

EUROSTOPODUS GUTTATUS.

Spotted Goat-sucker.

Caprimulgus guttatus, Vig. and Horsf. in Linn. Trans., vol. xv. p. 192.

Kál-ga, Aborigines of the lowland districts of Western Australia.

Goatsucker, of the Colonists.

As the similitude of its form would lead us to suspect, this species closely resembles the preceding, both in its habits and in the whole of its economy; unlike that species, however, whose range of habitat would appear to be very limited, the present bird is universally, but thinly, distributed over the whole of the southern portion of Australia. I killed it in South Australia and in New South Wales; the collection formed by Mr. Gilbert at Swan River also contained specimens which presented no difference whatever, either in size or markings.

I more than once flushed this bird in open day, when, after mounting rapidly in the air, it performed a few zigzag evolutions and pitched again to the earth at a distant spot. That it breeds on the ground there can be no doubt, as I found a newly hatched young one on the precise spot from which I had flushed the adult; the little helpless creature, which much resembled a small mass of down or wool, was of a reddish brown colour, not very dissimilar from the surface of the ground where it had been hatched: my utmost endeavours to find the broken shell were entirely unavailing; I am consequently unable to describe the egg, or to furnish any further information respecting the nidification of this singular form.

The sexes are so nearly alike in colour and size that they are not to be distinguished except by dissection; the young, on the contrary, is clothed in a more buffy brown dress until it has attained the size of the adult.

Forehead and centre of the head brownish black, each feather spotted and margined with bright buff; over each eye the feathers are pearly white very finely pencilled with brownish black; lores and sides of the face brown spotted with buff; collar at the back of the head reddish chestnut; back grey freckled with black; scapularies light grey freckled with brownish black, largely tipped with bright buff, with an irregular diagonal patch of black; wing-coverts grey, spotted and freckled with brown, each feather largely tipped with bright buff; primaries and secondaries brownish black, marked on both webs with buff, the buff on the outer webs being in the form of round spots, on the inner webs irregular bars; on the inner web of the first primary is a large spot of pure white, on the second primaries a similar but larger spot, and a small one on the outer web; the third and fourth crossed by a large irregular patch of white; middle tail-feathers light grey, marbled and finely freckled with dark brown; lateral feathers light grey barred with blackish brown and bright buff, and freckled with dark brown, the buff on the outer web of the outside feather forming a regular row of spots; on each side of the throat an oblique line of white; chest dark brown, each feather broadly barred and spotted with light buff; abdomen bright buff, finely and irregularly barred with black; under tail-coverts sandy; bill black; irides very dark brown; feet mealy reddish brown.

The Plate represents an adult male and a young bird of the natural size.