

EARLY TASMANIAN ORNITHOLOGY
THE CORRESPONDENCE OF
RONALD CAMPBELL GUNN AND JAMES GRANT
1836-1838



Ronald Campbell Gunn as a young man. Reproduced with the kind permission of the Director and the Board of Trustees, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.

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EARLY TASMANIAN ORNITHOLOGY
THE CORRESPONDENCE OF
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1836-1838

WILLIAM E. DAVIS, JR.



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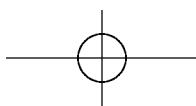
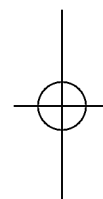
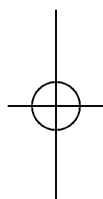
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For Robert (Bob) Mesibov
a good friend and my guru on things invertebrate



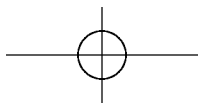
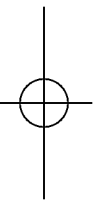
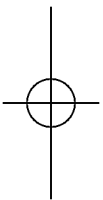


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PREFACE

The project began when a Tasmanian colleague, Robert Mesibov, informed me of the existence of a correspondence between Ronald Campbell Gunn and James Grant in the 1830s that dealt largely with birds. I am an ornithologist and Robert an entomologist, and he indicated to me that he had transcribed much of the correspondence but that he had no further interest in it and thought that as an ornithologist I might. He was correct. I reviewed the correspondence on microfilm at the state library in Hobart and decided that this correspondence represented an early (1836-1838) ornithology of Tasmania (then Van Diemen's Land). I subsequently learned from Ian Wilson that the correspondence probably constitutes the first attempt by Tasmanians to study the ornithology of their native birds. I thus decided that this correspondence should be published and began transcribing the remainder of the the letters not transcribed by Robert Mesibov.

The original letters presented in this volume in most cases were hand-written in columns, often two columns per sheet. I have chosen to retain the columnar format and simply transcribed running text, including Gunn's and Grant's paragraph structure, indenting, and spaces between paragraphs or sections. The transcriptions are as exact as possible, retaining capitalization (or lack thereof), commas, quotes, periods, dashes, and other punctuation. To enhance readability, in only a few cases have I indicated errors in the original in spelling, the occasional double word, for example, Parrot Parrot, or inconsistencies in capitalization. Determining if a word began with a capital or lower case letter was often problematic; for example, Gunn's lower case and upper case "c" were very much the same. Often in the original, the end of lines in the column served as commas and hence if transcribed without the columnar structure appear as grammatical inconsistencies. Gunn made virtually no corrections on his letters, hence the final product is a "first draft" and hence grammatical problems can be expected. In one letter, Grant made a first draft with very sloppy handwriting and a final draft that he mailed to Gunn that was much neater. I chose to include here the first draft because it contained several interesting short sections that he deleted from the final draft. For hyphenated words at a line's end, I have used a single hyphen rather than their double hyphen (resembling an equals = sign). I have chosen to retain underlining of scientific names rather than placing them in italics. Grant frequently quoted in Latin

from Vigors and Horsfield (1827) and other authors, and often was not precise in the use of diacritical marks, capitalization, or punctuation, and did not indicate sections that were in italics. His Greek words likewise have inconsistencies. I have retained Grant's Latin transcriptions rather than correcting them to the original, and have transcribed his Greek words without correction. I checked quotes against originals and have included citations including page numbers except for a few cases for which I was unable to locate the original publication quoted. In order to keep the index simple I have not indexed the upper level taxonomic headings, scattered through the text of the letters, of the various European workers. They are for the most part included in the taxonomic list of Gunn and Grant presented on pages 227-234. I have also, for simplicity, not indexed that section or the two appendices.

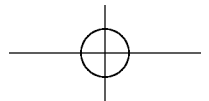
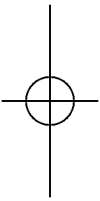
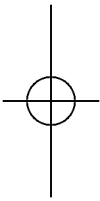
I have added the modern names for species in square brackets within the transcribed original text so that the reader can easily know the species under discussion. At the first mention of a species I have given the common name followed by the scientific name, unless the names are the same today as used in the letters, in which case I have not repeated them. If the subspecies of the bird species is endemic to Tasmania, I have included the subspecific name, completing the trinomial. If the species is mentioned again in the text I have given the common name only. Scientific names follow Dickinson (2003). The higher taxonomic categories, for example, order, have changed substantially since the time of Gunn and Grant, and are currently in a state of flux, mostly as the result of recent molecular DNA studies. As a result I have made only minimal suggestions as to current higher order categories. I have included commentary interspersed throughout the text and indicated commentary by placing it in brackets. Occasional words were illegible or nearly so. For most of these words I have entered my best guess and followed the word with [?]. To enhance readability I have used bold-face type for all bracketed material.

The transcriptions in this volume consist of (1) a series of letters from Robert Campbell Gunn to James Grant, whimsically entitled *The Circular-Head Scientific Journal*, (2) letters to Gunn from Grant on notes and remarks on the birds of Van Diemen's Land (V.D.L.), (3) letters from Grant to Gunn headed To the Editor of the *Circular Head Scientific Journal*, (4) letters from Gunn on notes and remarks on the birds of V.D.L., (5) a letter by Grant on the birds of V.D.L. and its supplement, (6) a list on the taxonomic order of birds by Gunn and Grant

(1840?), and (7) a list of birds by Gunn, August 1837. The letters were exchanged between 1836 and 1838 while Gunn was a Magistrate at Circular Head and Grant was living in Launceston. Gunn and his circle of friends had an extensive correspondence, much of it in a jocular vein (Ian J. Wilson pers. comm.), but the letters presented here were very serious science and the earliest scientific work on birds in Tasmania by people resident there. The letters included some minor sections on mammals and reptiles that have not been included here. I have presented the letters in chronological order.

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I thank Clemency Fisher of the Liverpool Museums for her gracious hospitality while I visited the Museum. I thank James Kay of the Library & Archives of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, United Kingdom, for providing me with a copy of the portrait of a young Ronald Campbell Gunn. Graeme Powell and Marie-Louise Ayres of the Australian National Library, where the original Gunn papers are archived, and Tony Marshall of the State Library of Tasmania, Hobart, were most helpful in locating documents relating to Gunn and Grant, providing me with an opportunity to view documents and securing permissions. All figures, unless otherwise specified, are courtesy of the Australian National Library, Canberra. My daughter Elizabeth (Lisa) Davis corrected my transcriptions of Greek words. Special thanks goes to Ian J. Wilson, who provided much information and copies of documents in his possession relating to Gunn and Grant, and sharing with me his in-depth knowledge of early Tasmania. I thank Lynn Blackwood, Walter Boles, Leo Joseph, John Kricher, Hamish Maxwell-Stewart, C. Stuart Houston, Libby Robin, and Ian Wilson for reviewing earlier drafts of the manuscript. I further thank Walter Boles, who edited this volume of the Memoir series. His knowledge of the taxonomy of Australian birds and the history of its nomenclature has immeasurably strengthened the manuscript. I owe a profound debt of gratitude to Robert Mesibov, who brought the correspondence of Gunn and Grant to my attention, and who transcribed more than half of it.



Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The island that since 1856, the year that the colony was granted self-government, has officially been named Tasmania, was originally settled as Van Diemen's Land, so named by Abel Tasman, the discover of the island, in 1642. Van Diemen's land was settled as a penal colony by the British in 1803, and convict ships arrived there until 1853 (Boyce 2008a). About 72,000 convicts were brought to Tasmania during that half century, and they constituted a majority of the population. In contrast to the harsh ecological conditions at Port Jackson (Sydney) in New South Wales, Van Diemen's land had a mild climate, extensive water, and extensive grasslands that had been tended by the native Aboriginal population with fire for millenia. The absence of the Dingo (*Canis lupus dingo*) resulted in an abundance of kangaroo, wallaby, and Emu (*Dromaius novaehollandiae diemenensis*) for game (Boyce 2008b). During the 1820s free land grants brought rapid settlement of the best farming and grazing lands that stretch from Hobart Town (now Hobart) to Launceston, effectively ending two decades of shared land use and producing an often wealthy elite class that established political and financial control of the island. In this period of settlement, largely engineered by Lieutenant Govenor George Arthur, William Effington Lawrence, who was to become a close friend of Ronald Campbell Gunn, came to Van Diemen's Land, receiving a 12,000-acre land grant with 2000 acres more granted to his son (Boyce 2008a). Gunn's brother, William, arrived in the early 1820s and also received a land grant. It was into this ecological and political setting that Ronald Campbell Gunn in 1830, and James Grant in 1834, arrived and became part of the elite (see Chapter 2).

Ronald Campbell Gunn and James Grant were serious avian taxonomists. That is, they were primarily interested in the description, naming, and classification of birds, especially Tasmanian birds. Their work is the first serious work on avian taxonomy of which we have a record for Tasmania, and among the first for all of Australia. It is particularly valuable in that it was conducted by individuals who resided in the colony. Their work consisted primarily of collecting and naming the birds of Tasmania. Most of the species had previously been named and

described by European taxonomists from specimens sent back to them from Australia (see Appendix I for authors and dates for original species or subspecies descriptions). In fact, Gunn sent most of his specimens to Sir William J. Hooker in Scotland, who distributed them to ornithologists for description and publication of any that might be new to science, and John Edward Gray of the British Museum (Datta 1997).

Gunn and Grant's major goal was to identify the birds they collected, compile a list of the birds of Tasmania, together with the natural history information that they were able to acquire. They had to arrange their list in some hopefully meaningful way (avian systematics), and so struggled to fit their birds into some classification scheme. This was a struggle because the avian classification schemes of the early nineteenth century were varied, with each European taxonomist having his own pet scheme that grouped the higher taxa (e.g., order, suborder, tribe, family) in different ways (Stresemann 1975, Walters 2003). It was clear that a particular bird species had closer "affinities" (whatever that meant) with some birds than to others. For example, all the gull species had closer affinities to each other than to sparrows. Another problem was how to organize the higher taxa. If you grouped all bird species into, for example, six orders, how did you order the orders—were raptors placed first, or should the wading birds be first? Emphasis was placed on a "natural order," but what did "natural" mean? Gunn and Grant were exposed to a variety of different answers to these questions through the books in their possession, including the writers who they most relied upon while identifying the birds they collected. These included Nicholas Vigors, John Latham, George Shaw, Louis Vieillot, William Swainson, G. L. Comte de Buffon, and Baron Cuvier (for detailed accounts of these varied classification systems see Stresemann 1975 and Walters 2003). Gunn was also influenced by ornithologists in what is now Sydney, for example, the Macleay family. William Sharp Macleay, who arrived in Sydney in 1838, was the first to propose a Quinary classification system that in turn influenced both Vigors and Swainson, and even Charles Darwin (Di Gregorio 1996), as well as Gunn. Gunn visited Sydney and interacted with ornithologists and naturalists there.

The major problem with all of these "natural" classification systems—and some were rather mystical and bizarre, especially the Quinary systems—was that they predated Darwin's concept of evolution through natural selection. Most were predicated on the assumption of fixity of species and some sort of hierarchy among living organisms

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preordained by God (man was, of course, at the top of the ladder or chain of being). With the concept of evolution came the idea that species that were similar to each other were either closely related or had evolved similar characteristics because they were subjected to similar selective pressures. With Darwin, the construction of a “natural” classification became feasible.

Gunn and Grant’s struggle with “natural” classification systems illustrates how impossible the task was for them two decades before publication of Darwin’s classic work on evolution (1859). It is also interesting to note that they flirted in several places with evolutionary ideas.

Both Gunn and Grant were meticulous workers, and approached their task with a great deal of common sense. Gunn, particularly, chided most European workers for not referring to the existing literature, with a resulting proliferation of names for the same species, and for incomplete and poor descriptions of the species they described. The latter made Gunn and Grant’s work of identifying some of their specimens problematic. Because they had to rely on books for descriptions of already-described species, they often tried to match their Tasmanian specimens with descriptions of non-Australian species, which frequently led to mistakes and confusion.

John Gould, under the auspices of Lieutenant-Governor Sir John Frankin and Lady Franklin, who were to have a profound effect on Gunn’s career, arrived on the Australian and Tasmanian scene in 1838 (Sharpe 1893, Lambourne 1987, Tree 1992, Sauer 1998a). Gunn and Grant apparently ceased their taxonomic bird projects, perhaps because Gould soon dominated Australian ornithology, publishing his epic, *The Birds of Australia* (1840-1848), and *Handbook* (1865). Or, perhaps, Gunn was simply distracted by his many new duties after returning from the isolation of Circular Head, and decided to dedicate his restricted free time to his botanical studies. As late as 26 June 1838, Gunn indicated in a letter to Grant (see pp. 209-210) that he still hoped to complete the project of listing all of Tasmania’s birds:

“Having now by dint of indefatigable exertion in the space of two years got through somewhat less than the eighth part of the Birds of Van Diemen’s Land—we may hope that in the course of fourteen years more we may by strenuous efforts get through the Classification and naming of the other seven-eighths . . . From

time to time we shall be enabled to dovetail into the Series any odd species we may kick up & it is possible by & bye—when attention is drawn to the Subject—that occasional New Holland Birds will be blown across, fished up & added to our Tasmanian Fauna.”

Gunn continued to collect birds and provided Gould with specimens at least through 1849 (Sauer 1998b, 1999, 2001). The classification system (see pp. 227-234) in Gunn’s handwriting contains the date of 1840, and thus indicates that his ornithological interests persisted. There is no question, however, that the correspondence of Grant and Gunn from 1836-1838 was the seminal serious study of Tasmanian birds.

The ornithological work of Gunn and Grant was very much a work in progress when Gould arrived. They discussed in their letters between 60 and 70 species birds that are on the current list of Tasmanian birds (it was not always clear, in some cases, whether their comments were about Tasmanian birds or those found elsewhere) of nearly 200 species that could be expected on the island today. They also discussed a number of species found as far afield as North America and Europe, usually when discussing or summarizing books that they had received and recently read. It is interesting to note that they seemingly ignored entire groups of birds, for example the shorebirds (waders) or gulls and terns, and did not deal with some of the endemic species (e.g., the Strong-billed (*Melithreptus validirostris*) and Black-headed (*M. affinis*) Honeyeaters that they presumably had an opportunity to collect and study, and the 1837 list of birds by Gunn indicates that they were familiar with many more species than they discussed in detail in their correspondence (see Appendix II). Nonetheless, their work on Tasmanian ornithology was substantial, and their letters are an important contribution to the history of Australian ornithology.

Chapter 2

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF RONALD CAMPBELL GUNN AND JAMES GRANT

Ronald Campbell Gunn—Although James Grant has faded into obscurity, that Ronald Campbell Gunn remains a person of interest is attested to by the continuing publications about him and his work (e.g., Reynolds 1926, Baulch 1961, Burns and Skemp 1961, Buchanan 1988, Wilson 2002, Voss 2003, Blackwood 2005). A statue of Gunn by sculptor Peter Corlett was dedicated on 4 July 2006, in Launceston, Tasmania, where he spend many years of his life (Figure 1). Gunn was



Figure 1. Statue by sculptor Peter Corlett, the inscription in the base reading: Ronald Campbell Gunn, F.L.S., F.R.S., Botanist, 1808-1881. Photograph by WED.

born on 4 April 1808 at Cape Town, South Africa, during tumultuous times in Europe, the Napoleonic Wars casting a pall across the European landscape. Ronald's father, William, was a lieutenant in the 72nd Highland Regiment, and Ronald spent his early years on the island of Réunion (Bourbon). In 1814 the military family returned briefly to the Cape of Good Hope and, fortuitously for Ronald's future, became friends with Lt.-Col. William Sorell, who later became the Lieutenant-Governor of Van Diemen's Land, where he would be indirectly influential in Ronald Campbell Gunn's settling there. The family then moved to moved to the West Indies, and several years later to Scotland, to Aberdeen, where Gunn received a parochial education designed to promote a military career (Baulch 1961).

