

PTILOTIS COCKERELLI, *Gould.*

Cockerell's Honey-eater.

Ptilotis Cockerelli, Gould in Ann. and Mag. Nat. Hist., 4th ser., vol. iv. p. 109.

It is but an act of justice that at least one of the birds of Australia should be named after Mr. James Cockerell, inasmuch as he is a native-born Australian, has collected very largely in the northern parts of that great country, and discovered more than one new species, among which must be enumerated the present very interesting bird. Mr. Cockerell informs me that it frequents the forests of the little-explored parts of the Cape-York peninsula, often in company with the Blue Mountain-Lory and the Yellow-spotted Honey-eater (*Ptilotis notata*), to which latter bird it assimilates in its actions and habits; it appears to be most numerous in the neighbourhood of Somerset in October, November, and December, when the trees are in blossom, and is tolerably common in the districts above mentioned. When characterizing it in the volume of the 'Annals and Magazine of Natural History' above referred to, I remarked that "although I have placed this beautiful new species in the genus *Ptilotis*, I am by no means certain that I am correct in so doing; for the bird possesses characters which ally it to at least three genera, namely *Stigmatops*, *Meliphaga*, and *Ptilotis*, while it also possesses characters peculiar to itself of almost sufficient importance to demand a distinct generic appellation. It somewhat resembles in its colouring the *Ptilotis polygramma* of Mr. G. R. Gray (*vide Proc. Zool. Soc.*, 1861, pp. 429, 434)."

The male has the fore part of the head grey, merging into the brown of the upper surface, which has a mottled appearance, owing to each feather being of a darker hue in the centre; lesser wing-coverts dark brown, with a spot of dull white at the tip of each, forming a spotted band across the shoulder; greater coverts and primaries dark brown margined with wax-yellow; tail brown, the lateral feathers margined externally at the base with wax-yellow; ear-coverts silvery, with a few of the anterior feathers pale yellow, and a posterior tuft of rich gamboge-yellow; throat and breast clothed with narrow lanceolate white feathers, a few on the sides of the chest tinged with deep yellow; abdomen dull greyish white, changing to a creamy tint towards the vent; bill black; feet horn-colour.

The female in colouring differs only in the spots at the tips of the lesser wing-coverts being nearly obsolete, but, as is the case with many other species of the family, is much smaller than the male, as will be seen by the following admeasurements:—

Male.—Total length 5 inches, bill 1, wing $3\frac{1}{2}$, tail $2\frac{3}{4}$, tarsi $\frac{3}{4}$.

Female.—Total length 4 inches, bill $\frac{3}{4}$, wing $2\frac{3}{4}$, tail $2\frac{1}{2}$, tarsi $\frac{5}{8}$.

The figures are of the natural size.