

and economy, and in none is this circumstance more remarkable than in the Apteryx, which, at the same time that it departs the farthest in form from the type of the group (the Ostrich), also departs the farthest in its mode of life and general economy; being in fact adapted to the peculiarities of its own country, and fitted for the particular kind of food there to be obtained.

The favourite localities of this bird are those covered with extensive and dense beds of fern, among which it conceals itself, and when hard pressed by dogs, the usual mode of chasing it, takes refuge in crevices of the rocks, hollow trees, and in the deep holes which it excavates in the ground, in the form of a chamber; in these latter situations it is said to construct its nest of dried fern and grasses, and to deposit its eggs, the number and colour of which have not been clearly ascertained.

While undisturbed, says Mr. Short, in a letter to Mr. Yarrell, the head is carried far back in the shoulders, with the bill pointing to the ground; but when pursued it runs with great swiftness, carrying the head elevated like the Ostrich. It is asserted to be almost exclusively nocturnal in its habits, and it is by torch-light that it is usually hunted by the natives, by whom it is sought after with the utmost avidity, the skins being highly prized for the dresses of the chiefs; indeed so much are they valued, that the natives can rarely be induced to part with them. The feathers are also employed to construct artificial flies for the capture of fish, precisely after the European manner. When attacked it defends itself very vigorously, striking rapid and dangerous blows with its powerful feet and sharp spur; with which it is also said to beat the ground in order to disturb the worms upon which it feeds, seizing them with its bill the instant they make their appearance; it also probably feeds upon snails, insects, etc.

A most careful and elaborate paper on the Anatomy of the Apteryx, by Professor Owen, is contained in the second volume of the "Transactions of the Zoological Society of London," quoted above, of which I have availed myself in my observations upon the genus.

It is said to be an inhabitant of all the islands of New Zealand, particularly the southern end of the middle island.

Face and throat greenish brown, all the remainder of the plumage consisting of long lanceolate hair-like feathers, of a chestnut-brown colour, margined on each side with blackish brown; on the lower part of the breast and belly the feathers are lighter than those of the upper surface, and become of a grey tint; bill yellowish horn-colour, its base beset with numerous long hairs; feet yellowish brown.

The Plate represents a male and a female, rather under the natural size.