

PLATYCERCUS PILEATUS, *Vig.*

Red-capped Parrakeet.

Platycercus pileatus, Vig. in Zool. Journ., vol. v. p. 274.—Lear's Ill. Psitt., pls. 21 and 22.—Wagl. Mon. Psitt. in Abhand., pp. 491 and 528.

Psittacus purpureocephalus, Quoy et Gaim. Voy. de l'Astrolabe, pl. 22.

Djar-rail-bur-tang, Aborigines of the lowland districts of Western Australia.

Blue Parrot of the Colonists.

THE *Platycercus pileatus* differs so much in the colouring of its plumage from every other species of the great family of Parrots, as to render it one of the most remarkable yet discovered; in the form and structure of its bill there is also a remarkable deviation from the true *Platycerci*, and it will probably be hereafter found that this modification of its form is adapted to some especial purpose, in which case this bird might with propriety constitute the type of a separate genus; in the absence, however, of all information respecting its habits and economy, I prefer retaining it in the genus in which it was placed by Mr. Vigors, its first describer.

The Red-capped Parrakeet is an inhabitant of Western Australia, where it is rather numerously dispersed over the country from King George's Sound to the northern limits of the colony. It is usually seen in small families feeding on the ground, but upon what particular kind of food it subsists has not been ascertained. The breeding-season extends over the months of October, November and December. The hollow dead branch of a gum- or mahogany-tree is the place usually chosen by the female for the reception of her eggs, which are milk-white and from seven to nine in number, about an inch and an eighth long by seven-eighths of an inch broad. The young during the first year of their existence are of nearly uniform green; at the same time, the hues which characterize the adult are perceptible at almost any age.

The females are never so finely marked as the males, neither are they so large or so gracefully formed.

The flight of this species, although swift, is not of long duration, nor is it characterized by those undulating sweeps common to the other members of the genus *Platycercus*.

Its voice is a sharp clucking note, several times repeated, in which respect it also offers a marked difference from the other *Platycerci*.

Forehead, crown and nape deep maroon red; cheeks yellowish green, becoming more yellow on the sides of the neck; back, scapularies and greater wing-coverts deep green; rump jonquil-yellow; edge of the shoulder, spurious wing and base of the outer webs of the primaries rich deep blue; remainder of the primaries and the secondaries deep black; breast and abdomen blue; vent and under tail-coverts scarlet; two centre tail-feathers yellowish green, deepening into black at the tip and crossed by indistinct bars of a darker tint; lateral feathers green at their base, passing into black on their inner webs, and into pale blue on the outer, both webs becoming blue towards the extremity of the feather, and fading into white at the tip; irides dark brown; bill horn-colour; legs and feet dull brown.

The Plate represents an adult male and female of the natural size.