

LIMOSA MELANUROIDES, *Gould.*

Black-tailed Godwit.

Limosa Melanuroides, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., Part XIV.

Mun-doorê-git, Aborigines of Port Essington.

My collection contains two specimens, male and female, in winter plumage, of this species, which at the first glance might readily be mistaken for specimens of the European bird ; on comparison however the Australian species is found to be of a much smaller size than the European, and to exhibit other differences, which although but slight, fully satisfy me that it is distinct : it is one of the many novelties which rewarded Mr. Gilbert's researches in the neighbourhood of Port Essington, and who states that it inhabits shallow muddy swamps and lakes, and that he usually met with it in tolerably large flocks ; he also adds that its stomach was extremely muscular, and that its food consists of aquatic insects of various kinds.

In its habits, actions and general economy it doubtless closely resembles its European ally, and in all probability undergoes similar changes of plumage, the dull colouring of winter giving place to a rich rufous tint in summer.

The winter dress may be thus described :—

Head and all the upper surface greyish brown, with a small streak of black down the centre of the feathers ; wings dark brown ; shafts white ; base of the primaries and secondaries and tips of the greater coverts white, forming a band when the wing is expanded ; upper tail-coverts white, forming a conspicuous mark ; tail black, with the exception of the two lateral feathers on each side, which are white at the base and black at the tip ; neck, breast and flanks greyish brown ; abdomen and under tail-coverts white ; irides brown ; bill greenish grey, becoming paler on the sides of the upper mandible ; legs and feet greenish grey.

The figures are of the natural size.