

CASUARIUS PICTICOLLIS, *Slater.*

Painted-throated Cassowary.

Casuarus picticollis, Sclat. P. Z. S. 1875, p. 85, pl. xviii., et List Vert. Anim. Z. S. L. ed. vi. p. 423.

UNLESS the heads of freshly killed birds are preserved in spirits or living specimens can be resorted to, it is almost impossible for the ornithologist to determine the various species of Cassowary, particularly of that section known by the trivial name of Mooruk. In their youth all are of a uniform brown in their plumage, while the partly denuded neck is varied with different tints of yellow and green, which in afterlife give place to blue, verditer green, orange, and chestnut red, whilst the brown feathers of the body are succeeded by black ones, which ever after remain permanent. The period of this succession of changes from youth to maturity is several years. It was on the 27th of May 1874 that an immature specimen of this very distinct Cassowary was received at the Gardens of the Zoological Society, in which it lived until the 16th of October 1876. Within three hours of the death of this fine bird, through the kindness of the Secretary, I received its body at my house, and was able, through the assistance of Mr. Hart, to take the accompanying illustration, which could not have been prepared in the way it is had not immediate attention been given to it. Mr. Slater has also had drawings taken in an intermediate state, one of which was published, along with descriptions, in the 'Proceedings' as above quoted. "On the 27th of May last year," says Mr. Slater, "we purchased of Mr. Broughton of the 'Paramatta,' who seldom returns from Sydney without bringing some welcome addition to our collection, a not quite adult Cassowary, which, as I am informed, had been brought to Sydney in the month of April, 1873, by Mr. Godfrey Goodman, Medical Officer of H.M.S. 'Basilisk,' and had lived some eight or nine months in the Botanic Gardens there. This Cassowary was entered in the register as a Mooruk; and not being at the time aware of its history, I did not pay special attention to it. Later in the summer, having become aware of its origin, I made a careful examination of the specimen in company with the Superintendent, and at once decided that it was not a Mooruk (*Casuarus bennetti*), although closely allied to that species in form and structure. It, in fact, more nearly resembles Westerman's Cassowary (*C. westermanni*), but is very differently coloured in the naked parts of the throat."

It may be said that the Cassowaries all differ in the form of the helmet, while those which have wattles differ in the length and situation of these appendages, and that not only the primitive but the complementary colours are found in the various species. But though these characters alter during adolescence, they remain permanent when the birds have attained the age of maturity; and I may state that both sexes are similarly adorned—if there be any difference, the females, according to my experience, being the largest in size and richest in colour. Such, then, is all the information I am at present able to render respecting the history of this interesting addition to the family of the Cassowaries.

C. picticollis may at once be distinguished by attending to the colouring of the neck—the naked skin of the hinder portion being blue, whilst in *C. westermanni* it is orange.

This bird, as regards size, is a trifle smaller than *C. westermanni*; the legs are light brown or a sickly bluish green, and very slender when compared with the other allied species. Length of tarsi 11 inches, middle toe $6\frac{1}{2}$, inner nail very long. Whole plumage of the adult jet-black; feathers of the shoulders and upper part of the back very stiff, round and shiny.

The sex of the individual from which my drawings were taken was marked male in Prof. Garrod's (our prosector's) journal.

Habitat. Discovery Bay, S.E. coast of New Guinea.