

HEMIPODIUS MELANOTUS, *Gould.*

Black-backed Hemipode.

Hemipodius melanotus, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., Part V. p. 8 ; and in Syn. Birds of Australia, Part II.
Turnix melanotus, Gould in Gray's Trav. App., vol. ii. p. 419, note.

SEVERAL years have now elapsed since I described this species from a specimen received from Moreton Bay ; since then I have obtained other examples from the eastern and northern parts of Australia. It was procured in the latter locality by Mr. Bynoe, and to that gentleman I am indebted for the two fine specimens figured in the accompanying Plate.

In structure, and particularly in the feeble form of its bill, the *Hemipodius melanotus* bears a close alliance to the *Hemipodius varius* ; and these slender-billed species form a small section which might with propriety be separated from the stout-billed birds, such as *H. velox* and *H. castaneothorax*.

The female of this species is a larger bird than the male, in which respect only do the sexes differ in outward appearance.

The total want of information respecting the habits and economy of this bird compels me to conclude my account of it with the following description of its colouring only :—

Crown of the head black, each feather fringed with brown at the tip ; space between the bill and the eye, stripe over the eye and cheeks, light yellowish brown, the feathers of the latter slightly tipped with black ; back of the neck rich chestnut-red ; scapularies deep chestnut-red, with a large transverse black mark in the centre of each feather, and a longitudinal stripe of fawn-yellow on their outer edges ; rump and upper tail-coverts black, each feather freckled with fine markings of brown, with indistinct spots of buff on the external edges of the upper tail-coverts ; greater and lesser wing-coverts buff-yellow, each feather having a spot of black in the centre ; primaries brown ; throat whitish ; front of the neck and chest deep buff ; sides of the neck and flanks light buff, with an oblong spot of black transversely disposed in the centre of each feather ; centre of the abdomen and under tail-coverts buffy white ; bill and feet brown.

The figures are of the natural size.