

CHALCOPHAPS CHRYSOCHLORA.

Little Green Pigeon.

Tourterelle de Java, Buff. Pl. Enl. 177?

Columba Javanica, Auctorum?

Colombe Turvert, Temm. Fig., fol. 2nd fam. pl. 26. p. 62.—Ib. Fig. et Gall., tom. ii. pp. 252 and 468.

Columba chrysochlora, Wagl. Syst. Av. Columba, sp. 79.

THERE are, in my opinion, several closely allied species of this form, distributed over Australia and the islands of Java, Sumatra, &c., whose specific characters have never been accurately defined; I am inclined to consider the Javanese bird as distinct from that here figured, and the bird inhabiting the northern coast of Australia, of which I have only seen one or two examples, as distinct from both. The principal difference that I have yet observed in the two species inhabiting Australia, is that the one from the north coast has the bill of much greater length than that from New South Wales; a more minute comparison, however, is necessary to ascertain if they be identical or not.

The Little Green Pigeon is sparingly dispersed in all the brushes of New South Wales, both those clothing the mountain ranges as well as those near the coast; how far it may proceed northwards has not yet been ascertained. The brushy districts are the localities peculiarly adapted to it, and these I believe it never leaves for the more open parts of the country; hence it is but little known to, and seldom seen by, the colonists, a circumstance the more to be regretted, as the beauty and brilliancy of its plumage and the neatness of its form render it one of the most pleasing objects to behold that occur in the Australian forests. When flushed, it flies very quickly through the scrub, but to no great distance, and readily eludes pursuit by pitching suddenly to the ground, and remaining so quiet that it can rarely be discovered.

I never met with its nest, nor could I obtain, either from the natives or settlers, any particulars respecting its nidification.

Its chief food during one season of the year is the seeds of the stiff wiry grass figured in the Plate, which was gathered at Illawarra.

The sexes differ considerably in colour, and the female is somewhat smaller than her mate.

The male has the crown of the head, face and all the under surface deep vinaceous; nape and back of the neck dark grey; edge of the shoulder snow-white; centre of the back, wing-coverts and outer webs of the tertiaries shining greenish copper-colour; rump and upper tail-coverts slaty-black, crossed by three indistinct bands of grey; primaries and secondaries brown, largely margined with ferruginous on the base of their inner webs; tail black, except the two outer feathers on each side, which are light grey, crossed by a broad band of black near the tip; under tail-coverts black; apical half of the bill blood-red, basal half plum-colour; feet dull reddish plum-colour; orbits dark grey; eyelash lilac-red; irides lilaceous lead-colour.

The female has the head and neck dark cinnamon-brown, approaching to chocolate; the wing-coverts much more green than in the male; face and all the under surface cinnamon-brown, with merely a wash on the breast of the vinaceous tint; upper tail-coverts brown; four centre tail-feathers brown; the two next on each side chestnut-brown, and the outer one on each side grey; all but the four middle ones crossed near the tip with a broad band of black; and the soft parts similar, but less brilliant than in the male.

The figures in the accompanying Plate were taken from specimens killed in New South Wales, and are of the natural size.