MELIPHAGA LONGIROSTRIS, *Gould.*

Long-billed Honey-eater.

Meliphaga longirostris, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., Sept. 22, 1846.
Baň-dene, Aborigines of the lowland districts of Western Australia.
Yellow-winged Honey-eater of the Colonists.

Although the *Meliphaga longirostris* and *Meliphaga Novæ-Hollandiæ* are very similar, they will on comparison prove to be specifically distinct; they are, in fact, beautiful representatives of each other on the opposite sides of the great Australian continent, the *M. longirostris* inhabiting the western, and the *M. Novæ-Hollandiæ* being spread over the eastern portion of the country, and it would be a matter of some interest to know at what degree of longitude the two species inosculate: I have traced the latter as far to the westward as Port Lincoln, while, so far as is known, the range of the former does not extend beyond the Swan River settlement. Several points of difference are found to exist in the two species, the most material of which are in the shape and length of the bill, and in the size of the white mark on the fore-part of the cheeks; the *M. longirostris,* as its name implies, has the bill much more lengthened and comparatively stouter than that of its near ally, and it moreover has the white patch on the face much less defined, and blended to a greater extent with the neighbouring black colouring; in the size of the body the two species are very much alike.

The *M. longirostris* inhabits all those districts of the Swan River settlement in which there are Banksias, a group of trees which it is evidently formed to inhabit, and the flowers of which yield it a constant supply of food, both of insects and honey. Like the other species of the group, it is very pugnacious, and when fighting utters a rapidly repeated chirrup, very much resembling that of the European Sparrow.

Its flight, which is varied, is sometimes extremely rapid.

It is a very early breeder, commencing in the first days of July and continuing as late as the last week in November. The nest consists of small sticks and fibrous roots, lined with Zamia wool or the buds of flowers; and is built in a variety of situations, sometimes in small thinly-branched trees, at about twelve feet from the ground; at others in small clumps of grass, only a few inches above the ground: in the York district it is frequently constructed among the bulrushes; but the most usual situation is in a scrubby bush surrounded with grass, at an altitude of about two or three feet; the eggs are ordinarily two in number, but towards the latter end of the breeding-season three are often found; their ground-colour is a delicate buff, with the larger end clouded with reddish buff, and thickly spotted and blotched with chestnut-brown and chestnut-red arranged in the form of a zone; their medium length is nine lines, and breadth seven lines.

The sexes are alike in colouring, but the female is about one-fifth smaller than her mate in all their admeasurements.

Top of the head and cheeks black, with minute white feathers on the forehead round the base of the upper mandible; a superciliary stripe, a moustache at the base of the lower mandible, and a small tuft of feathers immediately behind the ear-coverts white; feathers on the throat white and bristle-like; upper surface brownish black, becoming browner on the rump; wings brownish black, the outer edges of the quills margined at the base with beautiful wax-yellow, and faintly margined with white towards the extremities; tail brownish black, margined externally at the base with wax-yellow, and all but the two centre feathers with a large oval spot of white on the inner web at the tip; surface white, broadly striped with black, the black predominating on the breast and the white on the abdomen; irides white; bill and feet black.

The figures are of the natural size.