

## ESTRElda OCULEA.

### Red-eared Finch.

*Fringilla oculoa*, Quoy et Gaim. Voy. de l'Astrolabe, Zool., Part I. p. 211 ; Ois., pl. 18. fig. 2.  
*Jeë-ree*, Aborigines of the lowland, and  
*Dweë-den-ngool-gnäh-neer*, Aborigines of the mountain districts of Western Australia.  
*Native Sparrow*, Colonists of Swan River.

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THIS species is abundant in many parts of the colony of Swan River on the western coast, but has not as yet been discovered elsewhere. Like its near ally the *Estrellda bella* it inhabits open grassy glades studded with thickets, particularly in moist swampy districts and along the borders of lakes and rivers. Its food consists of small grass-seeds procured among the herbage on the ground. It is not a migratory species, and its place of resort appears to be merely changed when, the supply of food being exhausted, it becomes necessary to seek it elsewhere. Mr. Gilbert states that "it is a solitary species and is generally found in the most retired spots in the thickets, where its mournful, slowly drawn-out note only serves to add to the loneliness of the place. Its powers of flight, although sometimes rapid, would seem to be feeble, as they are merely employed to remove it from tree to tree. The natives of the mountain districts of Western Australia have a tradition that the first bird of this species speared a dog and drank its blood, and thus obtained its red bill."

The sexes are so much alike that dissection is necessary to distinguish the male from the female. The beautiful patch of scarlet feathers behind the eye, together with the rich colouring of the bill, assists very materially in relieving the more sombre but delicate markings of the remainder of the body.

Lores, line over the bill and a narrow circle surrounding the eye black ; behind the eye a small patch of shining scarlet ; all the upper surface olive-brown, crossed by numerous fine irregular crescent-shaped bands of black, which are broadest and most conspicuous on the lower part of the back ; wings and tail similarly marked, but with the black bands still broader and more distinct ; rump and the margins of the base of the central tail-feathers shining scarlet ; throat and breast light brown, crossed by numerous crescent-shaped bands of black ; abdomen and under surface black, with a large spot of white near the tip of each feather ; irides red ; bill bright vermilion, the base of the upper mandible edged with pearl-grey ; eyelash greenish blue ; legs yellowish grey.

The figures are of the natural size.