

CASARCA TADORNOIDES, *Eyton.*

Chestnut-coloured Shieldrake.

New Holland Shieldrake, Lath. Gen. Hist., vol. x. p. 306.

Anas Tadornoides, Jard. and Selb. Ill. Orn., vol. ii. pl. 62.

Casarca Tadornoides, Eyton, Mon. of the Anat., p. 171.

Goo-rá-ga, Aborigines of the lowland districts of Western Australia.

Mountain Duck, Colonists of Swan River.

THIS fine Shieldrake, although nowhere very plentiful, is universally spread over all such parts of Van Diemen's Land, South and Western Australia, as present localities suitable to its habits. During my residence in Van Diemen's Land I saw several fresh specimens that had been shot on the lakes of the interior of the island, and ascertained that it had formerly resorted to the rivers, heads of the bays, and inlets of the sea near Hobart Town. In South Australia it breeds annually at Gawler, on all the alluvial flats that abound in that district: it is also said to breed in the hollow spouts and boles of the lofty gum-trees.

Mr. Strange informed me that the nest is formed of the down plucked by the bird from its own breast, that he has taken thirteen eggs from a single nest, and that their colour was similar to those of the Teal. It breeds early in the spring, which in Australia is at an opposite period of the year to the spring of the northern hemisphere.

Its food consists of the small fish, crustacea, mollusks, &c. which abound in the flats and swampy places. I have never received this species from New South Wales.

Much information is yet to be obtained respecting the habits, range, etc. of this fine bird.

The sexes may be distinguished by the smaller size of the female, as well as by the whole of her markings being less pure, and by the ring of white or mottled feathers which surround the base of the bill.

Head and upper part of the neck shining dark green; chest, lower part of the neck and upper part of the back pale chestnut or rusty red, between which colour and the green of the upper part of the neck is a ring of pure white; upper and under surface black, finely freckled and waved with pale chestnut; upper and under tail-coverts and tail black, glossed with green; wing-coverts pure white; primaries dull black; secondaries rich glossy green on their outer webs, black on the inner; tertiaries rich chestnut on their outer and grey on their inner webs; irides dark brown; bill black; legs greyish black.

The figures are two-thirds of the natural size.