Ronald's elder brother, also a William, in 1822 traveled to Australia, where his ship stopped at Hobart and a chance meeting with Lt.-Col. Sorell led to him settling in Tasmania (then Van Diemen's Land) and receiving a land grant. Meanwhile, Ronald returned to the West Indies, where he worked for the Royal Engineers at Antigua, married and had two children. Brother William finally persuaded Ronald to bring his family to Tasmania, and the family returned to England in 1829, and in early February 1830 set out for Hobart (then Hobart Town) aboard the *Greenock*. He brought letters of introduction and the support of brother William, and soon was appointed superintendent of a convict barracks in Hobart, under the supervision of his brother. Gunn was obviously a very competent individual and by December of 1830 had moved to Launceston where he became Assistant Superintendent of Convicts. Because Van Diemen's Land was a penal colony, there was much work available managing convicts. He became Police Magistrate in 1833, with a rather heavy case load. He soon became friends with Robert William Lawrence, a man of about his own age whose father, William Effington Lawrence, was a major landowner in the region. Robert Lawrence and Thomas Scott stimulated an interest for botany in Gunn, and by letter introduced Gunn to William J. Hooker, a botanist and professor at Glasgow University, with the idea that Gunn would become a collector for the famous botanist. Despite Robert Lawrence's death in 1832, Gunn continued to botanize and collect for Hooker (Burns and Skemp 1966).

Gunn was offered the position of Police Magistrate of Circular Head (a large area in the far northwest of Tasmania), a position with a light work load that would give him an opportunity to expand his plant

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collecting activities and to develop his burgeoning interests in other fields of natural history, including ornithology. His life was not without complications, however. His wife had trouble adapting to colonial life (see letter from Gunn to Hooker, Burns and Skemp 1961, p. 50) and Gunn sent her back to her family in Dublin, where she died in 1836, leaving Gunn, at age 28, with five children to care for.

Nevertheless, this several years in the relative isolation of the far northwest led to the correspondence with his friend James Grant in Launceston, which constitutes the bulk of this book, and contains the first body of ornithological knowledge about the birds of Tasmania.

During the early 1830s, as Gunn began serious plant collecting for W. J. Hooker, he developed a need to accumulate a natural history library. In a 1 July 1833 letter to Hooker he stated,

“I am still without a single work, and can only obtain occasional glimpses at Books on Botany belonging to my friends—None are to be obtained by purchase either in this country or New South Wales.” (Burns and Skemp 1961, pp. 31-32).

At the time there were no public libraries in Hobart or Launceston, so Gunn was forced to make his own collection of natural history reference books, a library that became one of the finest in colonial Tasmania. A manuscript catalog of the holdings of the Gunn library (Gunn 1848) shows the rapid progress that he had made. The catalog has 70 entries for zoology, 255 for botany, and 77 for natural history in general (Wilson 2002).

Gunn's association with Hooker was a fruitful one for both parties. Hooker received Tasmanian plant specimens, many of which were new to science, and Gunn received books and had the honor of having a genus (*Gunnia*) and about 60 plant species named after him (about half of which are still valid, the others disappearing into synonymy). Gunn also sent Hooker specimens of a broad spectrum of animals, including birds and mammals that Hooker distributed for identification and description leading ornithologists and mammalogists in Great Britain.

In a 30 March 1835 letter to Hooker, Gunn gave us our first indication that he had expanded his interest into birds and the frustrations that this entailed,

“I regret I have been extremely unsuccessful in my pursuit of the two other branches of Natural History, vizt. Birds and Insects—

With reference to Birds—I have tried in vain to acquire skill in skinning them and have failed, and have been equally unsuccessful in my search for a man capable of doing so—I do not however despair of procuring one of the first Bird skinners who arrives in any prison ship from England . . .” (Burns and Skemp 1961, pp. 41-44).

In a letter dated 6 May 1835, Gunn stated that he has shipped a box of bird skins to Hooker, although most were badly preserved and from the collection of his late friend Robert Lawrence. By 29 June 1835, Gunn had found a professional bird skinner, James Lee (Buchanan 1988), and begun actively collecting birds around Launceston. In a 16 January letter to Hooker from Launceston, Gunn stated that he was shipping,

“ . . . a large Case containing 330 to 340 Skins of the Birds of this Colony—A few skins of Birds (19) from New Holl. [mainland Australia] and a few Animals [mammals] and Reptile skins of this my adopted land.” (Burns and Skemp 1961, pp. 51-52).

One of the mammal specimens was an Eastern Barred Bandicoot *Perameles gunnii* named in honor of Gunn by Gray in 1838.

Gunn was meticulous in packing specimens, and it was this care that is at least partly responsible for the fact that more than 300 of Gunn’s bird specimens are still extant in the collections of the British Museum (Natural History) and the Liverpool Museums. Gunn told of his packing procedures in a 5 February 1836 letter to Hooker,

“ . . . I hope that they [the specimens] will reach you safe and soon—the case is lined with tin and I have taken every precaution by packing every specimen in paper and wool between, to prevent any from rubbing or getting otherwise injured—Lots of camphor and spirits of Turpentine have also been put in the box so that I think they will be found perfectly free from insects . . .” (Burns and Skemp 1961, p. 54).

Gunn had acquired a circle of close friends while in Launceston. This is attested to not only by his extensive serious correspondence with one member of this circle, James Grant, but also by a series of humorous “newspapers” written and decorated by Gunn while he was at Circular Head for the amusement of his Launceston friends (Wilson no

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date). The newspapers as issued, under Gunn's pseudonym Caleb Comical, in chronological order were called, *Horton Herald*, *North West Literary Chronicle* and *Chronological List of Tasmania* (Turnbull 1948) (16 issues were purchased in 1982 by the Archives Office of Tasmania in Hobart, but in a 1990 inventory they were unfortunately reported missing). While Grant was at Circular Head, a group of Gunn's friends, calling themselves "Longnose & Co." wrote and illustrated a skit, and James Grant, who was a watercolorist as well as physician (Glover 1992), may well have been responsible for the caricatures that accompanied the manuscript; the character, Caleb Comical, was certainly Ronald Campbell Gunn. The skit provided insight into Gunn's personality: "Through the liberties taken by his friends we can infer that he was a seriously amusing character with a wicked sense of humor." (Wilson no date). These amusing interactions with his friends while he was at Circular Head were in sharp contrast to his professional and very serious correspondence with James Grant on the subject of ornithology.

Gunn did not suffer fools gladly, and could be very critical, as in a 2 September 1836 letter from Gunn to Hooker in which he blasted an associate,

"He is really supremely ignorant, vain & conceited and although we agree very well with each other, I must say that I have seldom met with a young man who has seen so much of the world and benefited so little by his experiences." (Burns and Skemp 1961, pp. 55-56).

In a 10 November 1836 letter (from Circular Head), Gunn continued his assault on this hapless individual,

"His collections he always purchased where possible, and all his other information he principally gleaned from me by copying my various memoranda on Birds & Plants—But even with that assistance so little research does he himself possess that I would recommend much caution in your publishing or acting upon information received from him.—His ignorance can only be equaled by his vanity and assumption of knowledge—or I might say impudence." (Burns and Skemp 1961, pp. 57-58).

You didn't want Ronald Campbell Gunn to be angry with you. The letters from Gunn to Grant in this volume occasionally take on a sharply critical tone when Gunn perceived shortcomings in Grant.

Circular Head proved to be everything Gunn had hoped for as far as a caseload was concerned, as he explained in a letter to Hooker on 16 November 1836,

“My Police District is about 100 miles long . . . but extensive as it is on the map I am happy to say the duties are almost a sinecure—and as compared to the situation I left, entirely so.—At Launceston I have frequently tried up to 30 cases in a day—here I have had only 18 in six months . . .” (Burns and Skemp 1961, pp. 58-60).

In the same letter Gunn expressed relief that Colonel Arthur, the Lieutenant-Governor of Van Diemen’s Land, had left, as Gunn thought Arthur unresponsive to science. Gunn then showed a strong interest in conservation and states,

“Many of our animals and Birds will become extinct or nearly so yet no attempt at a Museum, Botanical or Zoological Gardens has been made . . . Emus are now extremely rare—and in a few years will be quite gone, and no means has been taken in the Colony to domesticate or breed them.”

Gunn then expressed hope that the new Lieutenant-Governor, Sir John Franklin, who took office in January 1837, would alter matters. This would certainly prove to be the case. Gunn managed to send two Emus (the Tasmanian species, or subspecies depending on which taxonomist you talk to) to Hooker, and these were reportedly the only specimens in European museums (both were possibly destroyed during World War II [Burns and Skemp 1961], although two specimens currently reside in the British Museum (Natural History) [R. Schodde, pers. comm.]). The Tasmanian Emu is presumed to have become extinct about the middle of the nineteenth century.

The leisure time that the Circular Head position afforded was utilized by Gunn to greatly expand his collecting, both of plants for Hooker, and birds. He was also delighted with Sir John and Lady Jane Franklin, reporting in a 15 February 1838 letter to Hooker,

“Sir John & Lady Franklin are sincerely desirous of forwarding the Cause of Natural History in this Colony.—A Nat. Hist. Socy. has been Established and Lady Franklin is about purchasing a piece of ground out of her private income for a collection of our

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

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indigenous Plants—a thing most urgently wanted.” (Burns and Skemp 1961, pp. 70-72).

Gunn had been invited to meet with the new Governor and his wife in 1837, and accompanied them on a visit to Flinders Island. He later accompanied Lady Franklin and British ornithologist John Gould on an aborted trip to Port Davey and Macquarie Harbour on the west coast of Tasmania (Sauer 1982), spending two to three weeks at Recherche Bay. Gunn was offered a position in Hobart as Second Assistant Police Magistrate, and thus on 14 October 1838, Gunn’s extraordinarily productive two years at Circular Head came to an end (Baulch 1961). He prophetically suggested that, “My present situation will occupy my time more fully than it has been for some years past—so that my Natl. History Collections are likely to be small for some time to come . . .” (Gunn to Hooker 30 November 1838; Burns and Skemp, pp. 81-82). Gunn continued to collect plants, including live ones for shipment to Great Britain for Hooker, and some birds, but his own writing on birds became sadly diminished. The Gunn/Grant correspondence from Circular Head and Launceston was the high point of Gunn’s and Grant’s ornithological efforts. It seems likely that the presence of John Gould beginning in 1838, and the collecting efforts of his collector John Gilbert, may have doused the flames of inquiry about birds. Gould went on to publish his massive illustrated work on the birds of Australia (1840-1848), and his comprehensive *Handbook to the Birds of Australia* (1865).

Gunn did make some interesting suggestions, however, about birds as dispersers of plants. In a 25 December 1846 letter to Hooker Gunn suggested,

“The wide distribution of Aquatic plants is a matter of interest and I am led to think that Migratory Birds assist nature—or are rather the means used by nature in scattering these plants.” (Burns and Skemp 1961, pp. 115-116).

The attentions of Sir John and Lady Franklin brought Gunn opportunities, and helped him to the forefront of Tasmanian natural history. In Hobart he became Secretary of the Horticultural Society founded in 1839, and in 1840 he became Secretary of the Tasmanian Society that Franklin had started to promote scientific enquiry (Baulch 1961). He became Private Secretary to Sir Franklin, and in this capacity met sci-

entists who visited Hobart, including the son of William J. Hooker, Joseph Dalton Hooker, a man with interests in birds, and to whom he sent specimens. Gunn also accompanied J. D. Hooker on collecting trips while he was in Hobart, aiding greatly in the preparation of his *Flora Tasmaniae* (1860). In his introduction to this important work Hooker stated,

“There are few Tasmanian plants that Mr. Gunn has not seen alive, noted their habits in a living state, collected large suites of specimens with singular tact and judgment. These are transmitted to England in perfect preservation, and are accompanied with notes that display a remarkable power of observation, and a faculty for seizing important characters in their physiogomy, such as few experienced botanists possess.” (Reynolds 1926, p. 14).

In 1839 Gunn, at age 33, remarried and resigned from his government jobs, and became the manager of the large William E. Lawrence estates, living in Launceston. When the Franklins were recalled, he also became manager of their estate. Franklin’s successor attempted to merge the Tasmanian Society with his newly founded Royal Society of Van Diemen’s Land, but met resistance, and Gunn moved the Tasmanian Society to Launceston, where he remained in charge until under yet another Governor’s tenancy, in 1848, the two organizations were merged. For the new Society, Gunn was both Secretary and the editor of the new journal, *The Tasmanian Journal of Natural Science, Agriculture, Statistics, &c.* In 1856 he built a home, Newstead House, where he lived out his years.

Gunn became active in politics. He was elected to the Legislative Council, and in 1855, when the Colony was granted self-government, to the House of Assembly, a seat that he held until 1860. He then held a series of governmental posts until his retirement in 1876 when his health failed (Figure 2). He died on 13 March 1881.

Gunn had had a busy life. He had had five children with his first wife and five more with his second. His writing had largely been confined to a series (see Buchanan 1988 p. 10 for a list) of papers for *The Tasmanian Journal of Natural Science, Agriculture, Statistic, &c.* (later *Papers and Proceedings of the Royal Society of Van Diemen’s Land (Tasmania)*). He also collaborated with James Backhouse in producing the first locally produced botany *Index Plantarum* (1835). He contributed a note to the *London Journal of Botany* that mentioned birds,

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

13

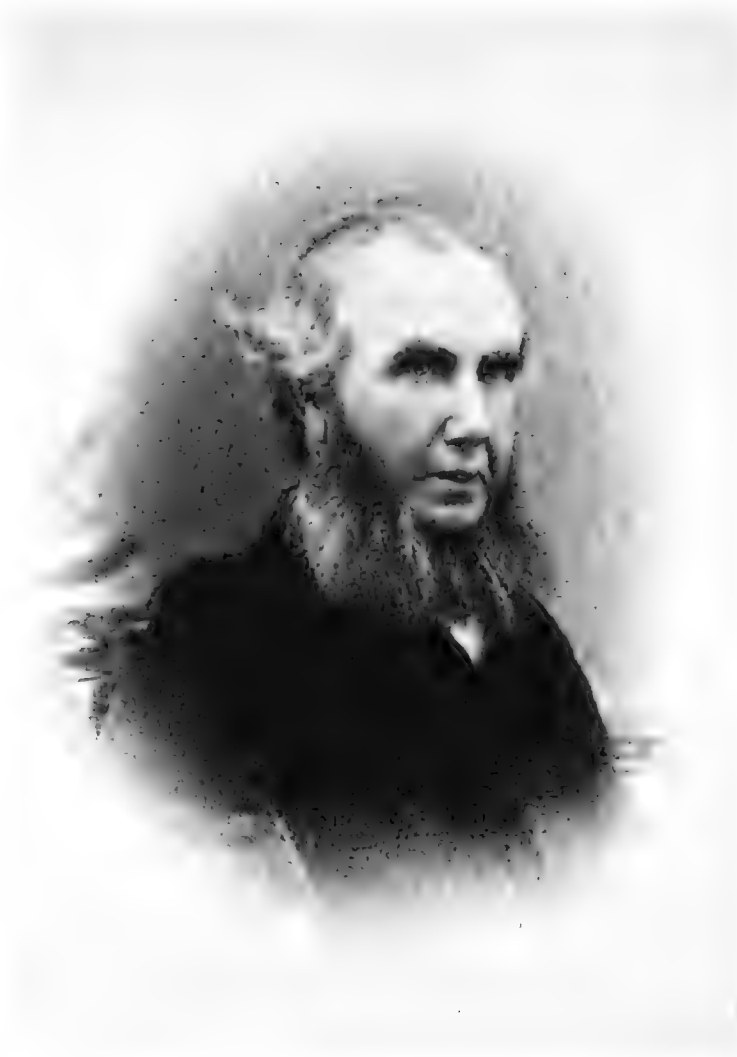


Figure 2. Portrait of Ronald Campbell Gun as an older man.
Courtesy of the State Library of Tasmania.

and he contributed notes on birds for John West's *The History of Tasmania* (West 1852) (Whittell 1954). He authored or co-authored 11 papers in *The Tasmanian Journal of Natural Science, Agriculture, Statistics, &c.* one of which (1849) was probably the first published record of moa bones (Burns and Skemp 1961). The other 10 papers dealt with plants or fossil bones. His personal plant collection was given to the Royal Society of Tasmania, and ended up in the National Herbarium of New South Wales. His extensive work in natural history earned him the election as Fellow of the Linnean Society in 1850 and to the Royal Society of London in 1854, the first Tasmanian so honored, and the only Tasmanian so honored in the nineteenth Century (Wilson 2002).

