

MALURUS ELEGANS, *Gould.*

Graceful Wren.

Malurus elegans, Gould, Birds of Australia, Part I. Aug. 1837.

Djur-jeel-ya, Aborigines of the lowland districts of Western Australia.

THIS is not only the largest species of the genus yet discovered, but may be considered as one of the most beautiful and elegant of its race: the delicate verditer-blue of the centre of the back, and the larger size and more spatulate form of its tail-feathers, at once distinguish it from *Malurus Lamberti*, the species to which it is most nearly allied. It is an inhabitant of the western coast of Australia; all the specimens I possess were collected at Swan River, where it is tolerably abundant. Mr. Gilbert states, that although in its economy it very closely resembles *M. splendens*, it nevertheless differs from that species in the nature of the localities it frequents, which are usually swampy situations, while *M. splendens* is more generally spread over all parts of the country. It is also said to differ slightly in its song, in commencing with one distinct note and then singing precisely like the former.

The nest, which is neither characterized by neatness nor compactness, is dome-shaped, with a hole in the side for an entrance, and is generally formed of the thin paper-like bark of the Tea-tree (*Melaleuca*), and lined with feathers: it is also usually suspended to the foliage of this tree, and occasionally to that of other shrubs which grow in its favourite localities. The eggs are four in number, of a delicate flesh-white freckled with spots of reddish brown, which are much thicker at the larger end; they are about eight lines long and six lines broad. The breeding-season commences in September and continues during the three following months.

The food consists of insects.

The males are subject to the same law relative to the seasonal change of plumage as the *Malurus cyaneus*, and the other members of the group.

The male has the forehead, ear-coverts, sides of the face and occiput rich verditer-blue; centre of the back light verditer-blue; scapularies chestnut; throat, chest, back of the neck and rump deep velvety black, the throat in certain lights tinged with blue; wings brown; abdomen and under tail-coverts buffy white; tail dull bluish-green, crossed by numerous indistinct bars, seen only in some positions, and very slightly tipped with white; bill black; eyes and feet blackish brown.

The female has all the upper surface and wings brown; throat and under surface buff-white; tail as in the male, but more dull, and devoid of the white at the extremity of the feathers; bill dull reddish brown, lighter beneath; space between the bill and eyes reddish brown; legs brown.

The figures are of the natural size, on the *Isopogon alternatus*.