

CAPRIMULGUS MACRURUS, *Horsf.*

Large-tailed Goatsucker.

Caprimulgus macrurus, Horsf. in Linn. Trans., vol. xiii. p. 142.

THIS, the only true *Caprimulgus* known to inhabit Australia, is I believe identical with the *C. macrurus* of Dr. Horsfield, whose specimens were procured in Java, while those I possess were obtained at Port Essington, where the bird is moderately plentiful; hence it would appear that it has an unusually wide range of habitat. It inhabits the open parts of the forest and is strictly nocturnal; it mostly rests on the ground on the shady side of a large tree close to the roots, and if disturbed several times in succession takes to the branch of one of the largest trees. I have never seen the eggs of this species, but I possess a young bird apparently only a few days old, which Mr. Gilbert found lying under a shrubby tree, without any nest or even a blade of grass near it; the little creature was so similar in colour to that of the ground upon which it was lying, that it was with difficulty detected, and Mr. Gilbert was only induced to search for it from the very peculiar manner in which the old bird rose, the reluctance it evinced to leave the spot, and its hovering over the place it had risen from, instead of flying off to the distance of nearly a hundred yards, as it usually does.

The sexes are distinguished from each other by the greater extent of the white mark on the primaries and outer tail-feathers; in other parts of the plumage and in size there is no difference.

Its food consists of moths, flies and coleopterous insects, which are taken during flight.

Head brownish grey, very minutely freckled with black; the feathers down the middle of the head and occiput with a large broad stripe of black down the centre; lores, space surrounding the eyes and ear-coverts reddish brown; on each side of the neck a broad stripe of rich buff barred with black; a narrow line of white passes below the angle of the mouth; chin brown; across the throat a band of white bounded below by black, the extremities of the white feathers being of that hue; centre of the back dark brown, freckled with black and buff; shoulders blackish brown; wing-coverts freckled grey, buff and black, each with a large spot of buff at the tip; primaries and secondaries blackish brown, the former crossed at their base, and the latter throughout their entire length, with reddish buff; the second and third primaries crossed near their base with a broad band of white, stained with buff on the outer margin; the first primary with a spot of white only on the margin of the inner web; the first three primaries freckled at their tips, and the remainder for the entire length of their inner webs with brownish grey; scapularies freckled grey and brown, with a large patch of deep dull black on their outer webs, margined externally with buff; rump freckled with dark brown and grey, and with an interrupted line of darker brown down the centre of each feather; two centre tail-feathers minutely and coarsely freckled with very dark brown; the next on each side very dark brown, crossed by irregular bands of freckled brownish grey and black; the next on each side similar, but the bands narrower and less conspicuous; the two outer ones on each side very dark brown for three parts of the length, the apical portion being white, stained with freckled buff and black on the outer webs; the basal or dark portion crossed by narrow indistinct and irregular bars of deep buff; breast freckled buff, grey and brown, some of the feathers in the centre of the breast largely tipped with buff; abdomen and under tail-coverts deep buff, crossed by narrow regular bands of dark brown; irides blackish brown; bill black; feet and claws reddish brown.

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