James Grant—Relatively little is known about the life of James Grant. He was born ca. 1813. He arrived in Van Diemen's Land in 1834 aboard

the ship *Medway*, bearing letters of introduction and references from the Secretary of State of England and from his patron the Marquis of Midlothian (Burns and Skemps 1961, Glover 1992, Wilson no date). He was a physician medical settler, and his first position was as a First Class Assistant Surgeon at the hospital at Launceston. He soon became part of Gunn's circle of friends, and became interested in ornithology. He was a member of the Tasmanian Society (forerunner of the Royal Society of Tasmania) and contributed four papers to *The Tasmanian Journal of Natural Science, Agriculture, &c.*, one co-authored with Gunn. Two of his papers dealt with birds, one with the Australian subspecies of the Eurasian Coot (*Fulica atra australis*) (1846a) and one on the Grey Goshawk (*Accipiter novaehollandiae*) (1846b).



Figure 3. Masked Lapwing (*Vanellus miles*) painting, attributed to James Grant (bird's name, *Vanellus Gallinaceous*, appears to be in Grant's handwriting). Page size: 15 cm x 17.5 cm.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

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Grant was an artist (Kerr 1992) (Figure 3) and his drawing of raptor heads in his letters to Gunn attest to his skill; he published three drawings in one of his papers. His personal life may not have always been a great success. Lady Franklin, in her diary (quoted in Burns and Skemp 1961, p. 80), tells of meeting a Mr. Bickford who lost an eye when hit by shot while Grant was quail hunting. Bickford reported that Grant had, “neglected him tho’ he was suffering much.” For his part, Grant used the excuse of extreme poverty to explain his lack of attendance. We see no signs of problems in Grant’s correspondence with Gunn, however, and Gunn said of Grant in a 31 July 1838 letter to William Hooker, “A very clever young medical gentleman, Dr. J. Grant in Launceston, is endeavouring to arrange and classify our Birds—in which I am lending my humble assistance—or rather we are trying to find out the names, &c. . . .” (Burns and Skemp 1961, p. 79). Grant was also a member of the close circle of friends, “Longnose & Co.”

Grant practiced in Launceston until 1851, when he moved to an estate on the Arthur River in Tasmania’s far northwest, and became the coroner for the Woolnorth district. He was back practicing medicine in Launceston in 1856. He died in 1865 from complications following surgery for injuries sustained in falling from his horse. Grant’s death was apparently a great blow to Gunn, who had maintained their friendship through the years. Gunn’s friendship with Grant is attested to by a silver tray that bears the inscription, “To Ronald Campbell Gunn Esq. A Token of Esteem & Gratitude from the relatives of the late Dr. James Grant.” (Burns and Skemp 1961, p. 81). Like Gunn, Grant’s writings on subjects ornithological were diminished after John Gould had spent time in Tasmania.

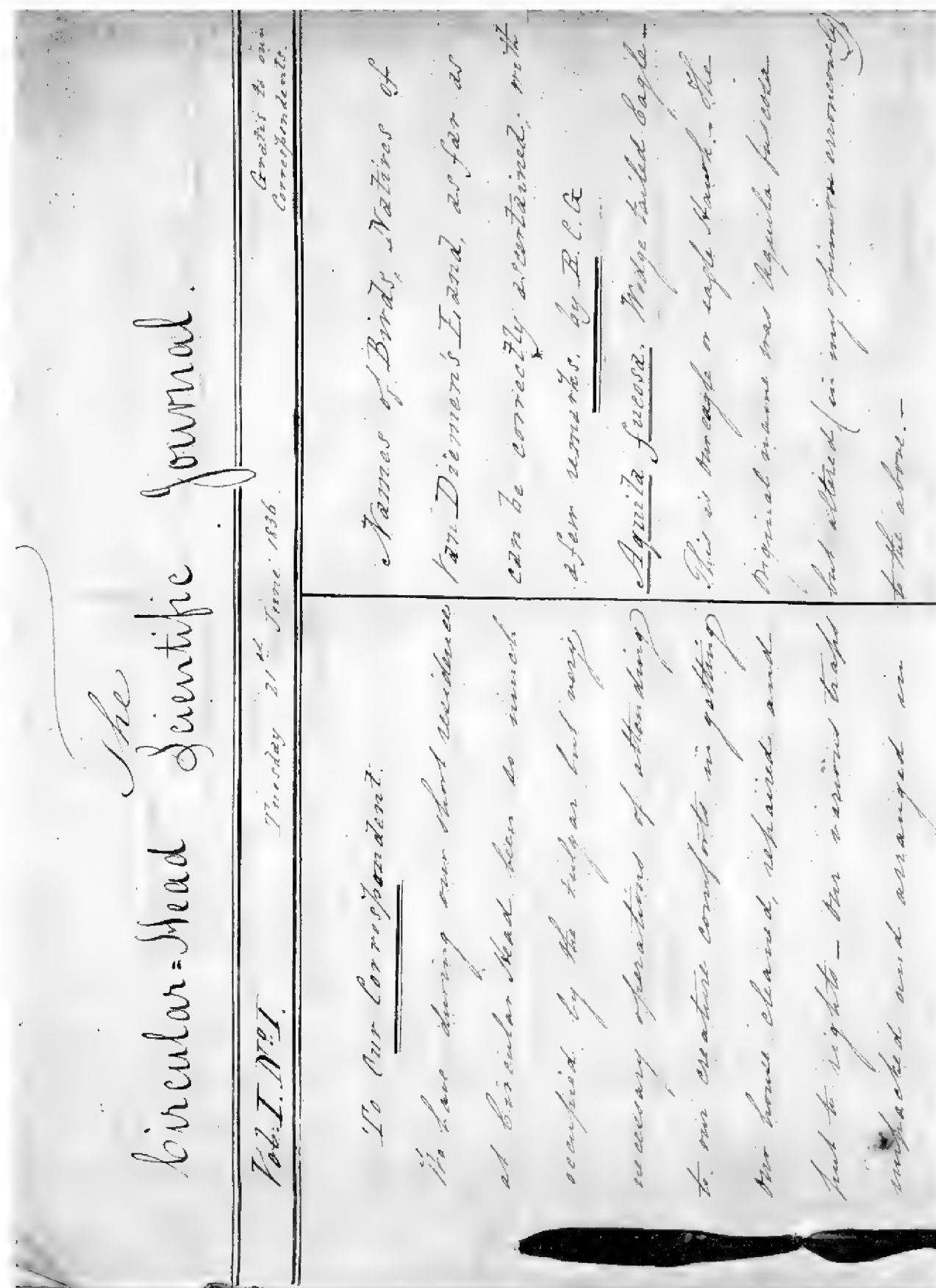


Figure 4. Circular-Head Scientific Journal, 21 June 1836. The page size of all of Gunn's letters (length x width) were approximately 25 cm x 20.2 cm.

CHAPTER 3

The Circular-Head Scientific Journal.[Figure 4]

Vol. I. No. I	Tuesday 21 st June 1836	Gratis to our Correspondents
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To Our Correspondent.

We have during our short residence at Circular Head been so much occupied by the vulgar but very necessary operations of attending to our creature comforts in getting our house cleaned, repaired and put to rights – our various traps unpacked and arranged in proper order – and though last not least the various wants in the way of food put in such a train of being supplied as to render starvation improbable, &c &c that we have been hitherto unable to devote that portion of our time to Scientific Pursuits which we hope in future to do – With that apology — we begin. –

[column break]

Names of Birds, Natives of
Van Diemen's Land, as far as
can be correctly ascertained; with
a few remarks. by R. C. G

Aquila fucose. Wedge tailed Eagle –
**[Wedge-tailed Eagle *Aquila audax fleayi*, a Tasmanian endemic
subspecies]**

18

This is our eagle or eagle hawk – The original name was *Aquila fuscosa* but altered (in my opinion erroneously) to the above. –

Dromaius Nova Hollandiae. Emu.

[Emu *Dromaius novaehollandiae diemenensis*, the now extinct Tasmanian subspecies]

Of this genus only one species exists.

Cygnus atratus. Black Swan. –

[*Cygnus atratus*]

Plyctolophus galeritus. Greater Sulphur crested Cockatoo. – Our white –

[Sulphur-crested Cockatoo *Cacatua galerita*]

called *Psittacus galeritus* in the old books. —

Barita Tibicen. Piping Crow

[Australian Magpie *Gymnorhina tibicen hypoleuca*, an endemic Tasmanian subspecies]

Our Common Magpie – called *Gracula tibicen* in Shaw's *Zoology - & Coracias*

[Shaw 1800-1826 (1809), Vol. 7, part 2, p. 465]

[page break]

Tibicen of Latham. –

Cereopsis Novae Hollandiae. Cape Barren Goose. –

[*Cereopsis novaehollandiae*]

The above Six names are from a book called “Gardens & Menageries of the Zoological Society” by Mr. Bennett the Secretary – 1831. – accompanied by very correct figures. –

[Bennett 1831]

Psittacus eximus. Non-pareil Parrot

[Eastern Rosella *Platycerus eximius diemenensis*, the endemic

CORRESPONDENCE

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Tasmanian subspecies, which is the largest race of the Eastern Rosella.]

is our Roselle – Or as some call it
Rose-Hill – viz. after a place near

[Rose-Hill is now know as Parramata, a suburb of Sydney.] [“viz” is a Latin abbreviation for “namely,” “that is to say,” etc.]

Sydney where it was very abundant.

Psittacus terrestris. Ground Parrot.

[*Pezoporus wallicus leachi*, an endemic Tasmania subspecies]

The one disected [sic] by you. –

Turdus punctatus. Spotted Shouldered

Thrush – Called also here “ground Dove.”

[Spotted Quail-thrush *Cinclosoma punctatum dovei*, an endemic Tasmanian subspecies]

it keeps much on the ground making
very short flights. –

The above three names from a
book called “Specimen of the
Zoology of New Holland by Geo.

Shaw, M.D. &c 1794 [**Shaw 1794**] – of the two
parrots correct coloured figures

[column break]

are given. –

Muscicapa flabellifera. Fan tailed

Fycatcher. — this I think agrees very

[Grey Fantail *Rhipidura albiscapa albiscapa*, an endemic Tasmania subspecies]

correctly with my No. 1. – Some

[Gunn and Grant sent each other specimens of birds they had collected and preserved, and referred to them by their numbered labels.]

specimens from New Holland appear
a little different but two coloured
plates that I have seen lead me to

20

think I am correct.

Muscicapa erythrogastra – Red bellied
Flycatcher. – The Musicapa Multicolor

**[Scarlet Robin *Petroica boodang leggii*, an endemic Tasmanian
subspecies]**

of Gmelin – This bird is figured &
coloured in a Copy of Latham's
Index Ornithologicus which I possess

[Latham 1790]

& is evidently my No. 2 – now sent –
He says – “Head, neck, &c black, breast
& belly of a deep carmine” – For

[Latham 1790, Vol. 11, p. 479]

farther Remarks see a subsequent
article. –

Alauda Novae Zealandiae. New Zealand
Lark – This is I think the lark which

**[Australian Pipit *Anthus australis bistriatus*, an endemic Tasmania
subspecies]**

is so abundant about Launceston,
running much on the ground, also
found on the Sea shores. – No. 5 a bad
specimen sent. –

[page break]

Silvia cyanea. – Superb Warbler –

**[Superb Fairy-wren *Malurus cyaneus cyaneus*, an endemic
Tasmanian subspecies]**

is our Blue Wren –

Pipra striata. Striped-headed

**[Striated Pardalote *Pardalotus striatus striatus*, a breeding endemic
Tasmanian subspecies]**

Manakin – Is I think my No. 6. – now
sent. – fig? In “Latham Ind. Orn” –

[Latham 1790]

The last five names are from
Latham's Index Ornithologicus –

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[Latham 1790]Gracula strepera. Noisy Grakle [sic]**[Grey Currawong *Strepera versicolor arguta*, a Tasmanian endemic subspecies]**

is our Black Magpie with the white vent – the “*Coracias strepera*” of Latham
Corvus graculinus or White-vented Crow
 of White’s Voy. to N.S. Wales. – The other

[White 1790]

species without the white vent is
 abundant here if you want any
 specimens, but not the above species. –

[The species with the white vent, Grey Currawong *Strepera versicolor arguta* is the ‘Clinking’ Currawong, a Tasmanian endemic subspecies, which is the darkest and largest race of Grey Currawong. The other Tasmanian species, without the white vent (the vent is black), is the Tasmanian endemic Black Currawong *S. fuliginosa*.]

Loxia nitida. Nitid grosbeak –**[Beautiful Firetail *Stagonopleura bella*]**

Is I think my No. 7. – now sent. — It
 agrees with a description I once read. –
 I have seen by the bye no other species
 of Grosbeak in V.D.L.

Merops carunculatus – of Shaw’s Zoology**[Red Wattlebird *Anthochaera carunculata*, which is not found in Tasmania]**

called also *Corvus carunculatus* &
Corvus paradoxus in the older works

[column break]

is evidently our Wattle-bird. – What

[Gunn is wrong here. The Tasmanian wattlebird is the Yellow Wattlebird *Anthochaera paradoxa*, a Tasmnian endemic species.]

22

is its new name?

Falco albus – White Hawk?

[This most certainly is the Grey Goshawk *Accipiter novaehollandiae*. In Tasmania, only the white morph of this polymorphic species occurs.]

Psittacus verticalis – Is this our

Common green Parrot? it is

[Green Rosella *Platycerus caledonicus*, an endemic Tasmanian species.]

very abundant here – but the Rosella

[Eastern Rosella]

is never seen in this quarter –

Is Psittacus sanguinolentus of

Shaw our Parrakeet with the claret

coloured tail – red shouldered? -

[The ‘Parrakeet’ with the claret-coloured tail is the Swift Parrot *Lathamus discolor*, a Tasmanian breeding endemic that migrates to the mainland for the winter.]

A little time will I think enable me to ferret out a few more names – but as yet I have not had time. – I will send you the Specific descriptions & other Remarks on any species you may require provided you do not possess them in your work – The above notes will however perhaps assist you a little. – Send me all the names you can — & any Queries on mine now sent – We cannot arrive at the truth except by

[page break]

continued investigation, & the Van

CORRESPONDENCE

23

Diemen's Land Birds though very similar to those of New South Wales may prove quite distinct, & most of the specimens described have been from the latter colony.—

[It would be interesting to know what Gunn thought about the reasons behind the fact that some birds that are geographically isolated from other birds got to be different and the fact that some birds seemed to be more closely related, or at least were more like some birds than others. This was two decades before Darwin and Wallace demolished the concept of fixity of species, and initiated a new paradigm, the evolution of species by natural selection. Gunn clearly recognized that many Tasmanian birds differed in small ways from similar birds on the mainland. One wonders if the idea of gradual changes in species occurred to him. Between 1836 and 1838 Darwin was aboard the *Beagle* making his observations that would two decades later flower into his magnum opus *Origin of Species* (1859).]

The length of the preceding article has left us little room for the many miscellaneous topics which we hope in future to introduce into this our "Scientific Journal" — Circular Head affords considerable novelty — two birds have been shot by us — one entirely new & the other rare — Specimens are sent to you — numbered — viz. [?] The entirely new one to us No. 8 — The rare one in other parts No. 9 — both are very common here, — No. 8 — associates a good deal with the Honeysuckle Birds — or at least

[New Holland Honeyeater *Phylidonyris novaehollandiae canescens*, an endemic Tasmanian subspecies]

24

has a habit not dissimilar –

[column break]

the flight consists of more sudden jerks – it flies higher – is wilder – also much more on the ground – The other (no. 9) is common in our garden & yard hopping about picking up insects, — &c The Rosella Parrot

[Eastern Rosella]

Parrot **[sic]** is never seen, — The White Vented Black Magpie

[Grey Currawong]

& the Barita
tibicen

[Australian Magpie]

are also we are informed never found at or near Circular Head the latter we miss much, its note being delightful. — The Miner does

[probably Noisy Miner *Manorina melanocephala leachi*, an endemic Tasmanian subspecies]

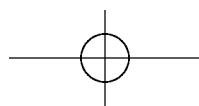
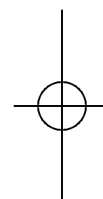
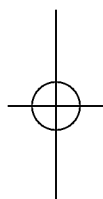
not exist – but we shall make out a list of the rare Aves – which we must beg to be supplied with from Launceston and in return shall send a list of the Common ones here which may prove rare near the City of the North. —

Our long Article on the Red bellied Flycatchers we must commence in a Supplementary sheet. —

[end of letter]

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Supplement to the
Circular-Head Scientific Journal.

