

## CALYPTORHYNCHUS FUNEREUS.

### Funereal Cockatoo.

*Psittacus funereus*, Shaw, Nat. Misc., pl. 186.—Kuhl, Consp. Psitt. in Nova Acta, etc., vol. x. p. 89.—Lath. Ind. Orn. Suppl., vol. i. p. xxii.

*Funereal Cockatoo*, Lath. Gen. Hist., vol. ii. p. 202.

*Banksian Cockatoo*, Lath. Gen. Syn. Suppl., vol. i. p. 91. C.—Shaw, Gen. Zool., vol. viii. p. 477.

*Calyptorhynchus funereus*, Vig. and Horsf. in Linn. Trans., vol. xv. p. 271.

*Plyctolophus funeralis*, Swains. Class. of Birds, vol. ii. p. 302.

*Wy-la*, Aborigines of the Upper Hunter in New South Wales.

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ALTHOUGH not the most powerful in its mandibles, the present bird is the largest species of the genus to which it belongs, its large wings and expansive tail being unequalled by those of any other member of the great family of *Psittacideæ* yet discovered. The true habitat of the *Calyptorhynchus funereus* is New South Wales, or that portion of the Australian continent forming its south-eastern division. Among other places, I observed it in the neighbourhood of Sydney, at Bong-bong, on Mosquito Island near the mouth of the River Hunter, and on the Liverpool range; and it may be said to be universally distributed over this part of the continent. The thick brushes clothing the mountain sides and bordering the coast-line, the trees of the plains and the more open country are equally frequented by it; at the same time it is nowhere very numerous, but is usually met with associated in small companies of from four to eight in number, except during the breeding season, when it is only to be seen in pairs. Its food is much varied; sometimes the great belts of Banksias are visited, and the seed-covers torn open for the sake of their contents; while at others it searches with avidity for the larvæ of the large caterpillars which are deposited in the wattles and gums. Its flight, as might be expected, is very heavy, flapping and laboured, but it sometimes dives about between the trees in a most rapid and extraordinary manner.

When busily engaged in scooping off the bark in search of its insect food, it may be approached very closely; and if one be shot, the remainder of the company will fly round for a short distance and perch on the neighbouring trees, until the whole are brought down, if you are desirous of so doing.

Its note is very singular,—a kind of whining call, which it is impossible to describe, but which somewhat resembles the syllables *Wy-la*, whence the native name.

The eggs, which are white and two in number, about one inch and five-eighths long by one inch and three-eighths broad, are deposited on the rotten wood in the hollow branch of a large gum.

Caley mentions that this bird has a habit of cutting off the smaller branches of the apple-trees (*Angophoræ*), apparently from no other than a mischievous motive.

The sexes are very nearly alike, and may be thus described:—

The general plumage brownish black, glossed with green, particularly on the head; feathers of the body, both above and beneath, narrowly margined with brown; ear-coverts dull wax-yellow; all but the two central tail-feathers crossed in the centre by a broad band, equal to half their length, of brimstone-yellow, thickly freckled with irregular zigzag markings of brownish black; the external web of the outer primary on each side, and the margin of the external web of the other banded feathers, brownish black; bill black in some and white in others, the latter being probably young birds; eyes blackish brown; feet mealy blackish brown; orbits in some black, in others pinkish red, and in others whitish.

The figure is about two-thirds of the natural size.