# CUCULUS CINERACEUS, *Vig. and Horsf.*

## Ash-coloured Cuckoo.

*Cuculus cineraceus*, Vig. and Horsf. in Linn. Trans., vol. xv. p. 298.
——— *incertus*, Ib. p. 299, young.
——— *variolosus*, Ib. p. 300, very young.
*Barred-tailed Cuckoo*, Lath. Gen. Hist., vol. iii. p. 310 ?
*Cuculus flabelliformis*, Lath. Ind. Orn. Supp., p. xxx. ?—Shaw, Gen. Zool., vol. ix. p. 96 ?
*Fan-tailed Cuckoo*, Lath. Gen. Syn. Supp., vol. ii. p. 138. pl. 126 ?—Ib. Gen. Hist., vol. iii. p. 305. pl. lvii. ?
*Du-laar*, Aborigines of the lowland districts of Western Australia.
*Lesser Cuckoo* of the Colonists.

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This is a migratory species, arriving in Van Diemen's Land in September, and after spending the summer months therein, departing to the northward in January. In the southern parts of the continent of Australia solitary individuals remain throughout the entire winter, as evidenced by my having observed it in South Australia in July: I have never seen individuals from the north coast; I therefore infer that its migratory movements are somewhat restricted; in all probability the 26th degree of latitude may be the extent of its range to the northward. During the summer months, its distribution over the southern portion of the continent may be said to be universal, but withal it is rather a solitary bird and loves to dwell in secluded situations, where but for its loud ringing call, which much resembles its aboriginal name, it would easily escape detection.

It flies rather heavily, and on alighting moves the tail up and down for some time; a similar movement of the tail also invariably precedes its taking flight.

Like the other species of Cuckoo, it deposits its single egg in the nest of some one or other of the smaller kinds of birds: it is of a perfectly oval form, of a flesh-white sprinkled all over with fine spots of purplish brown, nine or ten lines long by seven and a half lines broad.

The stomach is capacious, membranous, and lined with hairs; and the food consists of the larvæ of insects of various kinds.

The sexes are alike in plumage, but the female is a trifle smaller than her mate.

Head and all the upper surface dark slate-grey; wings brown, glossed with green; tail dark glossy greenish brown, each feather toothed on the edge with white, the extent of which gradually increases until on the lateral feathers they assume the form of irregular interrupted bars; on the edge of the shoulder a short narrow stripe of white; on the under surface of the wing an oblique band of white; chin grey; under surface ferruginous; bill black, except at the base of the lower mandible, where it is fleshy orange; irides dark brown; eyelash beautiful citron-yellow; feet yellowish olive.

The figures are of the size of life.