

ARDEA LEUCOPHÆA, *Gould.*

Australian Heron.

Ardea leucophæa, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., May 9, 1848.

DURING my journey into the interior of South Australia in 1839, I saw a fine adult example of this beautiful Heron, but although I resorted to every possible stratagem in my power to get within shot of it, I regret to say I was unsuccessful; I have since, however, received a skin direct from New South Wales, which enables me to include a figure of it in the present work, and I have also seen several examples from India, whence we may infer that it extends its range from that country throughout the islands to Australia.

Having carefully compared examples of this species with the Common Heron of Europe, I find it differs from that bird in being of a larger size in all its admeasurements, and that the line of the bill instead of being straight has an upward tendency; in other respects they are very similar.

Forehead and upper portion of the crest white; sides of the head and lower portion of the crest deep glossy black; neck white, washed with vinous and with a series of lanceolate marks of black disposed alternately down the front; all the upper surface, wings and tail dark grey, the lanceolate feathers of the back fading into white; edge of the wings buffy white; primaries and secondaries dark slate-colour; flanks and under surface of the wing grey; chest and abdomen white, separated from the grey of the flanks by a series of black feathers; under tail-coverts and thighs white; bill yellow; tarsi olive.

The young differs in having the whole of the crown of the head black; all the upper surface greyish brown; and the under surface striated with brown and white.

The Plate represents an old and a young bird about half the natural size.