Vol. I. No. I. Tuesday 21st June 1836. *Grants to our Correspondents.*

On the different Species of Muscivora known as Robin Red-Breasts in Australia.

Muscivora erythrogastra as described in your Memorandum copied from the Linnaean Transactions and from the colored figure in Latham's Ind. Brn. is evidently the same as now called M. 2. - The M. 1. is a different species.

Muscivora Lathamii is evidently M. 3. the colour of the head and abdomen "partures - variis" - agrees with a species which exists in 1836 but is rare - I saw one on Beveridge's house - I saw some introduced in a collection from New South Wales in the possession of Mr John Abbott. - I have also heard of its existing here. - ^{1836?}

Figure 5. Circular-Head Scientific Journal, Supplement.

Supplement to the
Circular-Head Scientific Journal [Figure 5]

Vol I. No. I.

Tuesday 21st June 1836

Gratis to
Our correspondents

[The following two lines appear to be in Grant's handwriting.]

On the different Species of Muscicapa
Know as Robin Red-Breasts in Australia

Muscicapa erythrogastra as described

[Scarlet Robin]

in your Memorandum copied from
the Linnaean Transactions and from
Coloured figure in Latham's Ind.
Orn. Is evidently the Specimen

[Latham 1790]

now sent marked No. 2 – The
black throat is a striking distinction
from the Specimen No. 3 also sent –

**[probably the Flame Robin *Petroica phoenicea*, which has an
orange throat]**

the black is also more dark and I
find it continues equally marked
in all the specimens I have seen
as also the different colour of the
red on the breast & belly – I do not
think age is the cause – or that
they are the same species – or even
varieties of the same. –

[column break]

**[In this last sentence we see that Gunn is aware of what after
Darwin would be considered subspecies, populations of bird that
differ slightly from other populations—varieties. One wonders
what he thought might cause these differences between varieties.]**

Muscicapa Lathami is evidently not
No. 3. the colour of the breast and
abdomen “purpureo-roseis” — agrees
with a species which exists in V.D.L.
but is rare — I saw one on Beveridges

[This is probably the Pink Robin *Petroica rodinogaster*, which is an uncommon resident of Tasmania and is also found in Victoria. It is possible that the specimens that Gunn refers to from New South Wales were of the somewhat similar plumaged Rose Robin *P. rosea* although the male of the latter has gray upperparts, whereas in the male Pink Robin they are black.]

farm — & saw some specimens in a
collection from New South Wales in the
possession of Mr. John Abbott. — I have
also heard of its existing here. C. Hd. — The

[Circular Head]

description of Muscicapa Lathami as
given by you from the Linnean Trans.
Strangely disagrees with that given
in Shaws Zoology to the same species.
He says “upper parts brown, the under
yellow; crown of Head & cheeks black,
quills dark brown & some with yellow
margins &c.” He must evidently

[Shaw 1800-1826 (1817), Vol. 10, Part 2, p. 336] [This description is of the Yellow-throated Scrubwren (*Sercornis citreogularis*), which is not found in Tasmania.]

be describing a different Bird to
the M. Lathami of the Linnean Soc’y.

[page break]

Muscicapa Goodenovii. — is in my
[Red-capped Robin *Petroica goodenovii*]
opinion the specimen now sent you
No. 4. — in the specific description
it says ‘fronte, pectoreque vivide
coccineis’ — fronte being the forehead. —

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29

[Vigors and Horsfield 1827, p. 245]

This beautiful species is from New South Wales and though a bad one being the only one I possess I must beg you to return after you have examined. – Having now made a few Remarks on the three species of Muscicapa of which you gave me the description I think the species sent as No. 3, is undescribed & certainly none of the three above alluded to – the var. B. of M. Latham I have not mentioned as the difference is only in the tail. –

Any further Remarks and Researches on this point will be welcomely received – I shall also make a few further observations as the two species exist here. –

[column break]

Crows.

The Crow with the white Iris shaded with blue into the pupil is very abundant here – feeding on the dead fish &c cast up on the Beach. – I think 3 species on examination will be found. – viz. [?] One with brown iris. – One with a brown iris but white orbits or if I recollect a large white patch behind the eye — & the third with the white iris now alluded to & the plumage more like that of a raven. – your observations

30

on this point are requested – as also
the specific names of any of the species –

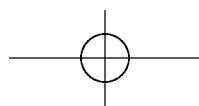
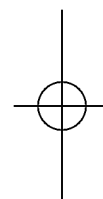
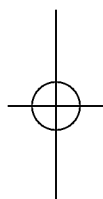
[The only crow now found in Tasmania is the Forest Raven *Corvus tasmanicus* and it is likely that it was the only species present during Gunn's time. Juvenile Forest Ravens have brown irises and hence Gunn was, in all probability, confusing juvenile differences with species characters. Forest Ravens have relatively short tails and massive bills compared to other Australian corvids. The fact that Gunn makes no mention of differences in these characters among his specimens suggests that all were the same species.]

[A paragraph on snakes is not included here.]

[end of letter]

CORRESPONDENCE

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To the Editor
of the
Circular-Head Scientific Journal

contribution 1st
flammarion albes

Fam. Stigidiae
Genus. Noctua Sav.
Species. Noctua maculata

To Our Editor
=

We hail you with much pleasure the
first no. of the Scientific Journal
and desired real gratification. This is the small spotted larva
from its perusal - and he two specimens of which we possess
hope that any gleanings he in the neighborhood of Laureceton
may be able to collect and the we shot in the best of
transmit. may he found worthy the day in the month of April
of a place ^{otherwise} ~~in your collection~~ when he were attached to a ~~book~~
- but as the field of larvae by a great number of
Pratt is very vast and wrens & far-tailed fly catchers
our knowledge very little ~~from among~~ ^{through} the midst of which
~~are~~ ^{are} ~~to~~ ^{to} ~~be~~ ^{be} ~~found~~ ^{found} ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~settle~~ ^{settle}

Figure 6. To the Editor, Circular-Head Scientific Journal (draft). The page size of Grant's letters (length x width) was approximately 23 cm x 18.2 cm.

[The following letter is to Ronald C. Gunn by James Grant of Launceston.]

To The Editor
of the
Circular-Head Scientific Journal

Contribution. 1st

[Transcribed here is a first draft of a letter sent 5 July 1836.]
[Figures 6 and 7]

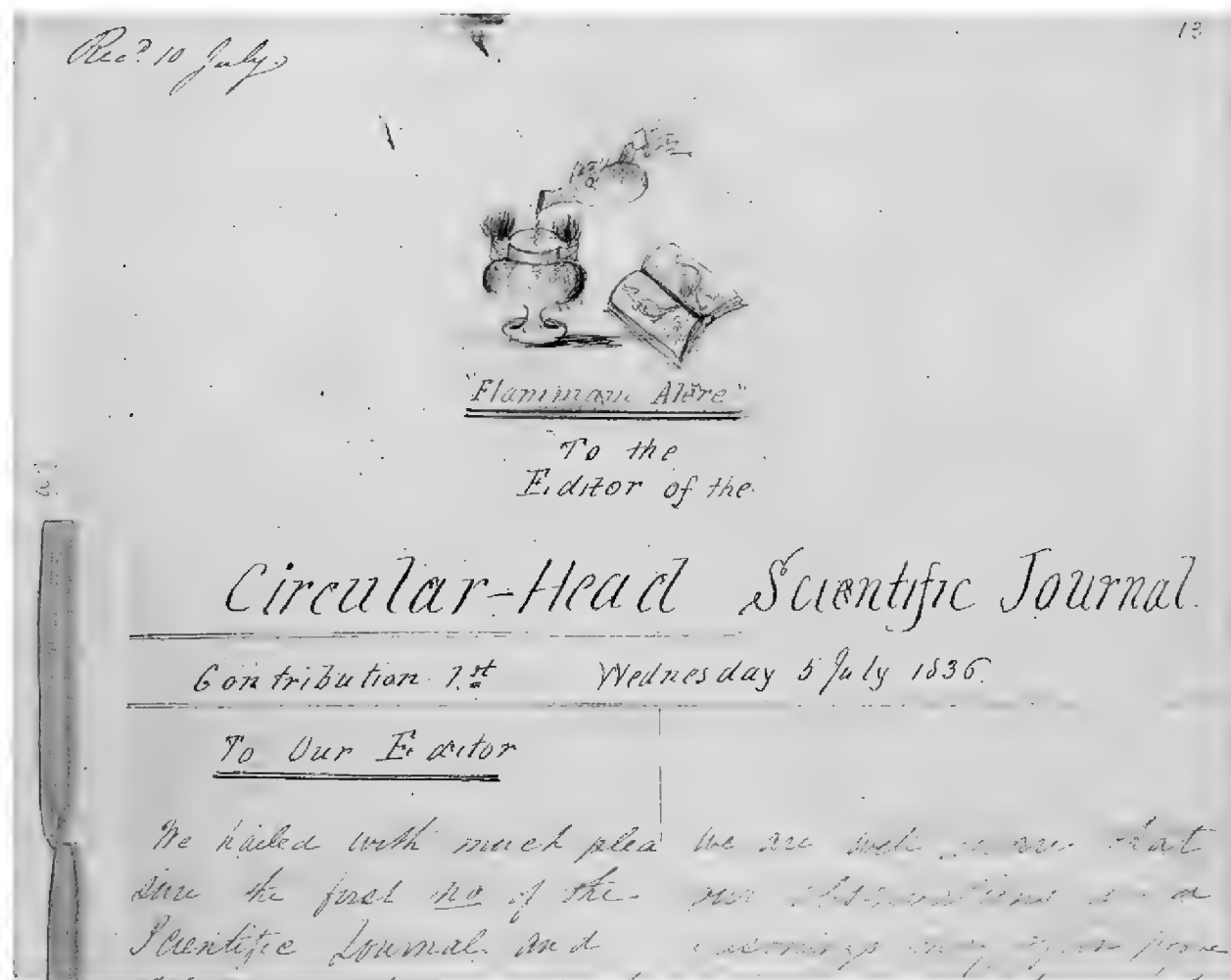


Figure 7. To the Editor, Circular-Head Scientific Journal, 5 July 1836

To Our Editor

We hailed with much pleasure the
 first no of the Scientific Journal
 and derived real gratification
 from its perusal – and we
 hope that any gleanings we
 May be able to collect and
 transmit may be found worthy
 of a place therein
 — but as the field of
 Nature is very vast and
 our knowledge being little
 we are well aware that
 our observations and reason
 — ings may often prove false
 and therefore hope that our
 Editor will not reject such
 contributions but carefully
 examine – put
 them to rights – & thus and **[sic]**
 set us in the right path
 to the temple of Truth!
!!!

[column break]

Fam. Strigidae
 Genus. Noctua. Sav.

[Savigny]

Species. Noctua maculata

**[Southern Boobook *Ninox novaeseelandiae leucopsis*, a Tasmanian
 endemic subspecies]**

This is the small spotted Owl
 two specimens of which we procured
 in the neighbourhood of Launceston.
 One we shot in the heat of

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the day in the month of April
when we were attracted to a
ravine by a number of
wrens & fan-tailed flycatchers

[Superb Fairy-wren; Grey Fantail]

through the midst of which
he darted and settled
on a low scrubby bush, shaded
from, the sun. —

The other we shot
at dusk from a hop-pole from
which he occasionally flew
performing evolutions in the air
in pursuit of insects & again
returning to the same perch
in the manner of the large goat sucker
of this country, and indeed its
wide gape and rather weak

[page break]

weak **[sic]** bill (at least weak in comparison
with, Strix). would incline
us to suppose that it subsists
in a great measure on Insect
food. —

**[Grant clearly is cognisant of the relationship between structure
and function.]**

The ears and disc around
the eyes being small may ac —
count for our finding it in
the day time as its organs
of hearing and sight are
not nearly so well adapted
for the dark as in Strix.

The specific description
of this bird by Messrs Vig & Hors.

[1827]

is minutely correct

There is another species of Noctua
described by them the N. Boolbook [sic]

[probably a mainland subspecies of the Southern Boobook]

Strix Boolbook [sic] of Lath. the native
name is Buck'buck the note
said to resemble that of the
European Cuckoo which is

[Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*]

certainly a remarkable cir-
cumstance considering the
discordant cries of its con-
geners. – the difference between
this and N. Maculata
consists in the more sparing
distribution of the spots which
are of a yellowish white
and the under parts being
white varied with rusty coloured
spots, whilst in N. Mac. the

[column break]

the abdomen is of a rusty
brown with large white spots
have you seen this species?
or one a half smaller with bare tarsi which we have
heard of from Mr. Thomson. –

Genus Strix Lin et. Aud.

Species Strix flammea

Strix flammea. Corpore luteo

[Although this name is that of a Barn Owl *Tyto alba*, Grant may be incorrect in identifying his Tasmanian specimens as belonging to this species. The Barn Owl is somewhat similar in appearance to the closely related Masked Owl *Tyto novaehollandiae castanops*, a Tasmanian endemic subspecies, but is only an occasional visitor to Tasmania from the mainland and does not regularly breed in Tasmania (Blakers et al. 1984, Green 1995, Thomas 1979). The

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Masked Owl is the common Tasmanian species.]

punctis albis, subtus albido
 punctiss nigricantibus Lin
 the barn or White owl.
 — this description cor
 responds very well with the
 specimens which I have.
 it is more perfect in
 its organs for night feeding
 and from the Strength of
 its bill & talons must
 be a very formidable bird
 & may possibly attack the
 opossum?

Fam. Hirundinae

Genus. Hirundo

Species Hir. Pyrrhonota Lath Mss

[Tree Martin *Petrochelidon nigricans*]

This is the common swallow
 bluish black above – tawny
 below – with a reddish stripe
 on the forehead and a tawny
 rump. – no mention is
 made by Mssrs. Vig. & Hors. of the
 Cypselus, or Swift which

[Probably the Fork-tailed Swift *Apus pacificus*, once know as *Cypselus australis* and *C. vittatus*]

I have seen hawking very high this summer but
 have not been able to procure
 do you possess a specimen?

[page break]

Fam. Caprimulgidae

We have seen and pre
 served for Mr. Henty a
 small bird of the family
 not more than five inches

38

in length – as the specimen
**[Australian Owlet-nightjar *Aegotheles cristatus tasmanicus*, an
 endemic Tasmanian subspecies]**

was perfectly fresh and had
 not the appearance of a
cage death we are inclined
 to suppose that it is a
 native of this country – but
 shall enquire

It differs from the true
 Caprimulgi in the roundness
 & shortness of the wing which
 in those birds is long & powerful the
 first quill being the longest
 — the legs and
 feet are also stronger
 indicating an approach
 to the Podargus or common
 Mope-Hawk which again

[Tawny Frogmouth *Podargus strigoides*]

seems not much removed from
 the owls. —

The disposition of the
 bristles at the gape appears
 to be much finer than in
 the larger goat sucker, its
 bill is also feeble, and there
 seemed to be abundance of
 the viscid saliva in its

[column break]

wide mouth; it is thus
 between Caprimulgus
 and Podargus. — and we
 think is described as

Gen. Agotheles from Αεγοθηλης.
 Caprimulgus of Aristotle. ???

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We shall defer speaking of the different species of Podargus until we can procure Specimens, because as you truly observe the birds of V.D Land may be found on close examination to be totally distinct from those N.S. Wales. – as we are particularly interested in this family any communication on the subject will be most acceptable -

Genus Rhipirdura

(Ρίπίς. flabellum. ουρα. cauda

Species Rhip. flabellifera.

[Grey Fantail, same as Muscicapa flabellifera mentioned earlier (p. 19)]

Muscicapa flabellifera Gmel.

fan-tailed fly catcher of Lath.

We were much pleased with the inspection of this bird which we had not before examined.

[page break]

On comparing it with Muscicapa

Erythrogastra – the greater

[Scarlet Robin]

width of gape and shortness of bill, with the finer arrangements of rictal bristles, the lengthened and fan-shaped tail, rounded wings & weaker legs, at once explained their difference

of habits – and is a beautiful
[written in later: adaptation]
 example of changes of form cor
 responding with a change in the
 mode of feeding in birds closely

allied —

**[This is and interesting evolutionary statement, probably
 Lamarckian in tone, but demonstrates that these men were well
 aware of the connection between structure and function in birds.
 It would be interesting to know if the word “allied” was meant to
 mean “related.” If it meant related, it would imply an evolution-
 ary relationship.]**

The Fantail launches
 out from his perch wheels &
 turns in a remarkable manner
 while capturing his prey – the
 Mus. Erythro pecks it either from the

[Scarlet Robin]

trunks of trees or from the ground
 & rarely catches it in the air
 the latter has however a more
 powerful wing but this may
 be explained by his wider range
 for food. – .

