

9.
CRASPEDOPHORA ALBERTI, Elliot.

Prince Albert's Rifle-bird.

- Ptilorhis magnificus* (nec Vieill.), Gould, Birds of Australia, Suppl. pl. 51 (1851).
Ptilorhis magnifica, pt., Sclater, Journ. Proc. Linn. Soc. ii. p. 164 (1858).
Craspedophora magnifica (nec Vieill.), Gould, Handb. B. Austr. i. p. 595 (1865).—Gray, Hand-l. B. i. p. 165, no. 1273 (1869, pt.).
Ptilorhis alberti, Wall. Malay Arch. ii. pp. 417, 420 (1869: descript. nullá).—Elliot, Proc. Zool. Soc. 1871, p. 583 (ex Gray, MSS.).—Gray, Ann. Nat. Hist. (4) viii. p. 365 (1871).—Elliot, Monogr. Parad. pl. xxxiv. (1873).—Sharpe, Cat. Birds Brit. Mus. iii. p. 156 (1877).—Finsch, Vög. der Südsee, p. 37 (1884).
Craspedophora alberti, Masters, Proc. Linn. Soc. N. S. W. i. p. 37 (1877).—Ramsay, op. cit. ii. p. 191 (1878, pt.).—Salvad. Orn. Papuasias e delle Molucche, ii. p. 558, note (1881).—Ramsay, Tab. List Austr. B. p. 11 (1888).

This species is an inhabitant of the Cape York Peninsula in Northern Australia, and for many years it was considered to be identical with *Craspedophora magnifica* of New Guinea, though Dr. Sclater noticed certain differences between the two forms as long ago as 1858, and Gray had affixed the MS. name of *Ptilorhis alberti* to the specimens in the British Museum. Dr. A. R. Wallace first mentioned this name in his 'Malay Archipelago,' and Mr. D. G. Elliot gave a description of the species in 1871.

C. alberti is a smaller bird than *C. magnifica*, and is distinguished by the olivaceous tint which appears on the breast below the golden-green pectoral collar. In the New Guinea species the reddish-purple colour begins directly below the pectoral collar. The females of the two birds are also very distinct.

Macgillivray gives the following account of the species:—"This fine Rifle-bird inhabits the densest of the brushes in the neighbourhood of Cape York. The natives are familiar with it under the name of 'Yagoonya.' Its cry is very striking; upon being imitated by man, which may be easily done, the male bird will answer. It consists of a loud whistle resembling *whceoo* repeated three times and ending abruptly in a note like *who-o-o*. Both sexes utter the same note, but that of the male is much the loudest. The old males are generally seen about the tops of the higher trees, where, if undisturbed, they remain long enough to utter their loud cry two or three times at intervals of from two to five minutes. If a female be near, the male perches on a conspicuous dead twig in a crouching attitude, rapidly opening and closing his wings, the feathers of which, by their peculiar form and texture, produce a loud rustling noise, which, in the comparative stillness of these solitudes, may be heard at the distance of a hundred yards, and may be faintly imitated by moving the feathers of a dried skin. The full-plumaged males are much more shy than the females or immature birds.

"From the shyness of this Rifle-bird, it is difficult to catch more than a passing glimpse of it in the dense brushes which it inhabits. I once, however, saw a female running up the trunk of a tree like a Creeper, and its stomach was afterwards found to be filled with insects only, chiefly ants; while the stomach of a male shot about the same time contained merely a few small round berries, the fruit of a tall tree, the botanical name of which is unknown to me."

Dr. Otto Finsch, when in the Cape York Peninsula, procured specimens in the neighbourhood of Somerset, where he says that its peculiar cry was one of the characteristic sounds of the jungle. It was not rare, but excessively shy and difficult to collect. Dr. Finsch procured a bird in nestling plumage, and remarks that the males gain their adult plumage by a gradual change of colour in the feather without any moult, and that they breed in this half-and-half plumage, showing that it takes some time for the male to assume his full livery.

The following descriptions are copied from my third volume of the 'Catalogue of Birds':—

Adult male. General colour velvety black, appearing purple when held away from the light, with somewhat of a bluish-purple gloss on some of the feathers, this latter shade being especially distinct on the outer wing-coverts, which are otherwise like the back; quills blue-black, of a velvety texture, the inner secondaries glossed with purplish blue; tail velvety black, the two centre feathers metallic steel-green, the next one on each side also glossed with steel-green towards the base; crown of head and nape metallic steel-green with a