

PORZANA PALUSTRIS, *Gould.*

Water Crake.

Porzana palustris, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., Part X. p. 139.

THIS little Water Crake would appear to be more abundant in Van Diemen's Land than on the continent of Australia, for although I clearly ascertained that it inhabits New South Wales, it is not so numerous there, in consequence, probably, of the country being much less fluviatile, and therefore much less suitable to its habits; for, like the *Porzana fluminea*, the present bird finds a natural abode in morasses covered with reeds and luxuriant herbage, to the more dense parts of which it is exclusively confined. Like all the other members of the genus, the present species swims with great facility, and displays the same power of diving, to which it equally resorts in time of need, and thus often successfully eludes the attacks of its natural enemies; in addition, few birds are more agile or thread the reeds with greater activity; hence, like the last species, it is seldom to be caught sight of unless the greatest vigilance be exerted in search of it.

I am indebted to the Rev. T. J. Ewing of Van Diemen's Land for the nest and eggs of this bird; the former is a flat structure formed of various kinds of grasses, and the latter are four or five in number, of a nearly uniform brownish olive, about one inch in length by three quarters of an inch in breadth.

Head and back of the neck rusty brown, with a stripe of blackish brown down the centre of each feather; feathers of the back, scapularies and secondaries brownish black margined with rusty brown, and with an oblong stripe or mark of white, interrupted in the middle with black; wing-coverts rusty brown, a few of them marked on their inner webs like the scapularies; primaries brown, two or three of the innermost with a mark or marks of white at the tip; tail dark brown, fringed with rusty brown; face, throat, chest and upper part of the abdomen grey; lower part of the abdomen and flanks blackish grey, crossed by broad irregular bands of grey; bill and feet olive-brown.

The figures are of the natural size.