

marked as occurring in area 8, and 240A, *Xerophila castaneiventris* as occurring in area 9. The former (*C. unicolor*) was obtained at Yalgoo, east of Geraldton, and the latter (*X. castaneiventris*) was obtained at Day Dawn, which is N.E. of Yalgoo!—TOM CARTER. Broome Hill (W.A.), 24/6/07.

Forgotten Feathers.

"GALDENS," *alias* "GAULDINGS."

BY TOM CARTER, BROOME HILL, W.A.

REFERRING to previous correspondence respecting Dampier's "Galdens" (*Emu*, vol. vi., pages 152, 207), the following descriptive account of the "*Gaulding*," which is given below word for word as printed in an old volume now in my possession, will, I think, be of interest to many ornithologists, and also prove that it is by no means certain that by "Galden" Dampier meant the Little Mangrove-Bittern (*Butorides stagnatilis*).

I have had the volume in question for some time, but only noticed the reference to *Gaulding* this week, when I had taken up the work to improve an idle evening. The book was published on 1st January, 1808, by H. D. Symonds, and contains a short life of George Louis le Clerc, Count of Buffon, by Condorcet, and also parts of Buffon's "Natural History." But, unfortunately, though the book is a bulky one, and has many coloured plates, it is incomplete, and does not contain a plate of the bird in question, the only birds figured being the "Avocetta" and "Crown-Bird." Buffon's description of the "Large White Gaulding" might well be for the Large White Egret, but what species of *Herodiones* his "Blue Gaulding" referred to gives room for much theory, as the birds he described are apparently taken haphazard from all parts of the world, and are without classification. The "Gaulding" comes between the "Curasow" and "Otis," and a few pages further on are accounts of the "Red-legged Horseman," the "Pokkoe," the "Umbre," the "Kokoi," &c.

The "Sheathbill" and "Fan-tailed Flycatcher" are briefly mentioned as hailing from New Zealand. The birds mentioned as being so numerous in Greenland were probably one of the *Alcidae*, possibly *Alca impennis*, and do not appear to have much bearing on the "Gaulding."

EXTRACT FROM BUFFON'S "NATURAL HISTORY."

THE GAULDING.

There are several varieties of this species, the most remarkable of which is the *Large White Gaulding*, which measures from the end of the bill to that of the tail about three feet and a half, and about four feet from the extension of each wing; the bill is very long, angular, and of a yellow colour, in which there are two long slits for nostrils. The neck is very crooked, resembling in some degree a Roman S, and is about eleven inches

long. The feathers that cover the whole body are of an exceedingly beautiful milk-white colour. The thighs, legs, and toes are about ten inches long, and are covered with large scales of a bluish-black colour. It has four toes, one behind and three before, the middlemost of which is nearly three inches long; the claws are black, and there is a small web between the two outermost toes. It feeds upon small fish, and frequents the sea marshes and salt pools.

Captain Wood observes that in the north-west parts of Greenland there is a sort of fowl which the natives catch with springes and snares, chiefly for the sale of their skins and feathers, which, being thick, they dress and make garments of, like furs, wearing the feathers outward in the summer time, and inward in the winter. He says two or three of his men killed 1,500 of them in one day. From this account one would imagine snares would be as unnecessary here as in the bird island of America, mentioned by the Earl of Cumberland, who says there are such incredible numbers of birds found in it that there needs no artifice to take them, for a man may catch with his hands alone almost enough to serve a whole fleet.

The *Blue Gaulding* is from its bill to the end of the tail about eighteen or twenty inches, and from the extension of each wing about a yard. The part of the bill towards the head is of a bluish colour, and black towards the extremity; it is very sharp, and about two inches and a half long; it has a greenish skin about the eyes, and a tuft of thin, small, longish feathers upon the head; the neck is about six inches long, covered with thin feathers of a bluish-black colour, the whole body of the bird being nearly the same colour, except the breast, belly, and under the wings, which appear somewhat lighter.

The legs are covered with greenish scales, and are about seven or eight inches long; it has four toes, one behind and three before, the middlemost of which is about two inches long, and it has black, crooked, sharp claws.

They feed on shrimps, young crabs, spiders, and field crickets, and frequent ponds and watery places.

[This description tallies fairly well with that of the Night-Heron (*Ardea nycticorax*) a bird which, like the Great White Egret, has a very large range.—T. C.]

From Magazines, &c.

JOURNAL OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION, vol. i., No. 1 (Second Series), is a pretentious issue, rivalling in its general appearance its model, *The Ibis*. The Southern Union is to be congratulated upon its ability to publish such a first-class journal locally.

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WILD DUCKS POISONED.—Ararat.—Large numbers of Wild Ducks are being destroyed by farmers in the Dunkeld and Glenthompson districts by means of poisoned wheat. The birds have developed a taste for wheat, and settle on newly-sown fields in thousands. To save the crops poisoned wheat is being used to destroy the birds.—*The Argus*, 29/6/07.

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POISON AGAIN!—Tunbridge.—Sportsmen generally complain of the scarcity of Wattle-Birds this season, and news has lately