

# AILURÆDUS MACULOSUS, *Ramsay.*

## Queensland Cat-bird.

*Ailurædus maculosus*, Ramsay, P. Z. S. 1874, p. 601.

THIS addition to the group of Cat-birds (*Ailurædus*) is of very great interest to me, as I have for years suspected that more species of the genus would be discovered, and the affinities of Mr. Ramsay's bird afford further evidence of the close zoological relations existing between the avifauna of Australia and that of New Guinea and the Aru Islands. Instead of being related to the ordinary species (*Ailurædus Smithii* vel *crassirostris*), the Queensland species comes nearer to the black-eared Cat-bird of the Aru Islands (*Ailurædus melanotis*), from which it is distinguished by its smaller size, dark-green coloration, and thickly mottled under surface. From the common Cat-bird it is at once to be told by its black ear-coverts and by other characters which are well set forth by Mr. Ramsay in the description quoted below. Although our knowledge of its habits is at present meagre, more details than usual in the case of novelties are given by the above-named naturalist. It will probably be found that, like *A. Smithii*, the present species does not build a bower as do *Ptilonorhynchus* and *Chlamydera*.

The following is Mr. Ramsay's description:—

“The whole of the head, including the chin, feathers at the base of the lower mandible, and ear-coverts, black, having a spot of white tinged with olive-green at the end of each feather; the spots on the back of the head and neck become more distinctly tinged with olive-green as they approach the shoulders, where they are lost in the brown-green margin of the feathers, which on their under surface are of a bluish green tint.

“A narrow line down the centre of each feather on the top of the head and neck black; line over the eye and just in front of it white tinged with olive-green; lower part of the ear-coverts black; upper part immediately behind the eye centred with white and tinged slightly with olive-green; sides of the lower part of the neck olive-green, each feather indistinctly marked with a whity-brown spot.

“Whole of the under surface olive-green, being brightest on the flanks, each feather on the chest centred with a conspicuous and somewhat heart-shaped blotch of white, which on the abdomen and flanks becomes lanceolate in form, more acute on those feathers between the flanks and round the vent, which are nearly white, having a brownish crescentic mark near the margin; the spots on the abdomen are almost obsolete. Under tail-coverts olive-green, centred and broadly margined with white tinged with olive-green; the basal portion of all the feathers brown; under surface of the tail brown, with a tinge of bluish green in certain lights; all but the two centre tail-feathers tipped with white on both surfaces; the under surface of the wings, inner webs of primaries, and secondaries dark brown, becoming almost white on the margins of the inner webs. The inner webs of primaries and secondaries, and the basal part of the inner webs of the tertiaries, blackish brown on the upper surface; the margin of the wings and under wing-coverts white, with a somewhat crescent-shaped mark of dark brown, margined with green, in the centre; the basal portion of the feathers dark brown. The narrow outer web of the primaries above bluish green; all the upper surface from the back of neck and mantle bright grass-green; on the tertiaries to approximate secondaries a small spot of white at the tips of the outer webs only; some of the lesser wing-coverts have also a similar spot in certain specimens; and a few of the feathers between the shoulders have a bluish green tinge; two centre tail-feathers and the outer webs of all except the first feather on either side bright grass-green above; the lower portion of the outer web of the first tail-feather on either side tinged with green; the inner webs of all the tail-feathers except the two centre ones blackish brown above, tinged with green near the shafts of the feathers, but becoming blackish brown near the tips, which end in a white marginal spot more largely developed on the inner webs and of greater extent on the outer feathers, diminishing into a narrow white line on those next the centre tail-feathers. Bill light horn-colour.

“Total length 10 to 11 inches; bill from forehead 1, from eye 1·9 to 2, from nostril 0·6, from angle of the mouth 1·45, width at base 0·5; wing from flexure 5·5; tail 4·3; tarsus 1·6 to 1·8, of a dark bluish horn-colour. Claws light brown.

“This new species is at least one quarter less in size than the New-South-Wales bird, *A. Smithii*, and is only found on the East-Coast ranges, about Cardwell, at Rockingham Bay. Several specimens were obtained, but unfortunately so late in the season that the plumage was much worn and discoloured.

“Its note resembles that of *A. Smithii*, but is not so distinct a cry, and less bat-like, clearer and more of a whistle. They assemble in small flocks from ten to twenty in number, and frequent the palms and native fruit-trees in company with *Ptilonopus superbus* and *Carpophaga assimilis*.”

The figure is of the natural size.