

## HIATICULA INORNATA, *Gould.*

Allied Dottrel.

*Hiaticula inornata*, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., Part XIV.

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I HAVE for some years had in my possession two examples of this species, the uniformity of whose colouring suggested the term of *inornata* as an appropriate appellation; lately, however, through the kindness of Lieut. Ince, R.N., I have received other examples with a brighter style of marking, which is doubtless characteristic of the summer or breeding-season; and which renders the above name only applicable to the bird when in the plumage of winter. It is nearly allied to the *Hiaticula Wilsonii* of North America, of which it forms a beautiful representative in the distant country of which it is a native.

I possess no information whatever as to the extent of the range of this new species; Mr. Gilbert found it abundant on most of the sandy points and bays in the neighbourhood of Port Essington, and I believe that it also inhabits the islands in Torres' Straits and New Guinea; Lieut. Ince's specimens were procured on Oomaga Island in Torres' Straits.

That an extraordinary difference exists in the relative size of the sexes is evident, some specimens being fully a third less than others, but I have not yet had sufficient opportunities to satisfy myself on the subject.

The stomachs of those dissected contain the remains of small crustaceous animals, and a large portion of sand.

The male in summer has the forehead white, above which is a stripe of black; all the upper surface pale greyish brown; crown of the head rufous, which colour is continued on the back and sides of the neck, and meeting on the centre of the breast forms a pectoral band; wings dark brown, the coverts and secondaries margined and tipped with white; the shafts of the primaries are also white; rump white; six central tail-feathers dark brown tipped with white; the lateral feathers white, tinged with brown in the centre; lores, line below the eye and ear-coverts black; chin, throat and all the under surface white; irides dark brown; bill blackish grey; tarsi light ash-grey; feet greenish grey.

The winter plumage differs in wanting the rufous tints about the head, neck and breast; in the ear-coverts being brown, and in having a brown patch like the commencement of a band on either side of the chest.

The figures are of the natural size.