HEMIPODIUS MELANOGASTER, Gould.

Hem. Capite, auriculis, gulâ abdomineque nigris; lineâ super oculum et ad nucham excurrente, plumis singulis maculâ ad apicem albâ; nuchæ plumis nigris et castaneis, maculis pluribus albis; dorso superiore castaneo-fusco, plumis singulis maculâ albâ, lineis duabus nigris cum fasciâ unicâ nigrâ apicali; scapulis, tectricibus primariis secundariisque rufo-brunneis, plumis singulis maculâ albâ nigro circumdatâ; remigibus primariis saturatè brunneis; femoribus et tectricibus superioribus et inferioribus caudæ brunneis nigro fasciatis et irroratis; rostro pallidè brunneo; pedibus carneis.

Long. tot. $8\frac{1}{2}$ unc.; rostri, 1; alæ, $4\frac{1}{2}$; caudæ, $1\frac{3}{4}$; tarsi, $1\frac{1}{8}$.

Crown of the head, ear-coverts, throat, and the centre of the abdomen black; over the eye extends a line of feathers having each a small white spot at the tip; this line extends to the nape, which part is also thickly spotted with white, on a black and chestnut-coloured ground; feathers on the sides of the chest and flanks black, having a large crescent-shaped mark of white near the tip; mantle and upper part of the back rich chestnut brown, each feather having a spot of white, and a stripe of black on each side, and barred with black at or near the tip; shoulders, greater and lesser wing-coverts rufous brown, each feather having a white spot surrounded with a black line; primaries dark brown; thighs and upper and under tail-coverts brown, freckled and crossed with black; bill light brown; feet flesh colour.

Hemipodius melanogaster, Gould, in Proc. of Zool. Soc. Part V. 1837; and in Syn. Birds of Australia.

We regret exceedingly that we are unable to communicate any information respecting the history of this species of *Hemipodius*. It is in all probability a native of New Zealand, as we have lately seen a collection from thence, in which was a fine specimen of the male; at all events New Zealand or Van Diemen's Land, or both, will be found to constitute its native habitat. In size it excels all the other known members of the genus, and it is second to none in the beautiful, bold and varied style of its markings.

I am only acquainted with two examples of this fine bird, one of which is in the collection of King's College, London, the other in that of the Zoological Society.

In its habits and manners this species doubtless resembles the other members of the genus, but on these points nothing is at present known.

The present form is almost universally distributed over the continents of Europe, Africa, Asia, and the whole of the islands of the Indian Archipelago, but does not exist in America. The birds of this group frequent the most sterile and arid plains, run with great rapidity, and often depend for safety more upon their powers of running than upon those of flight.

The birds in the Plate are of the natural size.