Fam. Pipridae

Genus Pardalotus Vieillot,
 Species. Pard. punctatus

the diamond bird.

[A common name usually applied to the Spotted Pardalote

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***Pardalotus punctatus* because of the bright white spots on the head and wings of the male.]**

the specimen No 6 of which
Pard. Striatus

[column break]

Pard. Striatus

[Striated Pardalote]

Streaked Mannakin

“Grayish-brown above cream-coloured below; top of the head black with white stripes; between the bill and the eye a rich yellow spot; secondaries of the wings yellow at the tips. four inches and a half long inhabits V.D Land”

* Brown Zool.

[Brown 1833, vol. 1, p. 190]

This description agrees very well except that all the wing feathers are tipped with white — perhaps it may be an error for the wing coverts of the primaries which are tipped with rich yellow Neither is any notice

[The yellow wing spot in the Tasmanian breeding subspecies is the main plumage difference between it and the mainland-breeding forms.]

taken of the beard of outer web of the Secondaries and tertials being of reddish yellow becoming white in the two last. — we should have thought that in specific descriptions such marks would

not have been omitted.

*The description of Pard Striatus by Vigors and Hors. seems to have been taken from a N. Holl Specimen & is a distinct species.

[The Striated Pardalote is polytypic with the southeastern mainland subspecies being *Pardalotus striatus ornatus*. The Tasmanian breeding subspecies is *P. s. striatus*. The subspecies are distinct enough to excuse Grant's considering them distinct species, and in fact they were considered separate species at least into the middle of the 20th century.]

Pard.

Pard. Striatus — dorso grisescenti-brunneo uropygio fulvo; capite alis caudâque nigris, illo albo striato; strigâ superciliari ad frontem flavâ pronè albâ, Pteromatibus apici coccineis, Gulâ flavâ, pectore abdominque albis, flavo parcè variegatis.

[Vigors and Horsfield 1827, p. 237]

[page break]

“uropygio” is the rump and it certainly is somewhat darker than we would translate “fulvo” by “Pteromatibus” we understand the wing feathers? and they are here described as tipped with crimson

**[One of the differences between *P. s. ornatus* and *P. s. striatus* is that wing feathers tipped with red in *ornatus* are tipped with yellow in *striatus*. It is interesting that Grant attributes these plumage color differences to climatic influences (see below).
Attributing color differences to climatic influences was to become**

CORRESPONDENCE

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a characteristic assumption of late nineteenth century neo-Lamarckians.]

You will find that otherwise it is minutely correct. — may not the Superior warmth of the climate account for the red markings?

Fam. Pipridae

Genus *Pachycephalus* - Swainson

Species *Pach. olivacea*

[Olive Whistler *Pachycephala olivacea apatetes*, is the endemic Tasmanian subspecies.]

Pac.

Pachy. supra viridi - Olivacea,
Subtus fulvescens. Capite grises -
Cente, gutture albo notato. —

[Vigors and Horsfield 1827, p. 241]

We think both from the generic and specific description that this is your No. 9.

in Vieillots genus *Thamnophilus*?

When alive has it a puffed out head as its name would imply?

Fam Meliphagidae

Genus. *Meliphaga*

Species. Mel. *Tenuirostris*

[Eastern Spinebill *Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris dubius*, an endemic Tasmanian subspecies]

Certhia tenuirostris Lath. ind. orn.

Le Cap. Noir Vieill.

Slender billed Honey Eater Lath.

Species Mel. *fulvifrons*

[Crescent Honeyeater *Phylidonyris pyrrhoptera*]

This agrees with your No. 8. except —
 ing the streak through the eyes ex
 tending to the side of the breast & there
 forming a ring, which is described
 as as [sic] brown (“brunnean”) — whereas in the
 specimen it is black or at least
 very dark brown — (“fusca”) there is

[column break]

another thing the wing feathers
 are said to be slightly margined
 with white whereas it is here
 yellow with a tinge of green. —
 * is your bird a male?

We shall have some more obser
 vations on this genus when
 we can procure a few specimens
 * a variety is mentioned. with a
 white forehead but they do
 not seem sure of it as it stands
 Var.? “Incapite Canescente?”

blos savdeo [?]

Genus Anthochaera

Ανθος Χαιρω

Species Antho. Carunculata

[Red Wattlebird]

Merops Carunculatus Lath

Corvus paradoxus – Id [?] suppl.

[A. paradoxus is the Yellow Wattlebird]

Pie à pendeloque Daud.

Wattled bee eater Phill. bot. Bay.

Wattled honey Eater of Lath.

Merops is not a good name
 as that belong to a totally
 distinct family — the proper bee-eaters

[Meropidae]

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birds of rapid flight which capture quick flying insects as bees wasps & hornets and are therefore as different from the present group as could well be imagined it is this confusion of names which is so annoying — many of them given by compilers who looked at the bird as something very pretty without knowing any thing of its structure or habits -

[Neither Gunn nor Grant suffered fools gladly.]

[page break]

Tribus Conirostres. Cuv.
Fam. Fringillidae

[Estrildidae]

Genus Fringilla
Species Fringilla bella

[Beautiful Firetail]

Loxia bella Latham
black lined grosbeak. Lath

Fringilla is a much better name than Loxia — as it is thus placed with the Finches — Loxia being now the generic name of the crossbills —

[Loxia remains the generic name for the crossbills.]

Fam Psittacidae Leach
Genus Platycerus.
Πλατυς χερκος

46

broad-tail

Species Plat. Eximius

[Eastern Rosella]

Psittacus eximius. Shaw.

Perruche omnicolore Le Vail

Non pariel parrot Lath

Rosella or Rosehill parrot

“Plat. flaviventrus”

“Psittacus flaviventrus Tem.”

“Psittacus Brownii Kuhl Nov. Act”

“Perruche à large queue Le Vail.”

“Van Diemens Parrot? Lath.”

“Sulphur-headed parrot” is

the yellow bellied parrot

with the crimson front

and sulphur coloured occiput

common enough here –

[Eastern Rosella]**[column break]**

Genus Pezoporus Illig [?]

Species Pez. Formosus

Psittacus formosus – Lath

[Ground Parrot]

Psittacus terrestis Shaw.

Perruche ingambe Le Vail

Ground Parrot – Lath.

The description is minutely correct &

was taken from a specimen

obtained at Port Philip in

[now Melbourne]

1804!! if they described the birds

how did they not describe the

land?!!

[This comment suggests that Grant was aware of the importance of habitat in the natural history and distribution of bird species.]

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Genus Trichoglossus
 Θριξ Seta γλωσσα Angua [?]
 Species Tricho- concinnus

[Musk Lorikeet *Glossopsitta concinna*]

Psittacus concinnus Shaw
 Perruche à bandeau rouge Le Vail
 Crimson fronted parakeet Lath.
 the specific description in
 Vigors & Horsfield is minutely
 correct and the generic also
 except in one very important
 point viz the tongue which is
 not subdivided into suckers
 but is entire & blunt at
 tip but certainly capable of being converted
 into a tube by rounding up the
 Edges. —

[In the final draft of this letter Grant added: it is
 the small bluish green parrot with
 Crimson front ant. [?] stripe
 down from the ears. bluish
 head. olive between the
 Shoulders and yellow under
 Each joint of wing —.]

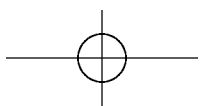
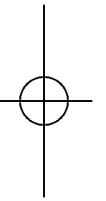
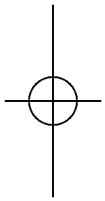
Tricho. pusillus
 Psittacus pusillus Lath
 Perruche à face rouge

**[both Perruche á face rouge and Small parakeet below refer to the
 Little Lorikeet *Glossopsitta pusilla*, which does not occur in
 Tasmania. Both the Musk and Little Lorikeets have green with
 red faces, hence the confusion.]**

Small parakeet White's Journal [?]

this is I think your Psitt. sanguinolentus

**[Swift Parrot]
 [end of letter]**



[letter from James Grant to Ronald C. Gunn]Recd 10 July **[in Gunn's hand]**

Col. Hospital 6 July 36

My Dear Sir

I send by Mr Smith, a package
Containing the bird Skins which you had
marked to be returned Viz. No. 4, 6, & 7
& beg to return thanks for the rest which you
have kindly allowed me to keep –

I hope you will continue your journal
regularly, and I will Endeavour to send
my Contribution as regularly.– and now that
our correspondence is fairly agoing I
anticipate with you much pleasure from
it.—and I do not think that we shall
run out of Matter very soon.— My Contribution
might have been somewhat larger, and in future
I hope to extend it at least to another Sheet
but I have had such short notice this time

I shall write down all I can collect and

[page break]

any idea that may Strike me, and if
it turns out that I am only describing
what all the world knows before me
what matter.—perhaps among the heap
of lumber there may be found Something
original –

I look forward to the next
arrival of the Edward for a Similar
paper, and hope you will not disappoint
me.—. .

believe me

Yours Most Truly

JGrant

R C Gunn Esqr

[end of letter]

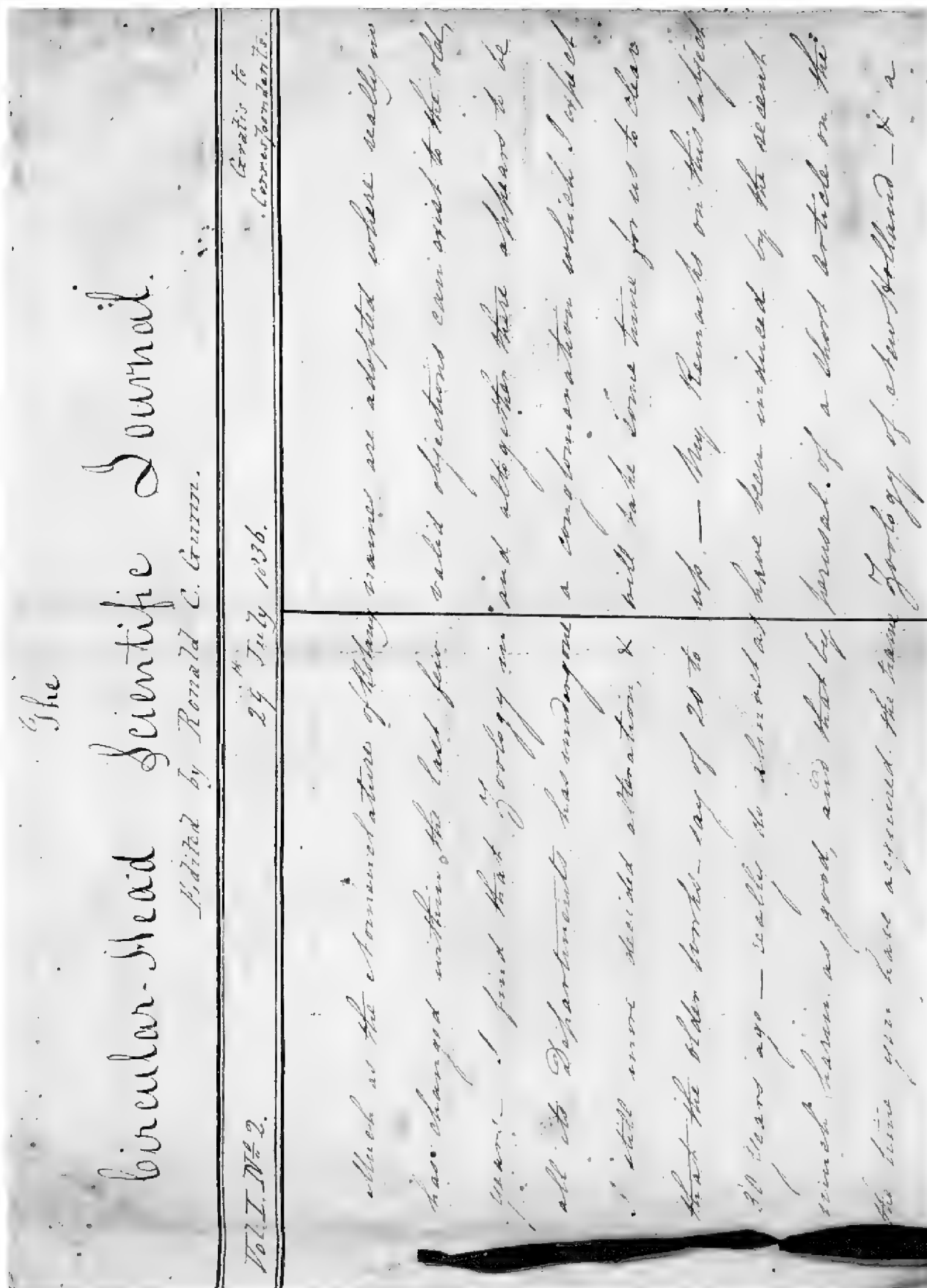


Figure 8. Circular Head Scientific Journal, 29 July 1836.

[The following issue of the “Journal” is bound together with cloth, shoelace-like material.]

The
Circular-Head Scientific Journal
Edited by Ronald C. Gunn **[Figure 8]**

Vol. I. No. 2

29th July 1836

Gratis to
Correspondents

[Gunn was frustrated by Europeans who named new species without surveying the literature and thus created a confusing situation where many names were applied to the same species. He reacts strongly to this situation in the following paragraph, and his “Euro-bashing” is a recurring theme in his writings.]

Much as the Nomenclature of Botany has changed within the last few years – I find that Zoology in all its Departments has undergone A [?] still more decided alteration, & that older books [?] – say 20 to 30 years ago – really do almost as much harm as good, and that by the time you have acquired the name of an animal or Bird from one author, you find in the next that it is changed, and so on until really the synonyms amount to an almost incredible number – and even at the present time matters appear far from settled as the Continental and British Naturalists each name the respective animals without reference to each other or preceding writers – New

[column break]

names are adopted where really no valid objections can exist to the old, and altogether there appears to be a conglomeration which I expect will take some time for us to clear up. — My remarks on this subject have been induced by the recent perusal of a short article on the Zoology of New Holland [**Shaw 1794**] - & a Catalogue of 1829 of the Museum of the Zoological Society — I need hardly say that, no synonyms being given to either, such names as I have ferreted out are a good deal at guess — but they may draw your attention to the particular species in any books [?] you may happen to fall in with. — I shall now add the result of my researches.

[page break]

Aves.

Astur Novae Hollandiae — appears to be
[Grey Goshawk]

the White Hawk — of which I believe only one species exists in Australia — See Lin. Trans. Vol. 15. — This is the

[Vigors and Horsfield 1827 is in volume 15.]

Falco Albus of Shaws Zoology.

[Shaw 1800-1826, Vol. 7 (1809), pt. 1, pp. 92-93]

Podargus Is the Generic name for
[frogmouths]

the New Holl. Goatsuckers; — there is a species *P. Cuvierii* — but no description is given.

[Vigors and Horsfield (1827, pp. 200-201) named *P. cuvieri* (single

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i) for the Tasmanian bird. The name has since been synonymised with the nominate race *P. strigoides strigoides*.]

Dacelo — appears to be new Generic name for our “Laughing Jackass” —

[There is a confusion of birds and names because the name “laughing jackass” was applied in Tasmania to the Grey Butcherbird *Cracticus torquatus cinereus* and in New South Wales to the Laughing Kookaburra *Dacelo novaeguineae*. The Laughing Kookaburra occurs in Tasmania but is not native; it was introduced to Tasmania about 1906 (Green 1995).]

I have obtained one specimen of a beautiful true Kingfisher here & hope to obtain more. —

Malurus Superbus Vieill. The Superb

[Superb Fairy-wren]

Warbler of New Holl. — Is this the “*Sylvia cyanea*” of Shaw’s Zoology? & Latham.

Cinclosoma punctatum. The Spotted Thrush

[Spotted Quail-thrush]

This is Shaws “*Turdus punctatus*” — I presume — as it alludes to its being of a peculiar Habit in the Catalogue Pardalotus punctatus. Vieill. The

[column break]

Spotted manakin. Is this our Diamond Bird having Spots on Wings and tail?

