

SERICORNIS FRONTALIS.

White-fronted Sericornis.

Acanthiza frontalis, Vig. and Horsf. in Linn. Trans., vol. xv. p. 226.—Gould, Syn. Birds of Australia, Part IV.
Sericornis parvulus, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., Part V. p. 134; and in Syn. Birds of Australia, Part IV. female.

THIS little bird inhabits the brushes, as well as all humid situations clothed with thick underwood, such as the sides of creeks, gullies, &c. The locality in which it is most abundant is the south-eastern part of Australia, where it is very numerous in all the dense forests which stretch along the coast between Sydney and Moreton Bay, and I believe I may safely state that its range does not extend westward of the 134th degree of East longitude, beyond which a nearly-allied species is found; the species, therefore, inosculate about Spencer's and St. Vincent's Gulfs in South Australia. Like the other members of the genus this bird generally hops about the bottoms of the brushes, selecting in preference the most damp and humid parts, where rotten wood and moss-covered stones afford some peculiar species of insect food, upon which it is destined to live. All the members of this genus are very Wren-like in their habits, actions, the kind of food they select, and in the structure of their nest. The present is one of the smallest yet discovered, and was always a favourite little bird with me, for in the inmost recesses of the forest, where all nature was hushed to quietude, and silence reigned supreme, the presence of the little bird figured in the accompanying Plate, hopping about from stone to stone in search of its insect food, now and then broke the monotony of the scene with its inward warbling strain, which however is so feeble, that it can only be heard when uttered close at hand.

The sexes present so little difference in colour that they cannot be distinguished with certainty; the female is somewhat the smaller. The young birds differ from the adult in having a few faint spots on the throat, but which are entirely lost as they advance in age.

The nest of this species, which, as I have before remarked, is very like that of the European Wren (*Troglodytes Europæus*), is made of leaves, moss and fibrous roots, and lined with feathers; its site is various, being sometimes under the shelving of a bank, and at others at the foot of a tuft of grass or herbage, beneath a stone, &c.; it is quite spherical in form, with a small neatly-made hole for an entrance. The breeding-season includes August, and the three or four following months, during which period two or three broods are usually reared. The eggs, which are generally three in number, are of a dull flesh-white, freckled and streaked with purplish brown, particularly at the larger end; their medium length is ten lines and breadth seven and a half lines.

Centre of the forehead, lores, and a line beneath the eye black; over the eye a line of greyish white; crown of the head, all the upper surface, wings and tail olive-brown; wing-coverts tipped with white; spurious wing blackish brown; throat white, striated with black; centre of the chest and abdomen citron-yellow; flanks olive-brown; bill blackish brown; feet yellowish white.

The Plate represents the male and female of the natural size. The very pretty plant was gathered in the brushes of Illawarra, where the birds are tolerably numerous.