POMATORHINUS SUPERCILIOSUS, *Vig. and Horsf.*

White-eyebrowed Pomatorhinus.

Pomatorhinus superciliosus, Vig. and Horsf. in Linn. Trans., vol. xv. p. 330.—Capt. Sturt's Expeditions to South Australia, vol. ii. p. 219.

Gnow-un, Aborigines of the mountain districts of Western Australia.

This species ranges over the whole of the southern portion of the continent of Australia, where it must be regarded as a bird peculiar to the interior, rather than as an inhabitant of the districts near the coast. It is common on the Liverpool Plains in New South Wales, and it was particularly noticed by my friend Captain Sturt during his expedition to the Darling. I myself encountered it near the bend of the river Murray, and it has also been found in the York district of Western Australia, but I have never heard of its having been seen either in the north or north-western parts of the country. It usually moves about in small troops of from six to ten in number, and is without exception the most restless, noisy, querulous bird I ever encountered. Its mode of progression among the branches of the trees is no less singular than is its voice different from that of other birds; it runs up and down the branches of the smaller trees with great rapidity and with the tail very much spread and raised above the level of the back. It usually feeds upon the ground under the Banksias and other low trees, but upon the least intrusion flits on to the lowest branch, and by a running or leaping motion quickly ascends to the highest, when it flies off to the next tree, uttering at the same time a jarring, chattering and discordant jumble of notes, which are sometimes preceded by a rapidly repeated, shrill, piping whistle.

When a troop are engaged in ascending the branches, which they usually do in line, they have a singular habit of suddenly assembling in a cluster, spreading their tails and wings, and puffing out their plumage until they resemble a complete ball of feathers.

The breeding-season commences in September and continues during the three following months. The nest is a large domed structure of dried sticks, with an entrance in the side, which is hidden from view by the sticks of the upper part of the nest being made to project over it for four or five inches like the thatch of a shed; the inside is generally lined with the soft parts of flowers and the dust of rotten wood, but occasionally with feathers. In Western Australia the nest is usually constructed in a dead jam-tree, the branches of which are drawn together at the top like a broom. It often happens that three or four pairs of birds build their nests in the same small clump of trees. The eggs are very like those of *P. temporalis*, the ground colour being olive-grey clouded with purplish brown, and streaked with similar hair-like lines of black; they are usually four in number, eleven and a half lines long by eight lines broad.

The sexes as well as the young so closely resemble each other, that they can only be distinguished by the aid of dissection.

Lores, space surrounding the eye and the ear-coverts dark silky brown; a broad line of white, bounded above and beneath with a narrow one of dark brown, commences at the base of the upper mandible, passes over the eye and continues to the occiput; crown of the head and all the upper surface, flanks and under tail-coverts olive-brown, passing into a purer and deeper brown on the primaries; tail dark brown, crossed by very indistinct bars of a darker colour, the five lateral feathers on each side tipped with white; chin, throat and chest white; bill blackish brown, the lower part of the under mandible greyish white; irides in the adult straw-yellow, in the young brown; feet blackish brown.

The figures are of the natural size.