[Both the Spotted and endemic Forty-spotted *P. quadragintus* Pardalotes have spots on their wings and tails, although the tail of Forty-spotted Pardalote usually has only white tips to the tail feathers. Hence this was probably the more common Spotted Pardalote.]

Rhipidura flabellifera. The Fantailed

[Grey Fantail]

Flycatcher — is probably Latham’s

54

Mus. Flabellifera. –

Seisura volitans. The volatile fly-catcher is another New Holl. Species, but

[Restless Flycatcher *Myiagra inquieta*, which does not occur in Tasmania. Gunn, relying on books that were available to him, would not have known this.]

I know not which. –

Glaucopis cinerea Forst. The Cinereous Wattle-bird – Is it ours? – I am not

[Gunn and Grant relied on bird descriptions from the books that they possessed and frequently attempted to find a described bird that matched their Tasmanian specimens. This led to their attempting to merge Tasmanian species with those described from elsewhere, sometimes leading to incorrect identifications. In this case, Gunn is apparently comparing the description of the Kokako *Callaeas cinerea*, a New Zealand species, with the Tasmanian endemic Yellow Wattlebird, but below concludes correctly that they are not the same species.]

certain that it is a New Holl. Sp. but the name struck me. – I think it is not –

See below*Pezoporus formosus. Ill. Is this the**[Ground Parrot]**

Psitt. terrestris?

The Honey-Eaters of New Holl. appear to be divided into 6 to 12 Genera – the family being called Meliphagidae.

[This is still the family name for the honeyeaters and chats.]

– One

of the genera is also named Meliphaga.

[Five species of Australian honeyeaters are still recognized in the genus *Meliphaga*.]

*Anthochaera carunculata. The Wattled Honey eater – will I think prove to be our Wattle Bird – It belongs to the Meliphagidae

[This is the Red Wattlebird of the mainland. The closely related Tasmanian endemic species is the Yellow Wattlebird.]

P.S.

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A number of the above are superceded
by your communication – since read.

[page break]

Since writing the preceding portion
of our Journal, a reply has been
received to our No. I. dated 5th
July – and we proceed to make
a few remarks on the contents. –
Of the family “Strigidae” I
unfortunately possess no specimens
having sent all I had Home –
therefore cannot say much — I
have not seen any owl smaller
than *N. maculata*. –

Hirundines. I have seen one very
fine specimen of the Swift shot
last season by Mr. Hobbler – It is
a very large Bird – from recollection
I think 15 to 18 inches from tip to
tip of the Wings. – I do not possess
a specimen.

**[White-throated Needletail *Hirundapus caudactus*, Australia’s
largest swift]**

Pardalotus striatus – of Brown’s Zool.

[Striated Pardalote] [Brown 1833, vol. 1, p. 190]

TextB. Is evidently the V.D.L. species –
but I send you a specimen to
look at of a New Holl. Species which
I think will probably will be found

[column break]

to be the P. striatus of Vigors &
Horsfield. – Indeed the two birds

[1827]

are most astonishingly similar

56

in their general markings and more particularly about the Head – the New Holl. Species however has a red spot on the Wing where the V.D.L. species has a yellow one – They are however evidently distinct species. – Have you remarked that

[As previously mentioned, the Tasmanian subspecies *P. s. striatus* has a yellow spot on its wings while the eastern Victorian subspecies *P. s. ornatus* has a red spot. It appears that Gunn thought that difference sufficient to claim them as separate species (see previous comments on pp. 41-42).]

the young Birds of the V.D.L. species are not striped on the Head the first season – I send you a specimen to look at. –

I should like to see a specimen of Meliphaga tenuirostris – that Genus

[Eastern Spinebill]

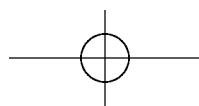
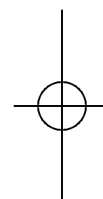
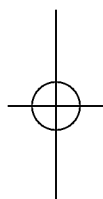
is so [?] numerous – do you mean the one like a Humming Bird – with Cinnamon Col'd abdomen. — No other portions of your Journal call for any particular Comments It is however all I could desire and will assist me much —

[Not presented here is a section on Australian mammals.]

[end of letter]

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Oct 23/36. To the Editor of the
Circular Head Scientific
Journal.

Communication 2d.

To our Editor. —

Aquila fucosa. — This, as
you well remark, would
have been much better

named *fucosa*. Why
they have applied the name
fucosa to it we cannot im-
agine. —

We lately shot a
very fine specimen in the
neighbourhood of Mount Doon
we had here. Kansas

our great and manifold
satisfaction the late
one hon. entered the breast
and came out at the
opposite flank, reaching
the old gentleman.

We found him to be
of a dusky brown, almost
black. And I am not sure
whether he be not a new
variety of the common.
He is nearly black except
the middle wing coverts.

Figure 9. To the Editor, Circular Head Scientific Journal, 23 October 1836.

[The following is a letter from James Grant to R. C. Gunn.]

Rec. ? 23/10/36 **[In Gunn's hand]**

To the Editor of the
Circular Head Scientific
Journal **[Figure 9]**

Communication 2nd

To our Editor. —

Aquila fucosa. — this, as
[Wedge-tailed Eagle]

you well remark, would
have been much better
Named fucosa. Why

[dark or black]

they have applied the term
fucosa to it we cannot im-
[painted or colored]

agine. —

We lately shot a
Very fine Specimen in the
neighbourhood of Mount Direction

We had been Kangaroo
hunting and having hung up a
Kangaroo — at the edge of sm
scrub. in a deep valley—on
returning about an hour after
wards an Eagle flew up from
the carcass and Settled on
a tree at some distance
We immediately brought
our rifle to bear and to

[column break]

our great and manifold
Satisfaction the ball
somehow Entered the breast
and came out at the
opposite flank, overturning
the old gentleman.

We found him to be
of a dusky brown. almost
black. and I am not sure
whether he be not a new
variety of the common.
he is nearly black except
the middle wing coverts
which are a greyish brown
Edged with white, the
Erectile feathers on the
back of the neck are also
of a reddish brown tipped
with black. The irides are
of a golden hue with a
darkish tinge. Sealing wax
made with gold leafmokes [?]
a good imitation

[page break]

he measured 6 feet 8 inches
between tip and tip of the
wings and weighed above 6 pounds
the ball having destroyed the
organs of generation we
were unable to determine
whether it was a male or
female –

It is surely a remarkable circum
stance this, of the Eagle feeding
on a dead carcass, and

[see Gunn's comments on this, pp. 75-76.]

CORRESPONDENCE

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I am not aware whether the European birds of this family have such a habit – I think not. They are always described as hunting for their prey. –

 Their keenness of sight is Very fine and I have no doubt that he saw this Kangaroo from a great height in the air When making a circuit as their habit is. – I believe that it is rather owing to this sense, also that Vultures so soon make their appearance when carrion is in

[column break]

the way, than to the sense of smell. When we think of the immense Space through which the odoriferous! particles have to traverse it is evident that they could not be diffused so widely nor in such a small space of time as sometimes Elapses between the death of an animal and the appearance of these birds – they must in all probability descend from the higher regions of the atmosphere. and thus appear as if coming from a great distance (guided by the Sense of smell – ac

62

ording to common opinion)

[page break]

Fam Laniadae
Subfam Thamnophilina
Genus. Vanga
Species Vanga destructor.
This is Our laughing Jack Ass

[Grey Butcherbird]

Very different from the bird
which the settlers in Sydney
call by the Same name –
Viz. the gigantic King fisher
Dacelo gigantea –

[Laughing Kookaburra]

You say that
you have lately procured
a true King fisher. Now com-
pare it with No 1. This Specimen
sent and you will see that
the latter has not the most
remote resemblance to a
King fisher – but is a true
Shrike. and is very well
Named and characterized
Strange how the same name
and that a very peculiar
one should be applied to
birds so dissimilar –
does the gigantic King-
fisher occur in this colony?

[column break]

Fam. Laniadae

[Gunn wrote vertically in red ink: My Brown thrush]

Genus. Colluricincla

CORRESPONDENCE

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Species Coli. cinerea

[Grey Shrike-thrush *Colluricincla harmonica strigata*, an endemic Tasmanian subspecies]

Specimen No 2. this belongs to the Fam-Sub. family as the one above and connects the shrikes and Thrushes, and indeed the name from Κολλυρίοου lanius. and Χιγγλος turdus Seems to have been given to indicate this – Compare it with the following.

Fam. Merulidae

[Gunn wrote: Brown ground thrush of my collection]

Sub fam. Merulina

Genus. Turdus

Species Turdus Varius—

[Bassian Thrush *Zoothera lunulata*. *Turdus varius* is an old name for *Z. dauma*, which at that time also included the Australian birds now separated as Bassian and Russet-tailed *Z. heinei* Thrushes. *Turdus varius* was proposed by Vieillot for the Noisy Miner. However, the bird described here by Grant appears to be the Bassian Thrush. This is, perhaps, another case of misapplication of a name from a book, although the Noisy Miner does occur in Tasmania.]

No. 3. You will find that bill is somewhat similar in both. More Especially the upper Mandibula and nostrils – This is a very rare bird. and the only Specimen in the Linnean Society Collection was like mine & [?] much injured by shot – we procured

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[page break]

we procured it in a
 very deep creek where
 the decayed timber and
 the rocks were covered
 with a damp moss and
 where no other vegetable
 grew. —

**[The above habitat description suggests that the bird was the
 Bassian Thrush; this is also suggested by Gunn's name, Brown
 ground thrush.]**

Fam. Muscicapidae
 Genus. Monarcha.
 Species —? No 4 seems
 to belong to this genus
 I cannot find the species
 but as this is a female it

[Gunn wrote: my common sparrow]

May probably belong to Mon.
 Carinata – Musciceta Carinata

**[In Swainson (1822-1823), this name belongs to the Black-faced
 Monarch *Monarcha melanopsis*, which does not occur in
 Tasmania.]**

of Swainson – it flies with great
 Smoothness occasionally
 alighting on the ground to pick
 up its food and resting on
 posts. dead stumps or trees
 the bill is like that of
 Mus. Erythrogastra. but

[Scarlet Robin]

is much stronger and with
 cutting edges, it is also more
 arched at the tip and
 has a ridge to Strengthen it

CORRESPONDENCE

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along the culmen. There
is the same arrangement

[column break]

of strong rictal bristles as
in Mus. Erythra. and the
head is Very large in
order to afford better scope [?]
for the Cay [?] muscles des-
tined [?] to move the powerful
jaws –

**[The above description suggests that the bird was a Dusky Robin
Melanodryas vittata, an endemic Tasmanian species.]**

On examining the con-
tents of its rather muscular
Stomach we have found them [to]
consist of very hard small
black beetles – thus account
ing with the firm Structure
of its organ of feeding.

Specimen No 5 is closely

**[This is, perhaps, a female or young male Golden Whistler
Pachycephala pectoralis glaucura, a Tasmanian endemic sub-
species.]**

allied to the preceding
but is a distinct species

[Gunn wrote: like my common sparrow but larger and not so thick]

as is evident from the
Shorter and more arched
bill, and lengthened tail
in fact it is not Easy to de-
termine whether this bird belongs
to the pipridae as the bill
resembles that of *Pachycephalus*
olivacea a specimen of

[Olive Whistler]

which has been sent us from

66

[page break]

from Circular Head and
we lately procured a
specimen exactly similar
from Mount Direction – a
Notice of this bird will be
found in our latest com-
munication

Fam. Sylviadae

[Gunn wrote: my smallish warbler – black band on tail called New
Zeal titmouse by me——]

Genus. *Acanthiza*

Species *Acanthiza pusilla*

This is evidently Specimen

No 6 now sent. One of the
dwarf warblers it frequents

trees –

[The above species is either the Brown Thornbill *Acanthiza pusilla diemenensis*, an endemic Tasmanian subspecies, or a Tasmanian Thornbill *Acanthiza ewingii*, a closely related Tasmanian endemic species that was not described until 1844 by Gould.]

Acanthiza Reguloides I

[Yellow-rumped Thornbill *Acanthiza chrysorrhoa leachi*, an endemic Tasmanian subspecies. This is probably another misidentification by Grant. The Buff-rumped Thornbill *Acanthiza reguloides* does not occur in Tasmania.]

think my No 7 is perhaps
the female of this species as
the only difference is in the

[Gunn wrote: my yellow rump]

Spots on the forehead which
in Vigors & Horsfield are des

[1827]

cribed as being of a rusty colour

CORRESPONDENCE

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whereas they are here white –
— perhaps a new species?
Can you throw any light on
this?

[column break]

Specimen No 8 I cannot
Make out. it is closely allied

[related to?]

to Acanthiza and perhaps
more to the Muscicapa
do you know anything of
it. ? –

Pardalotus. punctatus. – is

[Spotted Pardalote]

No 9 the female of the
Diamond bird? I have
some doubts about it as
the only difference pointed out
by Vigors and Horsfield is in

[1827]

the spots on the head being
of a tawny yellow.
“Fam. “Capitis punctis fulvis.”
Now. this bird has no spots on
the head at all and its general
Markings seem to belong to a male
bird. When I shot it, not
doubting but that it was a female
Diamon bird I neglected to
examine . — . –

[The lack of spots on the head and the color suggests that this bird was a Forty-spotted Pardalote, an endangered Tasmanian endemic species that was not described as a new species until 1838 by Gould, although it could be the similarly plumaged juvenile Spotted Pardalote.]

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— Malurus Superbus. is the same
[Superb Fairy-wren]
 as Sylvia Cyanea of Shaw.
 there are several species but
 I have not been able to procure
 any but the common. — there is
 a nest at your allotment in
 a furze bush —and there is
[furze is another name for gorse *Ulex* sp.]

[page break]

Only one female. though
 in the Summer we see only
 One male to several females
 but these must be young
 birds not having yet assumed
 the male plumage-

**[Grant was apparently aware that immature male birds often
 have “female” plumage.]**

Fam. Meliphagidae
 Genus. Meliphaga
 Sp. Mel. Novae Hollandiae

[New Holland Honeyeater]

is evidently No 10 and
 is minutely described
 it seems to be the type
 of the genus. —

[Gunn wrote: Common Honeysuckle]

Your observations on
 the Mamalia, **[sic]** we esteem
 Very much. as we were
 in ignorance as to the names
 of many. and we believe
 that several are yet undes
 cribed — if you could send

CORRESPONDENCE

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us the carcarsi of some of these
Smaller animals which
occur about Circular Head
we should feel grateful.

[column break]

The Specimens were

No 1. Laughing Jackass. blk varts
[abbreviation of varieties] [Grey Butcherbird]

“ 2. Common Thrush”

[Grey Shrike-thrush]

“ 3. Brown do.

[“do” is ditto; hence “Thrush”]

called Native Pheasant

[Native Pheasant is an old name for several species that do not occur in Tasmania.]

“ 4. Common Sparrow usually
with yellow rump

[Gunn called the Dusky Robin “Common Sparrow,” but it does not have a yellow rump.]

“ 5. Very like above, only longer
tail, & no white on wing –

[The description could refer to the Jacky Winter *Microeca fascians* but it does not occur in Tasmania.]

“ 6. N.Z. Titmouse dark band

[Brown Thornbill]

on tail

“ 7 Yellow Rump.

