

HYLACOLA PYRRHOPYGIA.

Red-rumped Wren.

Acanthiza pyrrhopygia, Vig. and Horsf. in Linn. Trans., vol. xv. p. 227.

IN some parts of its economy this bird closely resembles the *Maluri*, particularly in the upright position in which it carries its tail, in the quick hopping motion with which it passes over the surface of the ground, and the agility with which it trips along the horizontal branches of the fallen trees. The situations most favourable to its habits are open sterile spots, here and there studded with clumps of brushes or dense herbage. The beds and sides of creeks, as well as the crowns of stony hills, wherever they are scrubby, are also situations favourable to its habits. I have always observed it either in pairs or in small companies, probably the brood of a single pair, whose young accompany them throughout the autumn like the *Maluri*.

Its song, which is by no means disagreeable, is poured forth while the bird is perched upon some conspicuous part of a bush, or some little spray among the branches of the large fallen trees, where it loves to dwell, as on the approach of an intruder it can readily and effectually secrete itself among the high grass and herbage which have grown up amidst the branches. The facility with which it creeps among or threads these little thickets is surprising. It rarely flies, but depends for progression more upon the rapidity with which it can pass over the ground, than upon the feeble powers of its small rounded wing.

This species may be regarded as a bird whose natural habitat is the interior rather than the country near the coast; for although it does occur in some districts of New South Wales on the sea-side of the dividing range, it is much more abundant on the northern or interior side in all situations favourable to its existence. I found it on the low hills to the north of the Liverpool Plains, as well as in most parts of South Australia; I believe it is a stationary bird, as it appeared to be equally numerous in summer and winter.

Of its nidification I have nothing to communicate, its nest not having been discovered either by myself or by any of my party.

Its food consists of insects of various kinds, and like many insectivorous birds, I believe it seldom if ever drinks, not even during the greatest droughts.

The sexes present no visible difference in their plumage.

Crown of the head, all the upper surface, wings and tail brown; lower part of the rump and upper tail-coverts chestnut-red; all but the two centre tail-feathers crossed near the tip with a broad band of black, beyond which the tips are greyish white; line over the eye and all the under surface greyish white, each feather of the latter with a line of black down the centre, except on the middle of the abdomen; bill dark brown; irides buffy white; legs flesh-brown.

The figures are of the natural size.