

SARCIOPHORUS PECTORALIS.

Black-breasted Pewit.

Charadrius pectoralis, Cuv. in Mus. Par.—Wagl. Syst. Av., sp. 8.

——— *tricolor*, Vieill. 2nde Edit. du Nouv. Dict. d'Hist. Nat., tom. xxvii. p. 147.—Ibid. Ency. Méth. Orn., Part I. p. 337.

THIS species is known to inhabit Van Diemen's Land, South Australia and New South Wales, but over what other portions of the Australian continent its range is extended, has not yet been ascertained. I have never seen it in collections either from the western or northern shores. Its favourite localities are open sterile downs, thinly covered with grasses or other kinds of vegetation; but it is occasionally to be met with on the grassy flats in the neighbourhood of rivers. It is much more tame in its disposition than the Wattled Pewit, and permits a near approach before taking alarm; hence there was but little difficulty in obtaining specimens. It trips very quickly over the ground, much after the manner of the true Pewits, and when flushed generally flies off in a straight line, frequently very near the ground. I have never seen it mount in the air like the Common Lapwing, or perform during flight those sudden turns and dips so frequently exhibited by that species. So far as I have observed, it goes in pairs, or at most in companies of three. Nearly full-grown young were obtained in the month of November, from which we may infer that it is a very early breeder.

The eggs are two or three in number, and are deposited on the bare ground without any nest; they are one inch and a half long by one inch and an eighth broad; ground colour light olive-grey, very thickly blotched and stained with brown, so as nearly to cover the surface, particularly at the larger end. For the two eggs in my collection I am indebted to the kindness of Mr. Kermode of Van Diemen's Land, on whose estate they were taken.

The sexes are alike in colour, but the female has the lobe before the eye much smaller than in the male.

Crown of the head, line running from the angle of the mouth beneath the eye, and down the sides of the neck, and a broad crescent-shaped band across the breast jet-black; line from the eye to near the occiput, chin, throat, flanks, abdomen, upper and under tail-coverts white; back light brown; primaries brownish black; wing-coverts bronzy brown, passing into black towards the tip of each feather, and tipped with white; a few of the outer secondaries white, margined on the extremities of their outer webs with black, then a few entirely white, and the last two marked like the coverts, but largely margined with white; scapularies and lower part of the back bronzy brown; rump dark olive with bronzy reflexions; tail white, crossed near the tip by a broad irregular band of black; tip of the upper mandible horn-colour; the remainder of the bill beautiful primrose-yellow; naked parts of the thigh and knees dark pink; tarsi and toes blackish brown, the latter inclining to pink-red; irides yellow, surrounded by a rim of deep primrose extending in an oblique direction to the fleshy protuberance at the base of the upper mandible, which is blood-red in the male, much lighter or flesh-red in the female.

The figures represent both sexes of the natural size.