

PTILINOPUS SWAINSONII, *Gould.*

Swainson's Fruit Pigeon.

Ptilinopus purpuratus, var. *Regina*, Swains. Zool. Journ., vol. i. p. 474?

Columba purpurata, Jard. and Selb. Ill. Orn., vol. ii. pl. 70.

Ptilinopus Swainsonii, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., February 8, 1842.

CONSIDERABLE confusion has existed respecting the very beautiful birds constituting the genus *Ptilinopus*, as to whether they are so many species or merely varieties, and I quite agree with Messrs. Jardine and Selby when they say in their 'Illustrations' above quoted, "We strongly suspect that more than one species is involved among these different varieties, which some one in possession of them may hereafter be enabled to determine; and their varied geographical distribution tends considerably to strengthen this opinion." There are in fact several species of this beautiful form so closely allied that at a casual glance they would be considered as identical, but on a careful comparison their specific differences will be clearly perceived. At least two of them are natives of Australia, the remainder being distributed over the Indian and Polynesian Islands. The present bird has by many authors been considered either as identical with or as a mere variety of the *Columba purpurata*, Auct., but if compared with that species it will be found to possess characters sufficiently different to warrant its being characterized as distinct; I have therefore named it after Mr. Swainson, the author of the genus to which it belongs, as a slight testimony of the respect I entertain for the talents of one who has done so much towards the advancement of ornithology, at once the most interesting and popular branch of the science of natural history.

The specimens from which my figures were taken are from the brushes of the River Clarence, situated between the Hunter and Moreton Bay; in the last-mentioned district it is tolerably abundant, the dense and luxuriant brushes affording it a congenial habitat and breeding-place. I have received both the young and the adults from this locality, but as I have never myself seen them in a state of nature, I am unable to give any account of their habits or economy. The sexes are so nearly alike in colouring that dissection alone can distinguish them with certainty.

Forehead and crown deep crimson-red, surrounded except in front with a narrow ring of light yellow; back of the neck greyish green; all the upper surface bright green tinged with yellow, the green becoming deep blue towards the extremities of the tertiaries, which are broadly margined with yellow; primaries slaty grey on their inner webs and green on the outer, very slightly margined with yellow; tail-feathers deep green, largely tipped with rich yellow; throat greenish grey, stained with yellow on the chin in some specimens and greyish white in others; breast dull green, each feather forked at the end and with a triangular silvery-grey spot at each extremity; flanks and abdomen green, with a large patch of orange-red in the centre of the latter; under tail-coverts orange-yellow; thighs green; irides reddish orange; bill greenish black and horn-colour at tip; feet olive brown.

The figures are of the natural size.