

EPHTHIANURA CROCEA, *Cast. & Ramsay.*

Yellow-breasted Ephthianura.

Ephthianura crocea, Castelnau & Ramsay, Proc. Linn. Soc. N. S. W. i. p. 380 (1877).—Ramsay, op. cit. ii. p. 186 (1878).—Sharpe, Cat. Birds in Brit. Mus. vol. vii. p. 669 (1883).

THIS very pretty little species is one of the recent discoveries in Australian ornithology. It is easily distinguished from the other three species of the genus (*E. albifrons*, *E. tricolor*, and *E. aurifrons*) by its yellow under surface and black pectoral collar.

The species was first found on Norman River in the Gulf of Carpentaria by Mr. Gulliver, and more recently the late Mr. T. H. Bowyer Bower met with it on the Fitzroy River in North-western Australia. In my friend's last journal, which his father has kindly lent to me, I find the following note on this bird:—"Sept. 15. We had previously observed these beautiful *Ephthianuræ* on the swamp about two miles from our camp, but could not obtain any specimens. I went to try and get a White Heron, leaving Breston to look after the smaller birds. The species is to be seen flitting among some strong reedy grass growing out of the water, and appears to hang therefrom and pick insects off the surface of the water. I only heard a very simple call-note, but no song. Females and young birds are easily obtained, but adult males appear to be rare. When disturbed about the water, they sought safety in some long grass about fifty yards away from the swamp, round which the grass has all been beaten down by sheep."

The following descriptions are taken from a pair of birds presented to the British Museum by Capt. Bowyer Bower, and collected by his son on the Fitzroy River:—

Adult male. General colour above pale olive-brown, with slight indication of dusky centres on the feathers of the back; the lower back washed with yellow; rump and upper tail-coverts bright yellow; wing-coverts brown, edged with pale ashy, whiter on the median and greater series; the lesser coverts washed with yellow; bastard-wing, primary-coverts, and quills brown, margined with pale yellow, the inner secondaries broadly margined and tipped with ashy whitish; tail-feathers dark brown, margined with yellow and with a broad spot of ashy whitish at the ends; crown of head like the back, but washed with olive-yellow, brighter towards the forehead; lores blackish, surmounted by a streak of bright yellow; eyelid yellow; ear-coverts ashy brown washed with yellow; feathers below the eye, cheeks, and throat bright yellow, followed by a crescentic spot of black on the fore neck; remainder of under surface of body yellow, mixed with ashy, the lower abdomen ashy whitish; thighs and under tail-coverts yellow; under wing-coverts and axillaries ashy, with yellow margins; edge of wing yellow; quills below dusky brown, ashy whitish along the inner edge. Total length 4·3 inches, culmen 0·45, wing 2·35, tail 1·35, tarsus 0·7.

Adult female. Differs from the male in being ashy brown above without the wash of olive-yellow, the head like the back; sides of face ashy brown; lores, cheeks, and throat white; fore neck, breast, and sides of body light ashy brown, the latter with a slight yellowish tinge; lower abdomen ashy whitish; thighs and under tail-coverts brighter yellow; rump and upper tail-coverts bright yellow as in the male, but not so brilliant. Total length 4·2 inches, culmen 0·45, wing 2·3, tail 1·35, tarsus 0·7.

The figures in the Plate, which represent an adult pair of birds of the natural size, are drawn from the birds described above.

[R. B. S.]