

ERYTHRODRYAS RHODINOASTER.

Pink-breasted Wood-Robin.

Saxicola rhodinogaster, Drap. Ann. Gén. des Sci. Phys. de Bruxelles.

Muscicapa Lathamii, Vig. in Zool. Journ., vol. i. p. 410. pl. 13.—Jard. and Selb. Ill. Orn., vol. i. pl. 8.

Petroica rhodinogaster, Jard. and Selb. Ill. Orn. Add., vol. ii.

Erythrodryas rhodinogaster, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., August 9, 1842.

Pink-breasted Robin, Colonists of New South Wales.

THE great stronghold of this species is Van Diemen's Land, particularly the western parts of the island. I feel assured that it is rarely seen on the main land of Australia, from the circumstance of the total absence of skins in collections from those parts. In one instance only did I meet with it on the continent, and that was in a deep ravine under Mount Lofty in South Australia; I shot the specimen, which on dissection proved to be a young male.

In habits and disposition this and the following species are very dissimilar to the Red-breasted Robins (*Petroica*), being much less spirited in all their actions. They prefer the most secluded and remote parts of the forest, particularly the bottoms of deep gullies, the seclusion of which is seldom broken by the voice or presence of any living being, and where animal life is almost confined to aphides and other minute insects, upon which they exist. There are times, however, especially in winter, when they leave these quiet retreats and even enter the gardens of the settlers; but this is of so rare occurrence, that few persons can have had opportunities of observing this bird in a state of nature, except those who have visited the localities above described. I shot several specimens in the gullies under Mount Wellington in Van Diemen's Land; and on visiting, in company with the Rev. T. J. Ewing, the enchanting spot selected by my ever-esteemed friend Lady Franklin as a site for a Botanic Garden, I observed it to be tolerably numerous there. Through the kindness of Ronald C. Gunn, Esq., who liberally placed the whole of his collection at my disposal, I was enabled to obtain examples of many species, in every stage from youth to maturity; among others, of the present bird, which Mr. Gunn informed me had been collected on the Hampshire Hills, a locality where it is very abundant.

The food of the Pink-breasted Wood-Robin consists solely of insects, which it procures by darting out in pursuit of them while passing by in the air, and also on the ground.

It exhibits the peculiar actions and manners of the Robins by sitting about on stumps and stones at the bottom of the gullies, presenting its full breast like the Robin of Europe.

Its nest is formed of narrow strips of soft bark, soft fibres of decaying wood, and fine fibrous roots matted and woven together with vegetable fibres, and old black nests of spiders. The eggs are three in number, smaller but very similar to those of *Petroica multicolor*; of a greenish white thickly sprinkled with light chestnut and purplish brown; eight lines and a half long, by six lines and a half broad.

Like the true *Petroicas*, the sexes present considerable differences in their colouring.

The male has the head, neck, throat and back sooty black; a small spot of white in the centre of the forehead; wings brownish black; a few of the primaries and secondaries with an oblong spot of reddish brown on the outer web near the base and another near the tip, forming two small oblique bands when the wing is spread; breast and abdomen rose-pink, passing into white on the vent and under tail-coverts; irides and bill black; feet black, with the soles orange.

The female has an indication of the white spot on the forehead; all the upper surface brown; wings and tail brown, with the markings on the primaries and secondaries larger and of a more buffy colour than in the male; throat brownish buff; chest and abdomen brownish grey; vent and under tail-coverts buff.

The young male during the first autumn closely resembles the female; for the first two months after they have left the nest, they have the centre of each feather striated with buff.

The Plate represents the male and female of the natural size.