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BLACK THROATED GROUND BIRD

Cinclosoma alisteri (Mathews)

Male—lower figure

Female—upper figure

The Emu

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Cinclosoma alisteri (Mathews) Black-Throated Ground-Bird

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Mr. H. L. White, C.M.B.O.U., C.F.A.O.U., who again most liberally bears the expense of this beautiful plate by Mr. Neville W. Cayley, R.A.O.U., has requested me to supply the letterpress.

On the "Provisional List" of the R.A.O.U. Official Check-list, p. 103, is the name "*Cinclosoma alisteri*, Mathews. Black-breasted Ground-Bird." The original description (♂) is found in *Bulletin B.O.U.*, xvii., p. 16 (1910).

For over a decade this description has stood unique until Mr. F. L. Whitlock, collecting for Mr. H. L. White, recently took a fine series of similar skins at the western end of the Nullarbor Plain, Western Australia. Mr. Mathews' description is accurate save the coloration of the upper surface, which is auburn, not chestnut as described by Mr. Mathews, who also does not mention a conspicuous, elongated, white patch on the malar region, or side of the neck, and again, the bird is more black-throated than black-breasted, as the vernacular name describes it in his "1913 List" (p. 198). Should these three marked differences not agree with Mr. Mathews' type, then I venture to suggest the name *nullarborensis* for the bird represented on the present plate, in case it be different. But for the time being, we shall treat the interesting species as *C. alisteri*.

Adult Male.*—Upper surface from forehead to elongated tail coverts, and including ear-coverts, and side of neck auburn; wing-coverts and primary coverts black, tipped with white; secondaries mummy-brown, margined with cinnamon-rufous, some wholly, or on inner webs crimson-rufous; primaries mummy-brown with paler edges, especially third to sixth quills, which are margined with pinkish-buff towards the base; tail feathers clove-brown to blackish-brown, except the central pair,

* The male figured in plate is another specimen.

tipped with white, broadly on the outer, and diminishing in size towards inner ones, some margined with auburn on outer web; superciliary line and conspicuous patch on malar region, or side of neck, white; lores and line through eye black; throat and fore-neck black with bluish gloss; breast and centre of abdomen light buff, and separated from cinnamon-coloured flanks by tract, more or less defined, of blackish marked feathers; under tail-coverts, feathers dark brown and light buff, the former colour imparting a blackish spotted appearance; under wing coverts white, succeeded by small blackish patch; quills under, lustrous hair-brown with cinnamon drab tinge on inner webs. "Bill black, iris deep brown, feet lead grey" (Whitlock).

Dimensions (in flesh).—Total length 190 mm.; wing 82 mm.; culmen 16 mm.; tarsus 28 mm.

Habitat.—Haig, Nullarbor Plain, W.A., 11/10/21.

Adult Female.—Forehead, lores, ear-coverts, crown, nape, hind-neck and mantle cinnamon-brown, blending into back, rump, and upper tail-coverts auburn; lesser and greater wing coverts and primary coverts blackish brown (3), tipped with white; the greater coverts being edged with drab; secondaries cinnamon-brown, some striped with clove-brown; primaries blackish (clove) brown, some of outer webs, towards the base, edged with light buff; tail similar to that of male; lores, superciliary stripe, and malar region whitish, like breast and abdomen; chin and throat mottled grey and white; fore-neck mouse grey; flanks wood-brown; under tail-coverts light buff, indistinctly marked with wood-brown; under wing-coverts more mottled than in male; quills under, as in male. "Bill black, iris coffee brown, feet lead grey" (Whitlock).

Dimensions (in flesh).—Total length 185 mm.; wing 85 mm.; culmen 16 mm.; tarsus 24 mm.

Habitat.—Naretha, East-West Railway, W.A., 10/8/21.

Immature birds more resemble the female, with under surface, especially chin, throat and fore-neck mottled with black. "Bill, peary black; iris, deep brown; feet, lead grey" (Whitlock).

Dimensions (in flesh).—Total length 185 mm.; wing 80 mm.; culmen 15 mm.; tarsus 27 mm.

Note.—In the series of skins examined, there is practically no difference in Naretha and Haig specimens, but in a male taken at Loongana (31/10/21), further into the great plain, the upper surface generally is more cinnamon-rufous, perhaps caused by age, as the tail feathers are somewhat abraded. Total length 193 mm.; wing 84 mm.; culmen 14 mm.; tarsus 28 mm.

Eggs.—See descriptions by Mr. H. L. White, page 164.

Field Observations by Mr. F. L. Whitlock, p. 178.

* Type of female, the specimen figured in plate being co-type.