

## ARTAMUS INSIGNIS, *Sclater*.

### New-Ireland Wood-Swallow.

*Artamus insignis*, Sclater, P. Z. S. 1877, p. 101, pl. xv.

I THOROUGHLY indorse the term *insignis* (or "remarkable"), which has been applied to this species by Dr. Sclater; for, in my opinion, it is the handsomest of all the Wood-Swallows. The number of *Artami* has not been greatly increased since I published my 'Birds of Australia;' but at that time, certainly, the two finest species, *A. maximus* and *A. insignis*, were not known. I have therefore great pleasure in presenting my readers with figures of these beautiful birds.

Of the subject of the present article we have very little to record. It is one of the discoveries of Mr. George Brown, who procured it in New Ireland in March 1876; and the two specimens obtained are in the collection of the Marquis of Tweeddale, along with the rest of Mr. Brown's ornithological trophies. Dr. Sclater, who described it, observes that it is closely allied to *A. monachus* of Celebes, but differs in having the wings and tail black, as may be seen by a comparison of the Plates of these two birds given in this work. In his account of the collections sent by Mr. Brown, Dr. Sclater has pointed out in certain of the species a slight indication of Celebesian affinities, and he observes with regard to the *Artamus*:—"Here is a second instance of a repetition on the further side of New Guinea of a Celebesian type, *A. monachus* of Celebes being certainly the nearest known ally of this fine new species. I have examined a specimen of *A. melaleucus* (Forst.), of New Caledonia, in the British Museum, but find it quite distinct, having the upper back black. *A. maximus*, Meyer, of New Guinea, is of the same large size as the present bird, but has the whole back black."

General colour above pure white; the head and neck all round, the wings, and tail black; under surface of the body, from the black throat downwards, pure white; under wing-coverts white, the small ones along the edge of the wing black; bill bluish. Total length 7·3 inches, culmen 1·0, wing 5·65, tail 2·6, tarsus 0·8.

The principal figures in the Plate are of the natural size, and are drawn from the type specimens in the collection of the Marquis of Tweeddale.