

NESOCENTOR MILO.

Solomon-Islands Lark-heeled Cuckoo.

- Centropus milo*, Gould, Proc. Zool. Soc. 1856, p. 136.—Gray, Cat. B. Tropical Isl. Pacific Ocean, p. 34 (1859).
—Sclater, Proc. Zool. Soc. 1869, p. 124.—Gray, Hand-l. B. ii. p. 213, no. 8974 (1870).—Ramsay, Proc. Linn. Soc. N. S. Wales, iv. p. 69 (1879).
Nesocentor milo, Cab. & Heine, Mus. Hein. iv. p. 120 (1862).—Salvad. Ann. Mus. Civic. Genov. xiii. p. 463 (1878).—Id. Orn. Papuasias e delle Molucche, i. p. 385 (1880).—Grant, Proc. Zool. Soc. 1888, p. 191.

THE genus *Nesocentor* was founded in 1862 by Drs. Cabanis and Heine for the reception of several Lark-heeled Cuckoos from the Austro-Malayan Subregion; but apart from their sombre style of coloration, we can see no reason for separating these birds from the genus *Centropus*, though in the present instance we have adopted the nomenclature of Count Salvadori, the leading authority on Papuan ornithology.

The type specimen of the present species was discovered by the late John Macgillivray on the island of Guadalcanar, where it has since been met with by Mr. Woodford and other travellers. The typical example is not quite adult, and was described by Count Salvadori in his work on the birds of New Guinea. He appears afterwards to have entertained some doubt as to the specimen described by him in England having been really the type; and on requesting Dr. Slater to re-examine the specimen, he was assured by the latter gentleman that it did not exist in the Museum. How this mistake arose we cannot say, and we have no immediate recollection of a visit from Dr. Slater to examine the specimen in question; it may have been temporarily mislaid during the removal of the Natural History collections down to South Kensington, but we are happy to say that it is quite safe in the national collection.

As far as is known, the present species is only found in the island of Guadalcanar, in the Solomon group, where it replaces the smaller *N. ateralbus* of New Ireland, which is a violet-black bird with a white head. The latter is also said to inhabit the Solomon Islands on the faith of a collection sent by Mr. Krefft to Dr. Slater in 1871. So many birds in this collection really came from New Ireland, and not from the Solomons, that we may fairly suppose that the locality for *N. ateralbus* is wrongly recorded.

In *N. milo* the adult male is black, sides of the body greenish black with a steel-green gloss; the head, neck, mantle, throat, and breast creamy white; the abdomen black. Total length 28 inches, culmen 2.3, wing 10.1, tail 13.5, tarsus 2.65. The young is rufous streaked with black, and somewhat resembles the adults of other Lark-heels.

The figures in the Plate are taken from an adult male and a young female shot on Guadalcanar by Lieut. Reginald Tupper, R.N., and presented by him to the British Museum. He says that the iris was yellow or orange. Mr. Woodford gives the iris as red, and the bill and feet black, in an adult male from Aola. Another adult male had a brown iris and grey feet, while in an adult female and an immature bird the iris was dark grey and brown respectively.

[R. B. S.]