

## AQUILA MORPHNOIDES, *Gould.*

### Little Australian Eagle.

*Aquila Morphnoides*, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., Part VIII. p. 161.

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I SHALL perhaps better convey an idea of the rarity of this small but true species of *Aquila*, by stating that the specimen from which the accompanying drawing was made, and which forms part of my own collection, is the only one I have ever seen either living or dead. It is the second species of the genus known to inhabit Australia, and it is singular that while the Wedge-tailed Eagle is so common, the present species should be so rare, or, perhaps, so restricted in its range of habitat. This Eagle is as clearly an analogue of the *Aquila pennata* of Europe, as the Wedge-tailed Eagle is of the Golden. Its specific distinctions from *Aq. pennata* are its large size, the total absence of the white mark on the shoulder, and the cere and feet being of a lead-colour instead of yellowish-olive.

The part of Australia where I shot the specimen above alluded to, was Yarrundi on the River Hunter, on a portion of Mr. Coxen's estate near Tooloogan. I was led to the discovery of the bird by finding its nest containing a single egg, upon which it had been sitting for some time. I regret to add, that although I several times visited the nest after killing the bird, all my attempts at procuring the other sex were entirely unsuccessful. The nest was of a large size and was placed close to the hole, about one-fourth of the height from the top of one of the highest gum-trees; the egg was bluish white with very faint traces of brown blotchings, two inches and two lines long by one inch and nine lines broad.

Face, crown of the head and throat blackish brown, tinged with rufous, giving it a striated appearance, bounded in front above the nostrils with whitish; feathers at the back of the head, which are lengthened into a short occipital crest, back of the head, back, and sides of the neck, all the under surface, thighs and under tail-coverts rufous, all but the thighs and under tail-coverts with a stripe of black down the centre of each feather; back, rump and wings brown, the centre of the wing lighter; primaries brownish black, becoming darker at the tip, and barred throughout with greyish buff, which is conspicuous on the under surface, but scarcely perceptible on the upper, except at the base of the inner webs; under surface of the wing mottled with reddish brown and black; tail mottled greyish brown, crossed by seven or eight distinct bars of blackish brown, the tips being lighter; cere and bill lead-colour, passing into black at the tip; eye reddish hazel, surrounded by a narrow blackish brown eyelash; feet and toes very light lead-colour.

The figure is about three-fourths of the natural size.