

PARDALOTUS PUNCTATUS, Temm.

Spotted Pardalote.

Pardalotus punctatus, Temm., Man., Part I. p. lxx.—Id. Pl. Col., 78.—Vieill. Gal. des Ois., tom. i. pl. 73.—Vig. and Horsf. in Linn. Trans., vol. xv. p. 237.—Gould, Syn. Birds of Australia, Part II.

Pipra punctata, Lath. Ind. Orn., Supp., p. lvi. No. 1.—Shaw, Nat. Misc., p. 111.—Id. Zool., vol. x. p. 30.

Speckled Manikin, Lath. Gen. Syn. Supp., vol. ii. p. 253.—Id. Gen. Hist., vol. vii. p. 238.

Wè-dup-wè-dup, Aborigines of the lowland districts of Western Australia.

Diamond Bird, Colonists of New South Wales.

No species of the genus to which this bird belongs is more widely and generally distributed than the Spotted Pardalote; it inhabits the whole of the southern parts of the Australian continent from the western to the eastern extremities of the country, and is very common in Van Diemen's Land. It is nearly always engaged in searching for insects among the foliage, both of trees of the highest growth and of the lowest shrubs; it frequents gardens and enclosures as well as the open forest; and is exceedingly active in its actions, clinging about in every variety of position both above and beneath the leaves with equal facility.

With regard to the nidification of this species, it is a singular circumstance, that in the choice of situation for the reception of its nest, it differs from every other known member of the genus; for while they always place their nests in the holes of trees, this species descends to the ground, and availing itself of any little shelving bank that occurs in its vicinity, excavates a hole just large enough to admit of the passage of its body, in a nearly horizontal direction to the depth of two or three feet, at the end of which a chamber is formed in which the nest is deposited. The nest itself is a neat and beautifully built structure, formed of strips of the inner bark of the *Eucalypti*, and lined with finer strips of the same or similar materials; it is of a spherical contour, about four inches in diameter, with a small hole in the side for an entrance. The chamber is generally somewhat higher than the mouth of the hole, by which means the risk of its being inundated upon the occurrence of rain is obviated. I have been fortunate enough to discover many of the nests of this species, but they are most difficult to detect, and are only to be found by watching for the egress or ingress of the parent birds from or into its hole or entrance, which is frequently formed in a part of the bank overhung with herbage, or beneath the overhanging roots of a tree. How so neat a structure as is the nest of the Spotted Pardalote, should be constructed at the end of a hole where no light can possibly enter is beyond our comprehension, and is one of those wonderful results of instinct so often presented to our notice in the history of the animal creation, without our being in any way able to account for them. The present species rears two broods in the course of the year, the eggs upon each occasion being four or five in number, rather round in form, of a beautiful polished fleshy white, seven and a half lines long by six and a half lines broad.

Its voice is a rather harsh piping note of two syllables often repeated.

The male has the crown of the head, wings, and tail black, each feather having a round spot of white near the tip; a stripe of white commences at the nostrils and passes over the eye; ear-coverts and sides of the neck grey; feathers of the back grey at the base, succeeded by a triangular-shaped spot of fawn-colour, and edged with black; rump rufous brown; upper tail-coverts crimson; throat, chest, and under tail-coverts yellow; abdomen and flanks tawny; irides dark brown; bill brownish black; feet brown.

The female may be distinguished by the less strongly contrasted tints of her colouring, and by the absence of the bright yellow on the throat.

The figures represent the two sexes of the natural size.