

GYMNORHINA LEUCONOTA, *Gould.*

White-backed Crow-Shrike.

Barita Tibicen, Quoy et Gaim. Voy. de la Coq., pl. 20.—Less. Traité d'Orn., p. 345.

Gooŕe-bat, Aborigines of the lowland districts of Western Australia.

THIS fine species of *Gymnorhina*, which has been confounded by the French writers with the *G. Tibicen*, inhabits South Australia, and extends its range as far to the eastward as the colony of New South Wales. I hear that it is tolerably abundant at Port Philip, and that it is sometimes seen on the plains near Yass. For my own part I have never met with it in New South Wales, but observed it to be rather abundant in South Australia. In the extreme shyness of its disposition it presents a remarkable contrast to the *G. Tibicen*; it was indeed so wary and so difficult to approach, that it required the utmost ingenuity to obtain a sufficient number of specimens necessary for my purpose. Plain and open hilly parts of the country are the localities it prefers, where it dwells much on the ground, feeding upon locusts and other insects. In size it is fully as large as any species of the genus yet discovered; it runs over the ground with great facility, and the long flights it frequently takes across the plains from one belt of trees to another, indicated greater powers of flight than is possessed by its near allies; in other parts of its economy it so nearly resembles the *G. Tibicen*, that it would be useless to repeat a description of them here. The same single note and early carol of small companies perched on some leafless branch of a *Eucalyptus* appears characteristic of all the members of the genus.

It breeds in September and October, constructing a nest of dried sticks in an upright fork of a gum- or mahogany-tree. The eggs are three in number, very long in form, and of a dull bluish white, in some instances tinged with red, marked with large bold blotches or zigzag streakings of brownish red or light chestnut; the average length of the eggs is one inch and eight lines, and breadth one inch and one line. Occasionally eggs are met with which are spotted with black or umber-brown.

The sexes when fully adult present no other outward difference than the larger size of the female. Immature birds of both sexes have the whole of the back clouded with grey, and the bill of a less pure ash-colour.

Back of the neck, back, upper and under coverts of the wings, basal portion of the spurious wing, upper and under tail-coverts, and base of the tail-feathers white; remainder of the plumage and the shafts of the white portion of the tail-feathers glossy black; irides light hazel; bill bluish lilac-purple, passing into black at the tip; legs and feet blackish grey.

The Plate represents the two sexes rather less than the size of life.