

HEMIPODIUS CASTANOTUS, *Gould.*

Chestnut-backed Hemipode.

Hemipodius castanotus, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., Part VII. p. 145.

Win-do-loom, Aborigines of Port Essington.

Thick-billed Quail, Colonists.

THE Chestnut-backed Hemipode inhabits the northern and north-western portions of Australia; specimens from the latter have been forwarded to me by Mr. Bynoe and by Mr. Dring of H.M.S. Beagle; Mr. Gilbert also found it at Port Essington, and his notes respecting it I here transcribe:—

“ This is a tolerably abundant species, and inhabits the sides of stony hills in coveys of from fifteen to thirty in number; which, when disturbed, seldom rise together, but run along the ground, and it is only upon being very closely pursued that they will take wing, and then they merely fly to a short distance: while running on the ground their heads are thrown up as high as their necks will permit, and their bodies being carried very erect, a waddling motion is given to their gait, which is very ludicrous. The stomachs of those dissected were very muscular, and contained seeds and a large proportion of pebbles.”

Head, neck and chest olive-grey, the feathers of the head and neck spotted with fawn-white at the tip, and those of the chest having a spatulate mark of the same colour down the centre; centre of the abdomen and the under tail-coverts pale buff; a narrow stripe over each eye, back, shoulders and tail rich chestnut; the feathers on the back and shoulders spotted with white, the white spots bounded anteriorly with black; primaries brown, edged with buff; irides gamboge-yellow; bill light ash-grey; naked skin round the eye smoke-grey; tarsi and feet king's-yellow.

The Plate represents the two sexes of the natural size.