[Yellow-rumped Thornbill]

“ 8

“ 9 Spotted Winged Pardalotus

[Forty-spotted Pardalote? More likely Spotted Pardalote]

“ 10. Common Honeysuckle –

[New Holland Honeyeater]

[end of letter]

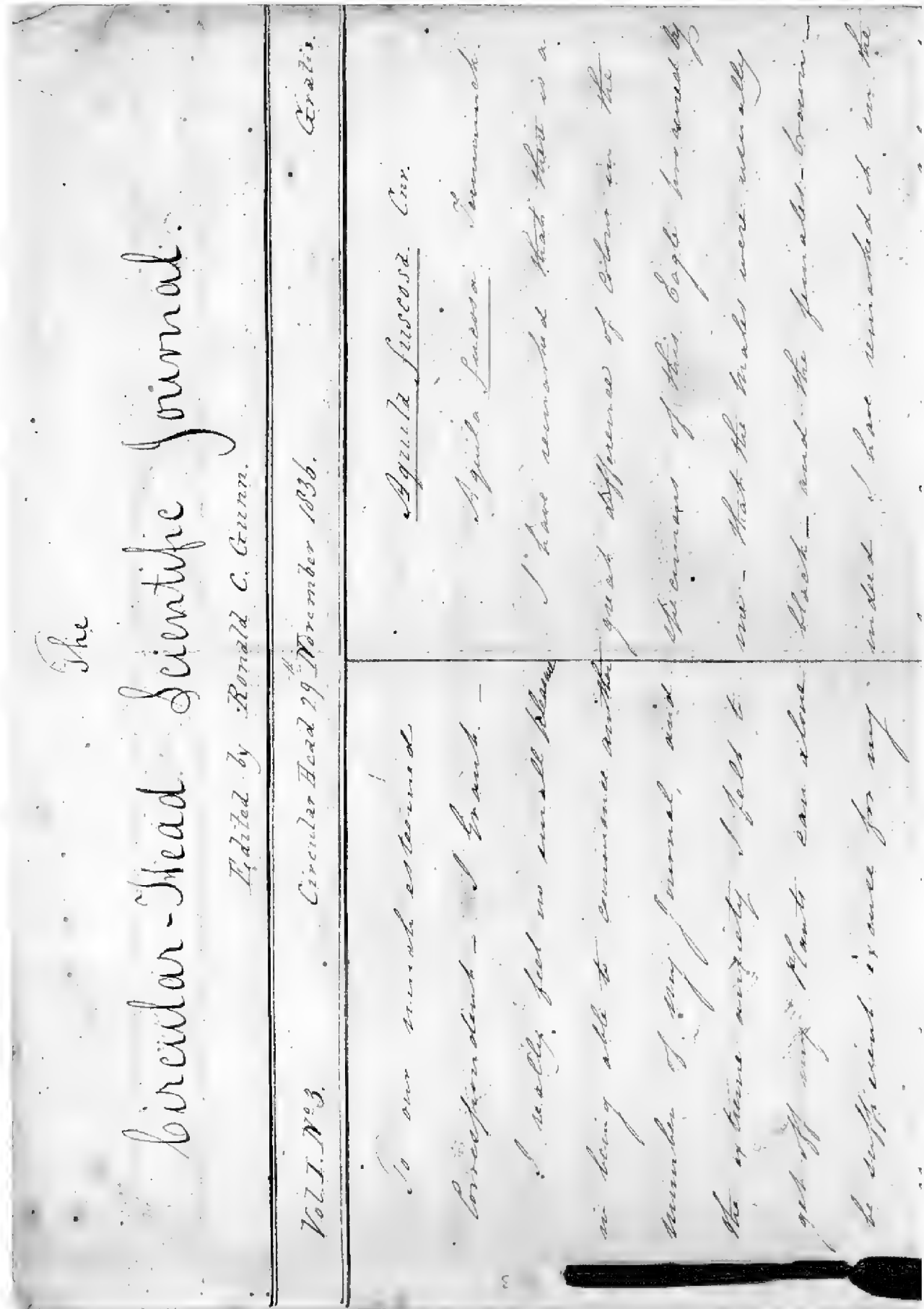


Figure 10. Circular-Head Scientific Journal, 29 November 1836.

The
Circular-Head Scientific Journal
Edited by Ronald C. Gunn [Figure 10]

Vol. I. No.3. Circular Head 29th November 1836 Gratis

To our much esteemed
Correspondent – J. Grant. –
I really feel no small pleasure
in being able to commence another
number of my Journal, and
the extreme anxiety I felt to
get off my Plants can alone

[to W. J. Hooker]

be sufficient excuse for my
allowing matters to accumu-
late on my hands, or for
my having so long neglected to
reply to your much valued
Communication of October last –
I however now hope to have
more time as I have got my
box packed and will I hope
have the lid screwed down in
the course of a day or two. –
Now in reply to yours. –

[column break]

Aquila fuscosa. Cuv.

[Wedge-tailed Eagle]

Aquila fucosa. Temminck

I have remarked that there is a
great difference of colour in the
specimens of this Eagle procured by

me – that the males were usually black – and the females — brown – indeed I have remarked it in the birds when flying – as I have both at Circular Head and Western Port had an opportunity of seeing them very near. — Age also affects the plumage of Eagles much – five years being considered the time taken to assume the full & final colours – from this has arisen the

[Wedge-tailed Eagles become progressively blacker for at least their first 10 years. Most birds become mostly black (the adult plumage) by 6-7 years of age with one instance of a mostly black bird by age 5 (Marchant and Higgins 1993).]

number of synonyms to most species – few going under less than two or three names – the errors

[page break]

having arisen from the different ages of the specimens obtained – The establishment however of Zoological Gardens has now enabled them to watch the gradual change from year to year – and to reconcile the apparent clashing of Naturalists and describers. – You say the irides

[In North America, Alexander Wilson had been raising birds in captivity in order to make similar determination several decades earlier (Wilson 1808-1814), and Gunn, who had a copy of Wilson's *American Ornithology* (probably the 1828 edition), was thus aware of this procedure.]

are of a golden hue, being a little diff't to mine which I have noted as light brown, the same as described in the living specimen in the

CORRESPONDENCE

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Zoological Garden, London – however
the iris also changes with age as
I see the American White-Headed
Sea Eagle has the eye at first

[Bald Eagle *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*]

hazel, but gradually brightens
into a brilliant straw-colour –
why may not therefore the *A. fuscosa*
alter in the same manner? – the
size of yours is not great – 7 to
10 & 12 feet have been known &
measured from tip to tip. – One

[column break]

of my specimens measured 7 ft
4 in as measured by Mr. F. James.
Mr. Jones (Prisoners Barracks)
measured a specimen from 10 to
11 ft — and young Mr. Talbot (of
the Break o’day) informed Mr. J.
Backhouse & myself on 6th Jan’y
1836, in my room, that he has
measured one 12 ft from tip to tip.

If we bear in mind the immense
age to which Eagles attain – and
the few casualties to which they
must be subject from their being
the sovereigns of the air, we
need not wonder at the diversity
in their colour & markings – and
ought to be slow in attempting
to form a new species unless
the general shape and more
permanent characters were
widely diff’t – What benefit

**[This statement indicates Gunn’s conservatism in taxonomy, a
sharp contrast to many taxonomists who search for minor differ-**

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ences in order to create new taxa.]

would we not have derived long
ere this had the Gov't established

[page break]

a small Botanical and Zoological
Garden, even if confined to the
productions of the Colony? – as it is —
less is know by the inhabitants
of V.D.L. of its Natural History
than by the people of England –
I can only hope times will change.

**[Lieutenant-Governor Arthur was not interested in promoting nat-
ural history, but when Sir John Franklin replaced him, things
changed (see pp. 3, 10-11)]**

The specimen of the *Aquila*
fuscosa now living in the Zoological
Gardens, London, is thus described –
“The general colour is a deep
dusky brown or dull black, with
a rufous tinge on the head and
back of the neck, which is also
present, but in a less degree, on
the breast. The wing-coverts are
partially margined with white,
but the anterior ones are bordered
with light brown. The beak is
black at the tip and horn-co-
loured at the base, the latter hue
extending over the cere to the
naked part of the face, which

[column break]

passes as far backwards as the eyes,
and has a very slight tinge of red.
The iris is light brown; &c &c” –

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[Bennett 1831, p. 294]

The Netherlands specimen described by M Temminck is “of a blackish soot-colour, with the back of the head and greater part of the neck isabella yellow spotted with brown, and dark brown edges to the wing-coverts.” The colour of the

[Temminck and de Chartrouse 1838, unpaginated, the quote is from the description of plate 32.]

Netherlands specimen at once accounts for M. Temminck’s altering the name from fuscosa to fuosa. The feeding of our V.D.L. Eagle on dead carcasses may partly arise from the greater scarcity of food as compared to former times – Civilization has driven the Kangaroos to the scrubs – and reduced their number much – but I think

[The preceding suggests that Gunn was well aware of the effects of habitat alteration, including the altering of animal behavior. This is a harbinger of modern thinking.]

our Eagle is naturally fond of Carrion. – At Western Port, where necessity I should suppose could not have arisen

[page break]

I saw them abundant, evidently attracted by Capt’n Swanston’s dead sheep. – At Mr. Beckfords they also daily visited a dead bullock in twos & threes, and one was shot – They however also attack living animals – lambs & Kangaroos. – Mr. Backhouse & Mr. Adam Thompson knew them to attempt snatching

up dogs. – One at New Norfolk carried away a live pig and dropped it some miles off – A Horse in a paddock at Mr. Barker's, Macquarie Plains, was chased & attacked by two — and the late Mrs. Burns of the Clyde, a lady of veracity, informed Mr. Backhouse that she was chased by one or two; (I forget which) & Backhouse's friend George Walker was nearly pounced on by one (at Circular Head I believe) whilst stooping for shells – and would most likely have got a dab

[column break]

had not Backhouse, who was some way off, & observed it, called to him. – The Sea Eagles of America

[Bald Eagles]

very generally feed on carrion and putrid carcasses – The Golden Eagle

[*Aquila chrysaetos*]

I believe usually hunts for its game. – Our having no species of vulture in Australia may probably have led to the Combining both characters in one bird. – It struck me at first certainly as being new –

[This hypothesis of the eagles taking over the role of the missing vulture in Australia has a modern ring to it—it is similar to the niche shift and niche expansion explanations for, for example, the shift of several Tasmanian bird species, such as the Brown

CORRESPONDENCE

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Thornbill or Grey Shrike-thrush, to more pronounced bark-foraging behavior in the absence of treecreepers and sittellas, the traditional bark-foraging guild of mainland Australia. Another example is the morphological and behavioral evolution to a bark-foraging niche by Strong-billed *Melithreptus validirostris* and Yellow-throated *Lichenostomus flavicollis* Honeyeaters, both Tasmanian endemic species.]

You are correct in supposing that sight alone can guide Eagles and Vultures to their prey – upon this point there can be no doubt. – The great Buffon remarks “A Hawk sees from on high a lark upon a clod of earth at twenty times the distance at which a man or a dog can perceive it – A kite having soared to an elevation

[page break]

beyond our ken, can see the small lizards, field mice & birds, & select those upon which he chooses to pounce. This great extent of the visual power is accompanied with a precision equally great, for the organ being at once both extremely supple & extremely sensible, the eye grows round or flat, is covered or uncovered, contracts or dilates, & speedily & alternately assumes all the forms necessary to adapt itself to every degree of light or distance.

Moreover, the sense of sight being the only one which produces the idea of motion, the only one

by which the degrees of space which are traversed can be compared, & the birds being of all animals the best adapted for Motion, it is not surprising that they possess, in the highest degree of certainty & perfection that sense

[column break]

which should be their principal guide. They are able to traverse a great space in a very little time: they, therefore, must be enabled to discern its extent & limits. Had nature, in bestowing on them such rapidity of flight, rendered them at the same time short-sighted, these two qualities would have been contrary, and the bird would not have dared to make use of his lightness, nor attempted a rapid flight; he would only have hovered slowly along under the dread of unforeseen shocks & resistances. The swiftness with which a bird can fly may indicate the extent of his reach of vision; not, however, absolutely, but relatively. A bird whose flight is quick, direct & sustained, certainly sees farther than another of the same form, which moves more slowly & obliquely; and, had nature ever produced birds with short sight &

[page break]

rapid wing, such species must have speedily perished from this con-

CORRESPONDENCE

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trariety of qualities, one of which not only hinders the exercise of the other, but exposes the individual to an infinite number of risks. From all this we may presume that the birds whose flight is shortest & slowest are also those whose power of vision is the least extended.”

[Buffon 1799-1808, Vol. 37 (1801), pp. 50-52]

The power, which however it may be explained, birds certainly possess of altering the convexity of the eye, of rendering the sight more or less distant, according to the wants of the animal, by correcting the divergence of the visual rays, is the reason why many birds, as well as the owl family, are nocturnal. —

The preceding extracts on the sight of birds, although long, are so very interesting, and meet my views so correctly that I could not

[column break]

resist giving them to you — and but for the length to which it would carry this paper I would have continued my extracts a little further. —

[These extensive extracts emphasize how important Gunn’s acquisition of European ornithological treatises was to his own studies and those of his colleagues. There simply were no libraries in Tasmania that provided adequate ornithological references.]

On the sense of smelling in
Birds, more particularly with

reference to Vultures, much may be said – and that common error that they are led by **[sic by?]** that sense to their prey is ably refuted by that celebrated Naturalist Audubon – It would occupy too much space to detail the various experiments tried by Audubon to prove that the sense of smelling is not acute in the vultures & that by sight alone they are guided to their prey, & which are published in the Philosophical Journal – but I shall concisely as possible detail the results –

[page break]

Audubon stuffed a deerskin with hay, and kept it until very dry – put it into the centre of an open field & laid it on its back as if dead – in a few minutes a vulture came down to it – voided itself freely, (as all birds of Prey in a wild state generally do before feeding) and attacked the eyes which were of dried painted clay – then went to the other end & pulled away until the stitches gave way & and plenty of hay came out – at last he took flight, coursed about the field, when suddenly rounding & falling, he saw him kill a small garter snake & swallow it in an instant – He here remarks “Judge of my feelings when I plainly saw that the Vulture, which could not discover, through its extraordinary

CORRESPONDENCE

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sense of smell, that no flesh either fresh or putrid, existed about that skin, could at a glance see a snake, scarcely as large as a man's finger,

[column break]

alive and destitute of odour, hundreds of yards distant. I concluded that at all events his ocular powers were much better than his sense of smell" –

[Audubon 1826-1827, p. 174]

Another experiment was to put a very putrid hog in July in a situation where the odour could be exhaled but the carcass covered by brushwood to be unseen – Vultures passed continually over it in search of food, but none discovered the carcass although the smell was so offensive that Audubon could not approach it within 30 yards. – Many dogs however at an early period found it out & fed upon it. –

[Turkey Vultures *Cathartes aura*, the subject of Audubon's study, find carrion both by sight and smell. They have an excellent sense of smell with very well developed olfactory organs. Recent studies have demonstrated that Turkey Vultures can locate food by smell (see Kirk and Mossman 1998 and references therein).]

He related many others but I have really made this paper so long that I dare not quote them, being already afraid your patience will be almost exhausted. – To search into these matters is at all times to me a most delightful study –

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[page break]Vanga destructor. Laughing**[Grey Butcherbird]**

Jack-ass of V.D.L. colonists. –

I have never seen the Sydney Bird

[probably Laughing Kookaburra]

in V.D.L. and do not think it exists

here – it is much larger, and from

recollection I think much similar

in general colour & shape. – Are

there two species in V.D.L.? One appears

much darker coloured although very

similar in other points. – I send

[Gunn probably refers to the immature Grey Butcherbird, which is much browner, and the adult bird, which is bold black, grey, and white.]

you a specimen No. 1 to look at – a female

but the male is similar. – Age may

cause the diff'ce – but in sending them

Home I find I gave them separate

numbers. – I also send you **[a]**

specimen of the true kingfisher No. 2

[Azure Kingfisher *Alcedo azurea diemenensis*, an endemic Tasmanian subspecies]

to examine and report upon. –

Turdus varius. I shot two in a**[Bassian Thrush]**

scrubby ravine between the Sand Hill [?] &

the North Esk – It also exists here,

I believe, but I have not seen it –

Its flight is very short resembling

[column break]somewhat *Cinclosoma punctatum* –

CORRESPONDENCE

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[Spotted Quail-thrush]

the spotted-shouldered thrush – but I had no opportunity of observing it more closely since – I have seen plenty specimens – say 6 or 8 – in the Colony in the possession of different persons –

Pardalotus punctatus. –

[Spotted Pardalote]

Your No. 9 is not the female of the Diamond Bird – but I now send you a female, No. 3 which you will find agrees precisely with the description of Vigors & Horsfield – Yours (No. 9) must be a very different species as the markings vary much from P. Punctatus. – The male & female of your No. 9 are alike, having shot them at C. H'd.

[This may be the Forty-spotted Pardalote, a Tasmanian endemic species or juvenile Spotted Pardalote. Gunn had previously mentioned the Striated Pardalote, and thus was familiar with that species. The Forty-spotted Pardalote had not been recognized as a separate species at the time of this letter; it was described by Gould in 1838. If this is indeed the Forty-spotted Pardalote, now an Endangered species found predominately in southeastern Tasmania, it suggests that the species was considerably more widely distributed in Gunn's time. Circular Head is in the Northwestern corner of Tasmania.]

