

CALAMANTHUS FULIGINOSUS.

Striated Reed-Lark.

Anthus fuliginosus, Vig. and Horsf. in Linn. Trans., vol. xv. p. 230.

Praticola fuliginosa, G. R. Gray, List of Gen. of Birds, 2nd Edit., p. 27.

THIS species is very generally dispersed over Van Diemen's Land, where it frequents open forests and sandy land covered with scrub and dwarf shrub-like trees. It carries its tail erect, like the *Mahuri*, but differs from the members of that group in moving that organ in a lateral direction whenever it perches, and at the termination of a succession of hops on the ground, over which it passes with great celerity, depending at all times for safety more on this power than on that of flight. It eludes pursuit by running through a bush to the opposite side, and hopping off to another beyond, which it does quite unseen unless closely watched. It builds a dome-shaped nest, which is placed on the ground, and frequently so hidden by the surrounding grass as to be with great difficulty discovered; a small narrow avenue of a yard in length, like the run of a mouse, being frequently resorted to by the bird, expressly, as one would suppose, to avoid detection. The eggs are three or four in number, rather large and somewhat round in form, of a reddish wood-brown, obscurely clouded with markings of reddish brown, the larger end of the eggs being the darkest; their medium length is ten lines and a half, and breadth eight lines and a half.

The nest is formed of dried grasses and leaves, and is warmly lined with feathers. The breeding-season commences in September and lasts until January.

This species emits so strong an odour, that pointers and other game-dogs stand to it as they do to a quail, and that too at a considerable distance. It possesses a clear and pretty song, which it frequently pours forth while sitting on a bare twig, or the summit of a low bush or shrub among the thickets, to a part of which it dives on the least alarm.

The sexes are precisely similar in colour, and nearly so in size.

All the upper surface olive, with a broad mark of sooty black down the centre of each feather; wings sooty black, narrowly margined with olive; tail olive, all but the two centre feathers crossed near the tip by a broad band of sooty black; line over the eye white; throat greyish white; breast, abdomen and flanks deep buff, each feather of the throat, breast and flanks with a narrow line of sooty black down the centre; irides light sandy buff; bill and feet brownish flesh-colour.

The Plate represents two birds of the natural size; the beautiful rush on which they are figured is very abundant in the immediate vicinity of Hobart Town..