

MONARCHA ALBIVENTRIS, *Gould.*

White-bellied Flycatcher.

Monarcha albiventris, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., 1866, p. 217.

BEFORE recording the little that is known respecting this new species, it will be as well, perhaps, to state that Mr. G. R. Gray has pointed out, in the 'Proceedings of the Zoological Society' for 1860, p. 352, that the true *Monarcha trivirgata*, which is a native of the island of Timor, is distinct from the bird of the south-eastern parts of Australia, so called in the second volume of this work, Plate 96, and in my 'Handbook to the Birds of Australia,' vol. i. p. 253, and has dedicated the latter to myself, calling it *Monarcha Gouldi*. This gentleman, moreover, states that the bird which he has named *M. bimaculata*, and which was brought to this country from Batchian by Mr. Wallace, is different from both. To this I may add that the bird here figured, which is a native of the Cape-York district, differs from all of them, and is distinguished for the pure whiteness of the under surface of its body, its axillaries, and the underside of the wings; whereas in the south-eastern species (*M. Gouldi*) the chestnut colouring of the breast is continued down the entire length of the flanks, over the under surface of the wings, and on the axillaries also in very old specimens.

The Northern-Queensland bird, *M. albiventris*, is also a little smaller in size than the New-South-Wales *M. Gouldi*, which more nearly assimilates, in size, colour, and markings, to the Timor *M. trivirgata*; but the latter has a longer and much narrower bill than the former, and, moreover, has a greater amount of white on the three outer tail-feathers, in which respect it resembles the Cape-York bird; but as the Timor species has buff sides and axillaries, like *M. Gouldi*, it cannot be regarded as identical.

The *M. albiventris* is abundantly dispersed over the Cape-York peninsula, where, according to Mr. James Cockerell, it is stationary, breeding on the edges of the scrubs. In actions it is a complete Flycatcher, sallying forth to capture insects, and returning to the same branch, all the while moving the tail from side to side.

Mr. Cockerell brought me the eggs of this bird, which may be described as of creamy white, covered with minute rufous dots, thinly dispersed over the middle and smaller end, and so thickly at the larger end as nearly to coalesce and form a rufous cap; they are about five-eighths of an inch in length by half an inch in breadth, and are generally two in number, laid on a small, shallow, round, and neatly formed nest.

Bill and legs olive lead-colour; forehead and a narrow stripe above the eye, upper portion of the ear-coverts, and the throat jet-black; cheeks, lower part of the neck, and the chest bright ferruginous; abdomen, axillaries, and a considerable portion of the under surface of the wing snow-white; crown of the head, back of the neck, and back bluish grey; primaries greyish brown; upper tail-coverts and tail black, the three outer feathers of the latter largely tipped with white.

There seems to be but little difference in the outward appearance of the sexes; the accompanying Plate may therefore be regarded as representing a male and a female, of the natural size.