

CRACTICUS PICATUS.

Pied Crow Shrike.

Cracticus picatus, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., February 22, 1848.

Ka-ra-a-ra, Aborigines of Port Essington.

Magpie, of the Colonists.

THIS is in every respect a miniature representative of the *Cracticus nigrogularis* of New South Wales ; it must, however, be regarded as a distinct species ; its much more diminutive size will warrant such a conclusion from every ornithologist who compares them.

It was found at Port Essington by Mr. Gilbert, where it exists in considerable abundance. He states that it is an extremely shy and wary bird, inhabiting the most secluded parts of the forest, and is as frequently seen searching for its food on the ground as among the topmost branches of the highest trees. In its habits, manners, mode of flight, and in its loud, discordant, organ-pipe-like voice, it closely resembles the other members of the genus. It is usually seen in pairs, or in small families of four or five. Its nest is built of sticks in the upright fork of a thickly-foliaged tree, at about thirty or forty feet from the ground.

The stomach is muscular, and the food consists of insects of various kinds, but principally of coleoptera.

The sexes are not to be distinguished by any markings in the plumage, but the young are dressed in a brown colouring like those of the other members of the genus.

Collar at the back of the neck, centre and edge of the wing, rump, abdomen, under tail-coverts and tips of all but the centre tail-feathers white, remainder of the plumage deep black ; irides dark reddish brown ; bill ash-grey, the tip black ; legs and feet dark greenish grey.

The Plate represents the two sexes of the natural size.