

HEMIPODIUS PYRRHOTHORAX, *Gould.*

Red-chested Hemipode.

Hemipodius pyrrhorthorax, Gould, in Proc. of Zool. Soc., November 10, 1840.

LITTLE as is known of the Swift-flying Hemipode, even less information has been obtained respecting the history of the present species, which, although assimilating in some of its characters to the former, differs from it in the marking of the face and neck, and the rufous colouring of the fore part of the throat and chest: it is also somewhat more slender and elegant in its proportions. It first came under my notice while traversing the flats near Aberdeen, on the Upper Hunter, when my dog pointing at what I conceived to be a specimen of the preceding species, a female of the present bird arose before me, and I at once saw, from the rufous colouring of the breast, that it differed from any I had previously seen: my shot was a successful one, and it was with no small delight that I picked up the beautiful bird, from which the accompanying drawing of the female was taken. I diligently sought for others, but was not fortunate enough to meet with a second living specimen. For the little male which enables me to complete my Plate, I am indebted to Mr. Charles Coxen, who had killed it some years before in the neighbourhood of the Liverpool Plains, but who could give me no further information respecting it: he had never seen the female. Of its habits and nidification, of course nothing is therefore known: when the distant interior is explored, its true habitat will doubtless be discovered, but until then its history must remain buried in obscurity.

Crown of the head dark brown, with a line of buff down the centre; feathers surrounding the eye, ear-coverts and sides of the neck extremely small, white edged with black; back and rump dark brown, transversely rayed with bars and freckles of black and buff; wings paler, edged with buff, within which is a line of black running in the same direction; primaries brown, margined with buff; throat, chest, flanks and under tail-coverts sandy red, passing into white on the centre of the abdomen; bill horn-colour; irides straw-yellow; feet yellowish white.

The male has a similar character of markings on the upper surface, but the colouring of the throat and flanks is much paler.

The Plate represents a male and a female of the natural size.