

LOBIVANELLUS PERSONATUS, *Gould.*

Masked Pewit.

Lobivanellus personatus, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., August 23, 1842.

Al-ga-ra-ra, Aborigines of Port Essington.

Wattled Plover, Residents of Port Essington.

THIS new Pewit, which is as abundant in the northern parts of Australia as the Wattled Pewit is in the eastern, is more elegantly formed than that species, being of the same size in the body, but with more lengthened legs; the fleshy wattles surrounding the eyes are also much more extensively developed; the crown of the head only in the present species is black, while in the Wattled Pewit the sides of the chest and upper part of the back are of the same colour. It is a very common bird in the Cobourg Peninsula, inhabiting swamps, the borders of lakes and open spots among the mangroves, and like its near ally, is mostly seen associated in small families. It is rather a noisy species, frequently uttering its note, which is not unlike the native name given above, both while on the wing and on the ground.

The stomach of this bird is very muscular, and its food while living in the marshes consists of aquatic coleoptera and small crustaceous animals, but when on the plains of the interior it readily accommodates itself to the kind of insect food it may find there.

The task of incubation is performed during the months of August and September; the eggs, which are two or three in number, being laid in a hollow on the bare ground at the edge of a flat adjoining a salt-marsh; they are of a dull olive-yellow, dashed all over with spots and markings of blackish brown and dark olive-brown, particularly at the larger end; they are one inch and five-eighths long by one inch and three-sixteenths broad, somewhat pointed at the smaller end.

Crown of the head and occiput jet-black; sides of the face, back of the neck, rump and all the under surface pure white; back and scapularies light brownish grey; wing-coverts grey; primaries deep black; secondaries white at the base on their inner webs, cinnamon-grey on their outer webs, and largely tipped with black; tail white at the base, largely tipped with black, the extreme ends of the feathers being cinnamon-grey, particularly the two centre ones; irides primrose-yellow; wattles lemon-yellow; bill lemon-yellow at the base, black at the tip; legs and feet carmine-red; the scales in front blackish green.

The figures are those of a male and a female of the natural size.