

SPHENŒACUS GALACTOTES.

Tawny Sphenœacus.

Malurus galactotes, Temm. Pl. Col., 65.

Megalurus galactotes, Vig. and Horsf. in Linn. Trans., vol. xv. p. 228.

THIS is a scarce species in New South Wales, the few individuals I have seen being from the grassy districts of the Liverpool Plains; in all probability, however, it ranges along the eastern and over the whole of the northern portion of Australia. Mr. Gilbert's notes inform me that he found it "tolerably abundant on the islands at the head of Van Diemen's Gulf, where it inhabits the long grass or rushes growing in or adjacent to the swamps; it is so shy that it is very rarely seen; when closely hunted it takes wing, but flying appears to be a difficult action at all times; at least I have never seen it sustain a flight of more than a hundred yards at the utmost, and even in that short distance it seemed ready to sink into the grass with fatigue. The only note I have heard it emit is a harsh and rapidly repeated *chutch*. The stomachs of those I dissected were extremely muscular, and contained the remains of insects of various kinds and what appeared to be vegetable fibres."

General plumage pale brown, deepening into rufous on the crown of the head and fading into dull white on the throat and centre of the abdomen; all the feathers of the upper surface with blackish brown centres; secondaries blackish brown, broadly margined with pale brown; tail pale brown, crossed with indistinct bars of a darker tint; irides light brown; upper mandible olive-brown, the cutting edges light yellowish white; lower mandible bluish white; tarsi and feet light reddish flesh-colour.

The figures are of the natural size.