

MELITHREPTUS LUNULATUS.

Lunulated Honey-eater.

Certhia lunulata, Shaw, Gen. Zool., vol. viii. p. 224.

Le Fuscalbin, Vieill. Ois. dor., tom. ii. p. 95. pl. 61.

Red-eyed Honey-eater, Lath. Gen. Hist., vol. iv. p. 203. no. 65.

Meliphaga lunulata, Vig. & Horsf. in Linn. Trans., vol. xv. p. 315. —Jard. & Selb. Ill. Orn., vol. iii. pl. 134. fig. 2.

Black-crowned Honey-sucker, Lewin, Birds of New Holl., pl. 24.

Meliphaga atricapilla, Temm. Pl. Col. 335. fig. 1.

——— *torquata*, Swains. Zool. Ill., 1st Ser., pl. 116.

Hæmatops lunulatus, Gould in Syn. Birds of Australia, Part I.

Gymnophrys torquatus, Swains. Class. of Birds, vol. ii. p. 327.

Melithreptus lunulatus, G. R. Gray, List of Gen. of Birds, 2nd edit., p. 21.

THE Lunulated Honey-eater is very abundantly dispersed over the colonies of New South Wales and South Australia, where it inhabits almost every variety of situation, but gives a decided preference to the *Eucalypti* and *Angophoræ* trees, among the smaller branches of which it may be constantly seen actively engaged in searching for insects, which with the pollen of the flowers constitute its sole food. It is a stationary species, and breeds during the months of August and September; its beautiful, round, cup-shaped open nest is composed of the inner rind of the stringy bark or other allied gum-trees intermingled with wool and hair, warmly lined with opossums' fur, and is suspended by the rim to the small leafy twigs of the topmost branches of the *Eucalypti*. The eggs are two or three in number, of a pale buff, dotted all over, but particularly at the larger end, with distinct markings of rich reddish brown and chestnut-red, among which are a few clouded markings of bluish grey; their medium length is nine lines, and breadth six and a half lines.

Like the young of *M. chloropsis*, the young birds of this species breed some time before arriving at maturity; at all events I have found examples breeding with that brown colouring of the head and neck, which I believe to be characteristic of youth.

The sexes are alike in plumage, but the female is somewhat smaller than the male.

Upper surface greenish olive; head and chin black; crescent-shaped mark at the occiput and all the under surface white; wings and tail brown, the apical half of the external webs of the primaries narrowly edged with grey; basal half of the external webs of the primaries, the outer webs of the secondaries and the tail-feathers washed with greenish olive; naked space above the eye scarlet; feet olive; irides very dark brown; bill blackish brown.

The Plate represents a male and a female of the natural size.