

MALURUS HYPOLEUCUS, *Gould.*

Fawn-breasted Superb Warbler.

Malurus hypoleucus, Gould in Ann. & Mag. Nat. Hist., 3rd. ser. vol. xix. p. 369.

SINCE I published a description of this very distinct species of *Malurus* in the work above referred to, I have received examples direct from Queensland. They formed part of a collection of birds procured in the Cape York district, and sent to this country by John Jardine, Esq. The males contained therein were accompanied by a specimen which I consider to be the female; hence a description of that sex, with which I was previously unacquainted, will be given below. All the male examples that have come under my notice are very similarly coloured, and, I feel confident, are fully adult and in their nuptial dress. The colouring of this new bird will doubtless be governed by the law which prevails in all the other members of the genus; in that case, its spring and autumn plumage will greatly differ.

The *Malurus hypoleucus* is easily distinguished from all the other known members of the subfamily to which it belongs by the fawn-white colouring of its under surface, by its white lores and eye-ring, and the deep-blue tint of its upper surface; it has not the projecting ear-tufts which constitute so remarkable a feature in *M. cyaneus* and its immediate allies; it also differs from the variegated group, *M. Lamberti* &c., in its bicoloured garb; to the black-headed and red-rumped *M. melanotus* and *M. Browni* it has no more affinity than it has to the white-winged *M. leucopterus* and the white-backed *M. leuconotus*. Were I asked if I observed an indication of a departure from the ordinary type of this genus of birds in any one of its members, I should say that something of the kind is apparent in the colouring of its plumage and in the more gibbous form of the bill of the present species; still it is a *Malurus* and nothing else. As is the case with many of the species recently discovered in that rich country, Queensland, we as yet know nothing of its habits and economy.

The male has the crown of the head and all the upper surface dull indigo-blue, somewhat brighter on the head; ear-coverts azure-blue; lores and a narrow ring round each eye white; wings nearly uniform brown, with a slight tinge of dull blue at the base of the primaries; under surface cream-white from the chin to the vent, with a wash of fawn-colour on the flanks; all the tail-feathers blue, except the outer web of the external one and the tips of the remainder, which are white, gradually diminishing in extent as the feathers approach the central ones; bill black; legs light brown.

Total length $4\frac{5}{8}$ inches, bill $\frac{7}{16}$, wing $1\frac{7}{8}$, tail $2\frac{1}{2}$, tarsi $\frac{5}{8}$.

The female has the whole of the upper surface, wings, and tail light brown, with a tinge of rufous on the wing-coverts, rump, and upper tail-coverts; under surface creamy white, washed with light fawn-colour on the sides of the neck, chest, and flanks; bill brown.

The Plate represents two males and a female, of the size of life.