

Inhabits the neighbourhood of Port Essington, is much smaller than *G. tranquilla*, but in colour and marking is precisely similar to that species.

437. *Geopelia cuneata* Vol. V. Pl. 74.

“All that we read or imagine of the softness and innocence of the dove,” says Captain Sturt, “is realized in this beautiful and delicate bird; it is common on the Murray and the Darling, and was met with in various parts of the interior. Two remained with us at the Depôt in latitude $39^{\circ} 40'$, longitude 142° , during a great part of the winter, and on one occasion roosted on the tent-ropes near the fire. Its note is exceedingly plaintive, similar to, but softer than, that of the turtle-dove of Europe.”

Genus MACROPYGIA, Swains.

A genus the members of which are distributed over India, Java, New Guinea, Ceram, the Moluccas, Australia, &c. Only one species, *M. Phasianella*, has yet been found in the last-mentioned country, but others may be discovered when its eastern and northern parts have been more fully explored.

438. *Macropygia Phasianella* Vol. V. Pl. 75.

The interior of the dense brushes are the favourite haunts of this bird, but it occasionally resorts to the crowns of the low hills and the open glades of the forest, where it searches for its food on the ground; on being disturbed it flies to the branches of the nearest tree, spreading out its broad tail at the moment of alighting.

Genus DIDUNCULUS, Peale.

Since I drew and described this most anomalous form, under the name assigned to it by Sir William Jardine, two important facts have been ascertained respecting it, viz. that it is identical with the bird described by Mr. Titian Peale of America under the name of *Didunculus*, and that the Samoan Islands and not Australia is its true habitat.

Didunculus strigirostris.

439. *Gnathodon strigirostris*, *Jard.* Vol. V. Pl. 76.

Family MEGAPODIDÆ, G. R. Gray.

The genera *Talegalla*, *Leipoa* and *Megapodius* form part of a great family of birds inhabiting Australia, New Guinea, Celebes, and the Philippine Islands, whose habits and economy are most singular and differ from those of every other group of birds which now exists upon the surface of our globe. In their structure they are most nearly allied to the *Gallinaceæ*, while in some of their actions and in their mode of flight they much resemble the *Rallidæ*; the small size of their brain, coupled with the extraordinary means employed for the incubation of their eggs, indicates an extremely low degree of organization.

The three species of the family inhabiting Australia, although referable to three distinct genera, have many habits in common, particularly in their mode of nidification—each and all depositing their eggs in mounds of earth and leaves, which, becoming heated either by the fermentation of the vegetable matter, or by the sun's rays, form a kind of natural hatching-apparatus, from which the young at length emerge fully feathered, and capable of sustaining life by their own unaided efforts.