

HERODIAS PICATA, Gould.

Pied Egret.

Ardea (Herodias) picata, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., Part XIII. p. 62.
Oo-le-buk-o, Aborigines of Port Essington.

EXAMPLES of this species, not the least beautiful member of the tribe to which it belongs, have been sent to me by Mr. Gilbert and by Lieut. Ince; they were all procured in the neighbourhood of Port Essington, where Mr. Gilbert states that it inhabits the inland swamps, and is usually encountered in small families often in company with other species, but is not so abundant in the vicinity of the harbour as on the islands at the head of Van Diemen's Gulf, where it appeared to be very numerous.

The stomachs of those dissected were found to be capacious and membranous, and the food to consist of fish, aquatic insects and their larvæ.

I regret to say that nothing more is at present known respecting it.

Upper part of the head, occiput, occipital plumes, the whole of the plumage of the body, wings and tail bluish slaty black; chin, neck, chest, and some of the lanceolate feathers dependent therefrom, white; some few of the lanceolate feathers on the neck and breast have one web white and the other web bluish slaty black; the remainder of these lanceolate feathers are the same colour as the body; irides yellow; bill, legs and feet greenish yellow.

The young birds differ in having the whole of the under surface white.

The figures are about the natural size.