

ESTRELDA RUFICAUDA, *Gould.*

Red-tailed Finch.

Amadina ruficauda, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., Part IV. p. 106; and in Syn. Birds of Australia, Part I.

I OBSERVED this beautiful Finch rather thinly dispersed on the sides of the river Namoi, particularly along the sloping banks covered with herbage, where it appeared to be feeding upon such grasses and other annuals as afforded seeds congenial to its taste; I also frequently observed it among the rushes which grow in the beds of mud along the sides of the water; and this, I regret to say, is all the information I have to communicate respecting it. It is a species seldom seen in collections, which may be attributed to the circumstance of its being strictly confined to the interior, a part of the country where collections are much less frequently formed than near the coast. The only parts of Australia whence I have received or in which I have killed it, are the Liverpool Plains, and the banks of the rivers Mokai and Namoi.

The adult male and female are scarcely to be distinguished by outward appearance; the female is, however, a trifle less than her mate in size. The young, on the contrary, present a very different appearance; the whole of their plumage being of a uniform buffy brown; eye yellowish olive surrounded by a narrow olive lash; bill reddish brown; legs brownish yellow.

Face and cheeks scarlet, the latter covered with narrow feathers, which are finely spotted with white at the tip; upper surface and wings olive-brown; upper tail-coverts and tail deep crimson-brown, the former having a large spot of pinkish white near the tip of each feather; throat, chest and flanks delicate olive-grey, each feather having a large oval white spot transversely disposed near the tip; centre of the abdomen and under tail-coverts dirty yellowish white; bill scarlet; irides orange slightly inclining to hazel, surrounded by a rather broad, naked, flesh-coloured lash; legs and feet rather darker than fine lemon-yellow.

The figures are of the natural size.