



Buffy Fig. 1. Wren (*Calamanthus fuliginosus*, North), 2.4 mm. 2.2 mm.

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[PART 4

Notes on the Rusty Field-Wren (*Calamanthus isabellinus*)

By EDWIN ASHBY, C.F.A.O.U., M.B.O.U., Blackwood, S.A.

The Rusty Field-Wren was described by North in 1896 from skins collected by Kearland at Missionary Plains, Central Australia, in 1894, the description being published in the *Report of the Horn Expedition*, Vol. II., Zoology, page 85, 1896.

In the type form the striations on the crown were absent or semi-obsolete. A bird similar in coloration but with well-marked striations on the crown and back was described by Campbell from a skin collected by Carter at Point Cloates, in the north-west of Western Australia, under the name *Calamanthus rubiginosus*, the description being published in *The Victorian Naturalist*, Vol. XVI., page 3, May, 1899.

The Rusty Field-Wren is essentially a bird of the dry interior, or, as we so often term it, a desert bird. Kearland, in his original field-notes, says that it frequents the desolate gibber plains, "far away from scrub or shelter of any kind, two of these little birds were seen running over the stones or gibbers, as actively and quickly as a Dotterel on the sea beach."

A specimen in my own collection, taken at Leigh's Creek in South Australia, Dec. 12, 1910, is identical with another collected at Day Dawn, in Western Australia, May 13, 1903, both being without striations on the crown and faintly striated only on the back. On the other hand, in the same collection, is a male, also taken at Day Dawn, in June of the same year, in which the crown is as strongly striated as in Campbell's *C. rubiginosus* and the striations on the neck and breast are darker and double the width of those on the specimens referred to above.

While in most of the skins from Leigh's Creek there is little or no striation on the crown, a few from this locality are well striated. McGilp reported that in the Lake Frome district

both these forms were living together and inter-breeding. On June 8, 1919, he took the eggs and made skins of a nesting pair, in which the striations were absent in one sex and present in the other. These skins are now in the South Australian Museum.

It is fairly evident that these variations are not seasonal, though they are probably in some measure affected by both sex and age. More material from these very widely separated localities is needed to enable one to assess fully the value of these factors.

DESCRIPTION.

Calamanthus isabellinus, North, = *C. rubiginosus*, Campbell, Rusty Field-Wren.

Forehead, crown and nape rufous, varying from streaks absent or sub-obsolete to having brown streaks, narrow but well-defined; upper surface sandy rufous, broadly and faintly streaked with brown; throat, neck and breast white to buff, streaks dark brown, well-defined but usually narrow; abdomen unstreaked.

A Wonderful Cockatoo.—A tennis match was played at Belltrees to-day, and a number of players came from Stewart's Brook, some 14 miles distant. Among them was Miss Dulcie Towns, who owns a pet White Cockatoo (*Kakatoë galerita*), which is about ten years old, very tame, and was secured from a nest in the district. This fine bird followed Miss Towns during her 14 miles drive to Belltrees, frequently flying well ahead, settling in a tree, and waiting until Miss Towns drove near; then the bird flew on again. This was kept up until Belltrees was reached. On arriving at the boarding-house, the bird followed Miss Towns through the front door, and alighted on the dining table. On the way down from Stewart's Brook a flock of White Cockatoos was passed in the forest, but the pet bird flew on, and took no notice of them. At Belltrees to-day this Cockatoo flew after Miss Towns to the tennis court (about a quarter of a mile from the boarding-house), and there sat in a tree watching the game. When afternoon tea was served it came down out of the tree, had something to eat, returned to the tree, and sat there until the game was finished. Later, Miss Towns started back to Stewart's Brook, the bird following her, frequently flying high overhead, but keeping well in front most of the time. It was dusk when they arrived home. The Cockatoo made a flight to-day of 28 miles when following Miss Towns—a wonderful performance.

At her home Miss Towns generally keeps the Cockatoo chained up, and states that sometimes he bites the chain through, or smashes it with his powerful bill. The bird is a good talker, and mimics well.—SID WM. JACKSON, R.A.O.U., Belltrees, Scone, New South Wales, 26th July, 1924.