

PODICEPS POLIOCEPHALUS, *Jard. and Selb.*

Hoary-headed Grebe.

Podiceps poliocephalus, Jard. and Selb. Ill. Orn., vol. i. pl. 13.

Podiceps Nestor, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., Part IV. p. 145; and in Syn. Birds of Australia, Part I.

Wy-oô-da, Aborigines of the lowland districts of Western Australia.

Dab-chick, Colonists of Swan River.

THIS species of Grebe is very abundantly dispersed over the inland waters of Van Diemen's Land, and is particularly common on the upper part of the river Derwent, where it may be seen during the winter season in flocks or mobs of from ten to thirty together, which separate into pairs on the approach of summer; I have also received it from Swan River, and observed it personally in the lagoons of New South Wales; its distribution therefore over all the southern portion of Australia may be said to be general. Like the *Podiceps gularis*, it constructs a flat nest of aquatic plants, which may be seen floating on the central portions of the lagoons, not unfrequently within a few yards of the land. The eggs are of a dirty white colour, and four or five in number.

Its powers of diving, notwithstanding its bushy head, are quite equal to those of the other members of the genus, and its food and general economy are as a matter of course strictly similar.

The lengthened hair-like plumes which ornament the face are doubtless merely assumed during the breeding-season, for I have frequently observed specimens in which this character was wholly absent, and not unfrequently others in which it was only partially developed; ignorance of these changes was the cause of my applying the name of *Nestor* to this species, which had previously received the very appropriate appellation of *poliocephalus*: this error will, however, I feel assured, be readily excused by all those who compare the bird with the plate in the "Ornithological Illustrations," where it is represented in a state of change, and I now take this opportunity of restoring the first name, and placing my own in the rank of a synonym.

The sexes are both adorned with the plumes on the head, and are moreover so nearly alike both in size and in colour that dissection is necessary to distinguish them.

In the breeding-season the head is black, with the forehead and sides of the face beset with long fine hair-like white plumes; all the upper surface and wings brown; base of the primaries and the whole of the secondaries white; under surface silvery grey, tinged with brown on the flanks; bill olive-black with the tip white; irides blackish olive with a very fine circle of yellow near the pupil, and the olive beautifully marked with a darker tint resembling lace-work; lores reddish flesh-colour; feet olive, tinged with yellow on the inner side.

After the breeding-season is over the head becomes brown, the white plumes disappear, and the throat becomes buff.

The Plate represents the two sexes of the natural size.