

PTILOPUS RICHARDSI, Ramsay.

Richards's Fruit-Pigeon.

Ptilopus richardsii, Ramsay, Proc. Linn. Soc. N. S. W. vi. p. 722 (1881).—Salvad. Ann. Mus. Civic. Genov. xviii. p. 427 (1882).—Id. Orn. Papuasie, iii. App. p. 554 (1882).

Ptilopus rhodostictus, Tristr. Ibis, 1882, pp. 139, 144, pl. v.—Ramsay, tom. cit. p. 473.

THIS beautiful Fruit-Pigeon, which was discovered almost simultaneously by Mr. Morton and by Captain Richards in the island of Ugi in the Solomon group, is easily recognized by the rose-coloured spots on the scapulars, whence Canon Tristram's name of *P. rhodostictus*. Mr. Ramsay's title of *P. richardsi* has, however, undoubted priority; and no one is likely to regret that Captain Richards's name should have been attached to such a fine species, as it is only a just tribute to the energy with which he used his opportunities for increasing our knowledge of the avifauna of the Solomon Islands, an example, unfortunately, not too often followed by commanders of Her Majesty's ships.

The following account is taken from the original description given by Mr. E. P. Ramsay:—

"Morton found this species tolerably abundant on Ugi, but on no other island visited: he was also fortunate enough to find the nest and eggs; like that of all the genus, the nest is a frail scanty structure of a few twigs placed over a fork of a branch about twenty feet from the ground; the egg is oval, rather pointed at the thin end, pure white; length 1·22, in breadth 0·83. A second nest and egg, taken by Dr. J. H. Lewis, R.N., H.M.S. 'Cormorant,' are similar, but the thicker end of the egg is more rounded; both eggs were nearly hatched, and a bird shot from one of the nests proved to be a male; in some of the females eggs were found ready for laying. From a nestling obtained in June, I take the following description:—

"All the upper surface green, slightly tinged with bronze on the wings and tail, the wing-coverts, secondaries, and scapulars margined with yellow, the three or four smaller innermost secondaries (or tertiaries) having the tips and the whole of the inner web yellow; except at the base the primaries narrowly margined with yellow; tail above bronzy green, the tips of all the feathers ash washed with green and distinctly margined with yellow; the under surface is ashy grey, the tips lighter and margined with yellow; the under tail-coverts and abdomen yellow, the throat pale yellowish; all the rest of the under surface ashy, the tips of all the feathers margined with light yellow; forehead ashy; the first primary attenuated at the tip. Length 6·5, wing 4·8, tail 2·8, tarsus 0·8. Bill olive, feet reddish."

The following is a description of the type specimen, lent to us by Mr. Ramsay:—

Adult male (type of species). General colour above dark bronzy green, relieved by some beautiful oval spots of pale pink or rose-colour, which are subterminal on the scapulars; lesser and median wing-coverts dark emerald-green, edged with bronzy green like the back; greater coverts dark emerald-green, the inner ones margined with bronzy green; bastard wing, primary-coverts, and quills dark emerald-green externally, ashy black on the inner webs, the primaries obsoletely fringed with yellow near the ends, a little more distinct on the secondaries, the innermost of which are edged with yellow on the inner web and have a broad longitudinal mark of pale rose-colour; upper tail-coverts rather more golden green than the back; tail-feathers dark emerald-green, dusky blackish on the inner web and broadly tipped with yellow, forming a broad band; crown of head, lores, and base of cheeks pale pearly grey, separated from the eye and surrounded posteriorly by a somewhat indistinct line of pale yellow; feathers round the eye, nape, hind neck, and upper mantle, as well as the ear-coverts, pale yellowish mixed with light pearly grey, the sides of the neck similarly marked; throat clear pale yellow as well as the cheeks; breast light pearly ash-colour, with greenish-yellow bases to the feathers, which are bifid; breast a little duller yellowish, like the sides of the body and flanks, the long feathers covering the thighs tipped with orange; thighs grey marked with green; centre of lower breast, abdomen, and under tail-coverts bright orange; axillaries and under wing-coverts light grey, marked with greenish yellow; quills light grey below. Total length 9·5 inches, culmen 0·6, wing 5·25, tail 3·0, tarsus 0·8.

The figures in the Plate represent the bird in two positions of the natural size; they are drawn from the bird described by us above, which belongs to the Australian Museum, Sydney.

[R. B. S.]