

EULABEORNIS CASTANEOVENTRIS, *Gould.*

Chestnut-bellied Rail.

Eulabeornis castaneoventris, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., March 26, 1844.
Mor-dug-e-ra, Aborigines of Port Essington.

THIS large and fine species of Rail, of which a single specimen only has as yet come under my notice, inhabits the low muddy shores and mangrove swamps of the north coast of Australia. The specimen above alluded to, which is in my own collection, was killed in the Gulf of Carpentaria by Captain Stokes, R.N., late Commander of H.M.S. the Beagle; to this gentleman I am also indebted for many acts of kindness and liberality, while science in more than one branch has been enriched by the discoveries made by himself and his officers during their late survey. I had some time before received the eggs of this species from Port Essington, but from its extreme shyness the bird could never be obtained; in fact, the wariness of its disposition is such, that even to catch a glimpse of it among the dense herbage and mangroves is an extremely rare occurrence. It runs with extraordinary fleetness, and takes alarm the instant the vicinity of its habitat is intruded upon.

The eggs are rather lengthened in form, of a pale pinky white, dotted all over with reddish chestnut, the spots being thinly dispersed, and some of them appearing as if beneath the surface of the shell, giving them a darker tint, two inches and one-eighth long, one inch and five-eighths broad.

Head and neck ash-grey; all the upper surface, wings and tail olive; breast and all the under surface greyish chestnut; bill yellow at the base, horn-colour at the tip; legs and feet brown.

Both sexes will doubtless be hereafter found to possess a similar kind of plumage.

The Plate represents the bird of the natural size.