

PEZOPORUS FORMOSUS, *Ill.*

Ground Parrakeet.

- Psittacus formosus*, Lath. Ind. Orn., vol. i. p. 103.—Kuhl, Consp. Psitt. in Nova Acta, vol. x. p. 45.
——— *terrestris*, Shaw, Mus. Lev., p. 217. pl. 53.—Ib. Zool. of New Holl., pl. 3.—Ib. Nat. Misc., pl. 228.
Perruche ingambé, Le Vaill. Hist. Nat. des Perr., tom. i. p. 66. pl. 32.
Black-spotted Parrakeet of Van Diemen's Land, D'Entrecast. Voy., vol. ii. p. 47. pl. x.
Ground Parrot, Lath. Gen. Syn., Supp., vol. ii. p. 26.—Shaw's Gen. Zool., vol. viii. p. 454. pl. 66.—Lath. Gen. Hist., vol. ii. p. 137.
Pezoporus formosus, Ill. Prod., p. 201.—Vig. and Horsf. in Linn. Trans., vol. xv. p. 285.—Wagl. Mon. Psitt. in Abhand., pp. 490 and 520.—Swains. Class. of Birds, vol. ii. p. 305.—G. R. Gray, Gen. of Birds, 2nd Edit., p. 66.
——— *rufifrons*, Bourj. de St. Hil. Supp. to Le Vaill. Hist. Nat. des Perr., pl. 9.
Boo-run-duf-dee, Aborigines northward of Perth in Western Australia.
Djar-doon-gur-ree, Aborigines around Perth.
Djul-bat-la, Aborigines southward of Perth.
Ky-lof-ing, Aborigines of King George's Sound.
Goolingnang, Aborigines near Sydney, New South Wales.
Swamp Parrakeet, Colonists of Van Diemen's Land.
Ground Parrakeet, Colonists of New South Wales and Western Australia.

THE Ground Parrakeet is diffused over the whole of the southern portions of Australia, including Van Diemen's Land, wherever localities exist suitable to its habits, and so far as I could learn, it is everywhere a stationary species. It has never been observed in the northern latitudes of the continent, but our knowledge of the productions of those parts of Australia is so very imperfect, that I cannot positively affirm that it does not exist there. Unlike some of the African members of its family, which are inelegant in form and slow and ungraceful in their actions, the *Pezoporus formosus* is as active and graceful as can well be imagined; and although in its colouring it cannot vie with some of its more gaudily attired brethren, it possesses a style of plumage and diversity of markings far from unpleasing. Having very frequently encountered it in a state of nature, I am enabled to state that in its actions it differs from every other known species of its race, as it also does in its habits and economy, which I shall now attempt to describe. Whether the power of perching is entirely denied to it or not I am uncertain, but I never saw it fly into a tree, nor could I ever force it to take shelter on the branches. It usually frequents either sandy sterile districts covered with tufts of rank grass and herbage, or low swampy flats abounding with rushes and the other kinds of vegetation peculiar to such situations. It is generally observed either singly or in pairs, but from its very recluse habits and great powers of running it is seldom or ever seen until it is flushed, and then only for a short time, as it soon pitches again and runs off to a place of seclusion, often under the covert of the Grass-tree (*Xanthorrhæa*), which abounds in the districts it frequents. A striking analogy in the foregoing habits to those of the Gallinaceæ and some of the Gallatores,—Snipes, &c., is very apparent; and a still further analogy to those tribes of birds is exhibited in the manner of its crouching on the approach of danger and in the strong scent it emits, which has many times caused my dogs to road it, and point as dead as they would have done had game been before them; consequently, when shooting over swampy land in Australia, the sportsman is never certain whether a parrakeet or a snipe will rise to the point of his dog. It flies near the ground with great rapidity, frequently making several zigzag turns in the short distance of a hundred yards, beyond which it seldom passes without again pitching to the ground. Its flesh is excellent, being much more delicate in flavour than that of the snipe, and equalling, if not surpassing, that of the quail. Its white eggs, the number of which I could not ascertain, are deposited on the bare ground. I possess examples of the young of all ages, from the egg to maturity, some killed in Van Diemen's Land, and others from various parts of Australia; I also procured both adults and young on Flinders' Island, where I found them breeding on the grassy plains which cover the greater portion of that island. The young assume the colouring of the adult at a very early age, but the sexes offer no external difference by which they can be distinguished.

Plumage of the whole of the upper surface dark grass-green, each feather crossed by irregular bands of black and yellow; feathers of the crown and nape with a broad streak of black down the centre; forehead scarlet; neck and breast pale yellowish green, passing into bright greenish yellow on the abdomen and under tail-coverts, crossed by numerous irregular waved blackish bands; primaries and spurious wings green on their outer webs and dark brown on the inner, each of the latter with a triangular spot of pale yellow near the base; four centre tail-feathers green, crossed by numerous narrow bars of yellow; lateral tail-feathers yellow, crossed by numerous bars of deep green; irides black with a fine ring of light grey; feet and legs bluish flesh-colour.

The figures are of the natural size.