211.

Nestor Novæ-Zelandiæ, Less. Traité d'Orn., p. 191.

Centrourus Australis, Swains. Class. of Birds., vol. ii. p. 303.

Ka-ka, Natives of New Zealand.

ALTHOUGH New Zealand has been known to us since the days of our celebrated voyager Captain Cook, and been a British possession for so many years, no one of its many intelligent settlers has written a line respecting this species of Parrot; neither has the English ornithologist Swainson, who resided there for some years, nor the German historian of its birds, Dieffenbach, nor the enlightened Governor Grey, said one word on the subject. Had an opportunity offered for my visiting New Zealand, this void in the history of one of the most interesting of the great group of Parrots should certainly have been filled up; what more, then, can I do than give an accurate figure of the bird, and call the attention of the residents of New Zealand to the subject, in the hope that one or more of them will study and record the habits and economy of the bird before it is extirpated, and its name and a few stuffed skins alone left as an evidence of its once having existed. Although urging this so strongly, I am aware that of all the members of the genus the present species is the commonest, and that at this moment numbers are yet to be found in the New Zealand group; still I feel assured that it is one of the species which before many years have elapsed will become extinct. A very great dissimilarity both in size and colouring occurs in different examples of this species, so much so as to induce a belief, both in my own mind and in that of others, that they may constitute two species, a great and a little *Ka-ka*. Some of the specimens have the whole of the crown and back of the neck and the outer portion of the wings bluish grey; others appear to be real Nestors, having very hoary heads; some have very distinct collars of beautiful-fringed feathers at the back of the neck, while in others this feature is more feebly developed. It will be a question for the colonists to determine if there be more than a single species, or if the differences seen in the skins sent to Europe are indications only of local varieties, and to what cause they may be due.

This bird is the type of Dr. Wagler's genus *Nestor*, the species of which are rendered remarkable by the depth and richness of their colouring; the only outward difference in the sexes would appear to be the somewhat smaller size and less brilliant colouring of the female. It is said to be one of the most noisy and impudent of its race, to have a voice harsh and disagreeable in the extreme, and to possess considerable powers of imitation.

Crown of the head and nape hoary, slightly tinged with green, and with a narrow edging of brown to each feather; ear-coverts striated with dull orange and brown; feathers at the cheeks and front of the throat hoary bordered with brown, and washed with red at the base of the bill; all the upper surface olive-brown, each feather margined with dark brown, and the feathers of the neck tipped with three semicircles of orange-brown and orange; wings and tail olive, becoming paler on the margins and tip; under wing-coverts scarlet, crossed by narrow bands of black; primaries and secondaries deeply toothed on their internal webs with light salmon-colour, those of the tail with deep-reddish salmon-colour; feathers of the breast olive, with a narrow crescent of brown near the tip, beyond which is a second of dark-reddish orange; lower part of the back, upper tail-coverts, abdomen, and under tail-coverts olive, largely tipped with deep rich red, within which, near the end, is a narrow crescent of brown; bill horny; feet mealy brown.

The large figure on the accompanying Plate was taken from a tolerably old bird, and is of the size of life; the reduced figure is given to show the colouring of the under surface of the wings and tail.