

CEREOPSIS NOVÆ-HOLLANDIÆ, *Lath.*

Cereopsis Goose.

- Cereopsis Novæ-Hollandiæ*, Lath. Ind. Orn. Supp., p. lxvi.—Temm. Man., tom. ii. p. cvii.—Ib. Pl. Col., 206.—Benn. in Gard. and Menag. of Zool. Soc., Birds, p. 315.—Jard. and Selb. Ill. Orn., vol. iv. pl. xxxiii.—G. R. Gray, List of Gen. of Birds, 2nd edit., p. 93.—List of Birds in Brit. Mus. Coll., part iii. p. 126.—Less. Man. d'Orn., tom. ii. p. 413.—Ib. Traité d'Orn., p. 627. pl. 109. fig. 2.
- New Holland Cereopsis*, Lath. Gen. Syn. Supp., vol. ii. p. 325. pl. 138*.—Ib. Gen. Hist., vol. ix. p. 432 pl. clxii.—Steph. Cont. of Shaw's Gen. Zool., vol. xii. p. 67. pl. 44.
- Cereopsis cinereus*, Vieill. Gal. des Ois., tom. ii. pl. 284.—Ib. Nouv. Dict. d'Hist. Nat., tom. v. p. 516.—Ib. Ency. Méth., tom. iii. p. 1045.
- Anser griseus*, Vieill. 2nde édit. du Nouv. Dict. d'Hist. Nat., tom. xxiii. p. 338.—Ib. Ency. Méth., tom. i. p. 351. pl. 236. fig. 1.
- Cereopsis Australis*, Swains., Anim. in Menag., p. 219. fig. 32.
- Cape Barren Goose* of the Colonists.
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THIS is one of the Australian birds which particularly attracted the notice of the earlier voyagers to that country, by nearly every one of whom it is mentioned as being very plentiful on all the islands in Bass's Straits, and so tame that it might be easily knocked down with sticks or even captured by hand ; during my sojourn in the country I visited most of the localities above-mentioned, and found that so far from its being still numerous, it is almost extirpated ; a few, however, still inhabit the smaller islands in Bass's Straits, and I killed a pair on Isabella Island, one of a small group near Flinders' Island, on the 12th of January 1839. I believe that it may be still abundant on some of the unexplored parts of the south coast of Australia, but in the colonised districts, where it has been much molested, it has now become so scarce that it is very rarely seen. It passes the greater portion of its time among the grass, and rarely takes to the water. It appears to be strictly a vegetable feeder, and to subsist principally upon grasses in the neighbourhood of the coast ; consequently its flesh is excellent, and all who have tasted it agree in extolling its delicacy and flavour. It bears confinement remarkably well, but is by no means a desirable addition to the farm-yard ; for it is so pugnacious, that it not only drives all other birds before it, but readily attacks pigs, dogs, or any other animal that may approach, and often inflicts severe wounds with its hard and sharp bill.

Its voice is a deep, short, hoarse, clanging and disagreeable sound. It readily breeds in confinement. The eggs are creamy white, about three inches and a quarter in length by two inches and a quarter in breadth.

The sexes are precisely alike in plumage.

Crown of the head whitish, the remainder of the plumage brownish grey ; the wing-coverts and scapularies with a spot of brownish black near the tip ; the feathers of the back margined with pale brownish grey ; the apical half of the primaries, the tips of the secondaries, the tail and the under tail-coverts blackish brown ; bill black ; cere lemon-yellow ; irides vermilion ; eyelash dark brown ; legs reddish orange ; toes, webs, claws and a streak up the front of the legs black.

The figure is rather more than half the natural size.