

HYLACOLA CAUTA, *Gould.*

Cautious Wren.

Hylacola cauta, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., Part X. p. 135.

THE only locality in which I have seen this species is the great scrub clothing the banks of the river Murray in South Australia, where it was not uncommon, but so excessively shy that I obtained a single specimen only during my stay in the district. Its timidity being so great, and its natural habitat the more dense parts of the scrub, it is a species which must for a long time be exceedingly scarce in our collections. The individual killed was fired at within a few yards of where I stood, it being impossible to sight it at a greater distance.

With the exception of its being even more shy, its whole habits and economy appeared to be very similar to those of the preceding species (*H. pyrrhopygia*). It carries its tail perfectly erect, and hops over the ground and threads the bushes with the greatest alacrity; generally keeping among the more dense parts of the low bushes, and only exposing itself on the outermost twigs when desirous of pouring forth its song, which is sweet and harmonious, and by which its presence is more frequently detected than by any other means.

I could neither find the nest and eggs myself nor obtain any information respecting them; but I have no doubt that when discovered the nest will be found to be of a domed form, with a small hole for an entrance, and the eggs very similar to those of the *Maluri*. In size the *H. cauta* is rather less than the *H. pyrrhopygia*, has the markings of the under surface much bolder, and the chestnut-coloured mark on the rump of a much deeper tint.

Line from the base of the upper mandible along the side of the face and over the eye white; above this a narrow line of black; crown of the head and all the upper surface brown; upper and under tail-coverts bright chestnut; wing-coverts brown, edged with brownish white; primaries brown, with the outer web white at the base, forming a conspicuous spot in the centre of the wing; tail blackish brown, tipped with white; throat striated with black and white, produced by each feather being black down the centre and fringed with white; flanks mottled brown and white; abdomen white; bill dark brown; irides buffy white; feet flesh-brown.

The figures are of the natural size.