

INTRODUCTION.

Genus LEUCOSARCIA, *Gould.*

Generic characters.

Bill lengthened, almost cylindrical, fleshy for two-thirds of its length from the base; *nostrils* lateral and covered by an oval swollen operculum; *wings* very short and concave; *tail* short; *tarsi* lengthened and defended in front by large distinct scuta; *toes* rather short, hind-toe situated high upon the tarsus.

A genus proposed by me for the reception of the Wonga-Wonga Pigeon of the Australian Brushes, a bird having many peculiar habits, but which, being mainly terrestrial, lead it to frequent the ground in the midst of the dense forests, where it moves about in pairs, feeding upon seeds and berries. Its flesh being remarkably white and extremely delicate, it is one of the best birds for the table inhabiting Australia, or indeed any other country.

The colour of the flesh suggested the generic term I have assigned to it.

425. *Leucosarcia picata* Vol. V. Pl. 63.

Genus PHAPS, *Selby.*

The members of this genus, generally known by the name of Bronze-wings, form an excellent viand for the settlers, and one of the greatest boons bestowed upon the explorer, since they not only furnish him with a supply of nutritious food, but direct him by their straight and arrow-like evening flight to the situations where he may find water, that element without which man cannot exist.

426. *Phaps chalcoptera*.
Peristera chalcoptera Vol. V. Pl. 64.
427. *Phaps elegans*.
Peristera elegans Vol. V. Pl. 65.
428. *Phaps histrionica*.
Peristera histrionica, *Gould* Vol. V. Pl. 66.

"This beautiful pigeon," says Captain Sturt, "is an inhabitant of the interior. It lays its eggs in February, depositing them under any low bush in the middle of the open plains. In the end of March and the beginning of April they collect in large flocks and live on the seed of the rice-grass, which the natives also collect for food. During the short period this harvest lasts the flavour of this pigeon is most delicious, but at other times it is indifferent. It flies to water at sunset, but like the Bronze-wing only wets the bill. It is astonishing indeed that so small a quantity as a bare mouthful should be sufficient to quench its thirst in the burning deserts it inhabits. It left us in the beginning of May, and I think migrated to the N.E., for the further we went to the westward the fewer did we see of it."

Mr. Gilbert observed this species in vast flocks on the plains in latitude 19° S.

Genus GEOPHAPS, *Gould.*

Generic characters.

Bill very short and robust; *eyes* surrounded with a bare skin; *wings* very short and rounded; *tertiaries* long, and broad at their ends; *tarsi* moderately long; *toes* shorter than the tarsus, the inner toe rather the longest.

The members of this genus are peculiar to Australia; are more terrestrial in their habits than any other form of pigeons inhabiting that country; incubate on the ground; squat like the partridges when their haunts are intruded upon; inhabit the plains and open downs; have white pectoral muscles; are excellent food for man; run with great rapidity; fly swiftly for short distances; and when disturbed either perch on the larger branches, on which they squat lengthwise, or descend to the ground and run off after the manner of the true *Gallinaceæ*.

429. *Geophaps scripta* Vol. V. Pl. 67.
430. *Geophaps Smithii* Vol. V. Pl. 68.