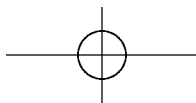
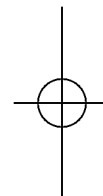
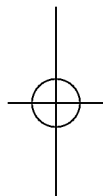
Your specimens Nos. 7 & 8 I have retained until next trip. –

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Please return all mine.

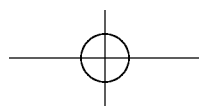
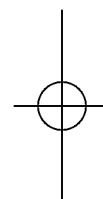
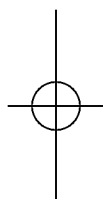
To be continued.

[end of letter]



CORRESPONDENCE

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To the Editor of
Circular-Head Scientific Journal,
Communication 3.

We have just received the two
with the this No. of the Scientific Journal
normal for which we have
long and immediately looked
and we hope that our learned
editors will continue to send us
a copy regularly as it is
a great disappointment with
the *Gypaetus barbatus* which has the form of an Eagle

Figure 11. To the Editor, Circular-Head Scientific Journal, (no date).

[The first four pages of the following letter are in a much clearer handwriting than the last four, suggesting that Grant made a second draft of the first four pages.]

To the Editor of
Circular-Head Scientific Journal
Communication 3d **[Figure 11]**

We have just received the box
with the third No. of the Scientific
Journal for which we have
long and anxiously looked
and we hope that our learned
Editor will continue to send us
a copy regularly as it is
a great dis appointment when
the Schooner arrives without
a copy for Tartar Emetic.

The Article on the Aquila
fuscosa, we have perused with
[Wedge-tailed Eagle]
much interest, and the Extracts
from Audubon and Buffon
were so good that if we may
presume so far as to interfere
in the publication we would
like to see occasionally a

[column break]

few Extracts of the same Nature
— that is — if our Worthy Editor
can find time & room for the
purpose. —

As to the circumstance of

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the Eagle feeding on Carrion,
I find that there is an Oriental
species the “Gypaëtus barbatus” –

[Lammergeier *Gypaetus barbatus*]

which has the form of an Eagle
but the habits of a Vulture” Now

[The quote apparently ends with Vulture.]

this Coincides well with your
remark that the want of Vultures
in this Colony may lead to a
Combination of both Characters
in the same bird — I have
no doubt but that it is by the
sense of sight chiefly that birds
of prey procure their food
Still that of smell is highly

[page break]

developed in some birds as an
Anecdote by Mr Antorni
will prove if true. tho the
narrative Savours not a little
of the saw [?] head & bloody bones

“A gentleman was murdered
by an innkeeper” (under very
atrocious circumstances) “In order
to avoid discovery and to prevent
the body from rising to the surface
of the water, he pierced it through
with a long stake sharpened at
the End, which he pushed into
the mud so far that only a small
portion of the end of the Stake was
visible. — A few days afterwards
some ravens arrived from all directions
and crowded to the spot, their incessant
croaking altogether unusual to the

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place, led the inhabitants to fancy a thousand foolish stories. the pertinacity of the birds was such alas, that it was useless to attempt

[column break]

driving them away; this increased the excited curiosity of the people so much, that the stake was at length with difficulty drawn out, which was no sooner done than the body rose to the surface of the water.

Enquires were made the track of the cart wheels was traced from the river to the back of the inn and the Murderer when taken confessed his crime.”

Mr Knapp observes of the Rook,

[Rook *Corvus frugilegus*]

‘I have often observed them alight on a pasture of uniform Verdure, and Exhibiting no Sensible trace of withering or Decay, and commence stocking [?] up the ground, upon investigating the object of these operations, I have found many heads of plants dandelions, & other plants drawn out

[page break]

out [**sic**] of the ground and scattered about; their roots having been taken off by a grub, leaving only a crown of leaves upon

the surface, which grub these birds had detected in their flight and descended to feed upon, and which they did by first pulling up the plant which concealed it and, then drawing the larvae from their holes. By what intimation this bird had discovered its hidden food, we are at a loss to conjecture; but the Rook has always been supposed to scent Matters with great discrimination.”

“Water birds might be sup

[There do not appear to be quote marks ending this quote, so that the end of the quote, if it is a quote, is unknown.]

posed, from the considerable development of their nerves of smell, to have this sense Very acute, and Leucetius

[column break]

accordingly attributes to the quick smelling of the Geese their discovery of the Gauls when they attempted to take the Capital by surprise — the organs of smell in the goose are however considerably less

[in dark ink between lines: vide note at the end]

developed than in the duck —
— The petrels we might infer, ought to possess an acute smell, as their Nostrils are not only large, but different from other birds; They project distinctly from the beak forming a singular looking sort [?]

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of nose; — in Some Species, as the
Pintado petrel (*Procellaria Capensis*)

[Cape Petrel *Daption capense*]

nearly an inch long. in the Giant
Petrel (*P. gigantea*) it is much more

**[either Southern Giant-Petrel *Macronectes giganteus* or Northern
Giant-Petrel *M. halli*, not at that time separated]**

— as these birds do not fly so high
in the air as Vultures and Ravens
and live upon dead fish and simi
lar, garbage. These prominent Nostrils
are probably intended to render them

“Sagacious of their quarry from afar”

**[Grant is correct that the procellariiform birds do have a well
developed sense of smell.]**

[page break]

This opinion is rendered more
probable from the very different
structure of the Nostrils in birds
which live on live fish. The
Pelecans for Example have the
Cavity of the Nostrils in general
very small, and the marginal
cartilage, as well as the opening
in the bone, Scarcely perceptible,
Even in the Skeleton, the Cormorant
again, which is ranked in the
Same group (*pelecanidae*) has
the Nostrils so small that Dr
Blainville Says it is with difficulty
a very small slit can be dis
tingushed in the living bird
hence he designates them by the
term *Cryptosrhinia* — The same
Author describes in Several Species

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a sort of Scale covering the Nostrils
like a lid. It is worthy of remark
that the King fisher, though not a
Swimming bird like the Pelecans

[column break]

and cormorants, has very small
Nostrils with a cartilaginous lid,
Smell being, so far as we can
judge of inferior moment to
them, in as much as they feed
almost Exclusively on live
fish which — they must discover
and pursue by the eye “ Birds. do eat
of [illegible]
I. Know [?]

**[It is unclear by its position whether the quote marks accompany
the “eye” or “Birds,” but the quote marks are in a dark tone more
like the parenthetical remarks beginning with “Birds.”]**

Some people deny altogether the existence
of the sense of smell in birds
while others seem to ascribe
to it too much acuteness — we
find that the Shape of the Nostrils
Varies with the habits & feeding
of the bird, and thus forms a Very
good generic distinction — per
haps I shall have ready for
next trip a paper “on the Senses
of Smell & Sight in birds” and
I wait for the Moonlight Nights
in order to procure a goatsucker
for dissection. — When I hope
to have something New for you

[page break]

Vanga Destructor No1

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[Grey Butcherbird]

I return this Specimen of the laughing Jack-Ass of this colony, you say that you have not seen the bird which in Sydney they call by the Same Name — it belongs to a totally different family — Viz. the King-fisher

[Laughing Kookaburra]

it is thus described by Brown — ‘Brown above, white beneath, with grey undulated bars on the abdomen; feathers of the head elongated; wing coverts & rump green, tail with transverse black bars. 18 inches long. **[inhabits]** N. Holland’ — the bill is very

[Brown 1833, vol. 1, p. 225; “*Dacelo gigantea*, The Gigantic Dacelo”]

large, thick, Strong, & quadrangular I have seen it in the Zoological Society Garden in London — & I believe that is confined to N.S.W it is a very ugly bird. —

Genus Halcyon No 2

I return your very fine specimen of the true King-fisher but I cannot find the specific description, at least one that will apply completely — but

[column break]

I think it more than probable that it is the Halcyon Cinnamominus here described.

[The Azure Kingfisher is the only regularly occurring kingfisher with cinnamon underparts in Tasmania. The Sacred Kingfisher *Todiramphus sanctus*, occasionally occurs in Tasmania and in fresh plumage has a cinnamon wash on the underparts and more closely

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resembles the Micronesian Kingfisher *T. cinnamominus* than does the Azure Kingfisher.]

Halc. caeruleo-viridis; pileo collo,
plumisque totis subtus pallidè cin
namominis; Auribus viridibus;
Nuchâ torque Nigro gracili ornatâ

[Vigors and Horsfield 1827, p. 206]

— You see that this does not Ex
actly coincide perhaps it may
belong to the genus. Ceyx
Ceyx azurea is as follows.

[Azure Kingfisher]

— Ceyx Saturatè azurea, corpore
Subtus lorisque flavescens, lat
eribus colli maculâ obliquâ albâ

[Vigors and Horsfield 1827, p. 208]

Saturate azurea applies to
this specimen (above), but it is more of
a cinnamon than a yellow colour
below

There is a very remarkable cir
cumstance in the structure of the
feet in this bird, all the king-fishers
which I have ever seen have had
three toes before, (though Cral [?] feet
certainly) whereas this bird has
only two, a mere rudiment ind [sic]

[page break]

indicating the place of the inner toe
this [drawing of foot] is something like the
foot [Figure 12] of the King-fisher
though rather long as to the two outer
toes the inner marked A is sufficiently
developed — in the specimen before me [?]
You see that it is merely rudi-
Mentary — perhaps this is a generic

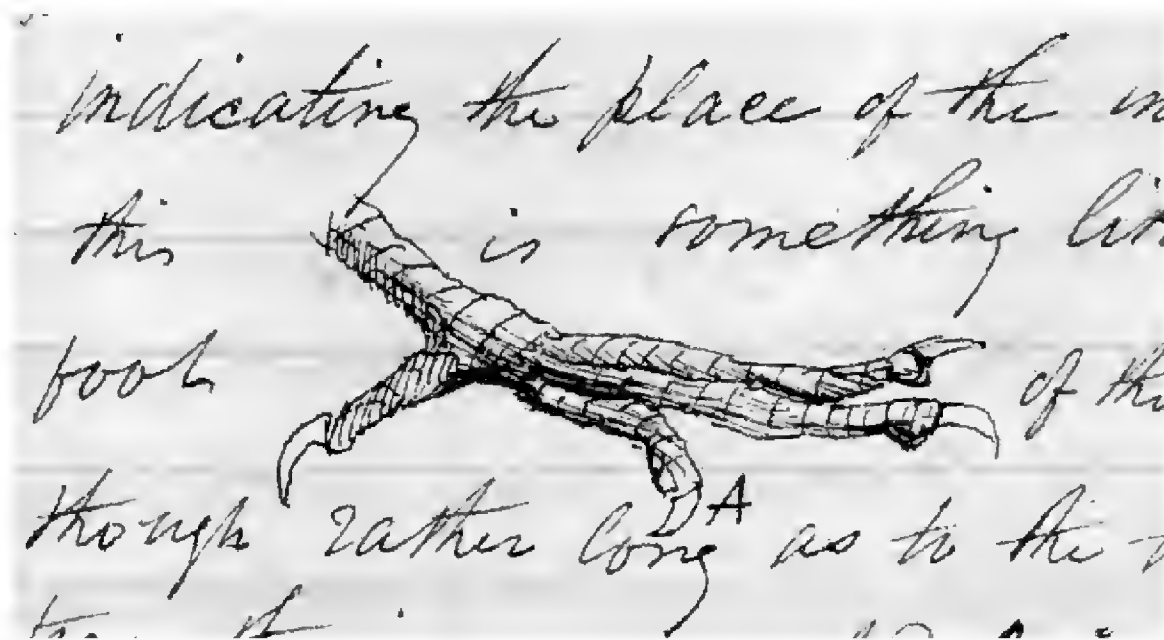


Figure 12. Foot of an Azure Kingfisher (*Alcedo azurea*).

distinction of Ceyx and you may Enlighten me on the subject –

(round – tail)

Genus *Platycereus* (: Πλατυς Κερκος)

Species *Platy. Eximius* No 3

[Eastern Rosella]

Rosella Parakeet

I lately received a specimen shot in this neighbourhood, which seems to be an incidental Variety of the Rosella but as I have Not a specimen of that bird perhaps you will be kind Enough to compare & report upon them it appears to me that the tail is not so well developed as in the true Rosella. & the upper Mandibula Seems Much Elongated, but that may be from the way in which it has dried

[See Gunn's comments on dried birds skins, pp. 104-105.]

The upper parts are of a light yellow

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with a tinge of green – underparts
[Possibly this is a young bird, which lacks the distinctive black centers to the bright yellow dorsal feathers.]

[column break]

bright light yellow, the head,
 Nape, breast, and Vent of
 bright red. the feathers being
 faintly bordered with yellow
 , **[sic]** the shoulders & and outer web
 of the wing-feathers of a light
 Azure — inner web of a Dirty White
 two longest tail feathers
 are greenish the others are
 white & light azure, I
 send it for your inspection

Genus Calyptorhynchus

(Καλυπτω, celo. ρυγχος, rostrum)

Species Calypto; Galeatus No 4

Red Crowned parrot. Lath. gen. hist

**[Latham 1821-1828, vol. 2, (1821), pp. 218-219] [Gang-gang
 Cockatoo *Callocephalon fimbriatum*]**

I send the male & female
 birds of this name — they were
 shot. at Port Philip

[present-day Melbourne]

by Mr
 Wedge. and belong to the same
 genus as our black Cockatoos
 “The chief difference between
 this Genus & that of Plectolophus
 (the white Cockatoo) consists in
 the greater Elevation and the
 comparative shortness of the
 bill, the later group

[page break]

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possesses a bill of nearly an Equal length and similar construction to that of the true *Psittacus*.

[African Grey Parrot *Psittacus erithacus*]

While *Calyptorhynchus* is allied to the Maccaws in the character of this member, and thus Evinces a higher development than [?] *Plyctolophus* of

[e.g., Sulphur-crested Cockatoo]

the typical peculiarities of the family the culmen of the upper mandibula is considerably curved & bent in wards at the apex, the under Mandibula is also much more dilated than it is in *Plycto*lophus, the group appears to be confined to Australia, the black colour that prevails through these birds separates them also at first sight from species of *Plyctolophus*, which are generally white — the *Calypto - galeatus*

[Gang-gang Cockatoo]

which deviates from the characteristic colouring of its Congeners connects the two groups”

Vigors and Horsf.

[Vigors and Horsfield 1827, pp. 269-271]

[column break]

Genus *Pezoporus*. Ill.

Species *Pezop. formosus*.

[Ground Parrot]

this is the beautiful ground parakeet of the swamps. green with black & yellow bands — I last year

discovered a curious structure
 in this bird - it has no Clavicle
 or furculum (Merry thought) and
 the Articulations of the Coracoid
 bones being very loose, the [sic] should
 readily approximate — probably
 to Enable the bird to run & make
 its way more easily among the
 thick grass of the swamps which it
 frequents — in consequence if
 this want of a fixed point on which
 the humerus or bone of the arm
 Must Move, the flight is feeble
 and unsustained, it never flies
 any distance but on being flushed
 it soon alights — and yet the

**[These comments indicate that Grant had a keen awarness of the
 relationship between structure and function. However, in the
 platycercine parrots, which include the rosellas and Ground
 Parrot, the absence of the furcula is normal, while the birds are
 capable of strong and sustained flight.]**

Keel of the Sternum is Very deep &
 continues to the Very End of the Sturnum
 I send you the Sternal apparatus
 of one of these birds which I dissected
 this afternoon. & also that of the
 wedge

[page break]

Wedge-tailed Eagle in order that
 you may compare the two — the
 Eagle has a finely formed set
 of bones, — the strength is concentrated
 in the front, and the clavicles form
 a perfect arc having its depth
 in the direction of the Strain — the
 coracoid bones (which are peculiar

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to birds) are also Short, Strong, and placed at an angle which Meets about the centre of the Sternum. And you will observe a Strengthening ridge running along this latter bone to that point marked A — The Sternum itself is Very finely formed like the Run [?] of a vessel, the inside is concave & is admirably adapted for the support and protection of the lungs and other viscera, you observe numerous holes on this surface these are the openings from which atmospheric air is conveyed into all the bones directly from the lungs.

Compare now the same parts with those of the ground parakeet — observe in the first place the total absence of the furcal bones (clavicle) (this **[sic]**

[column break]

(the ligaments you see are common to all birds) — thus the Coracoids are nearly parallel & loosely articulated & longer in proportion than those of the Eagle — the Sternum is very narrow anteriorly — broad posteriorly with two large holes filled up with membrane— indicating great power of leg. [?] the lower surface is very flat. & narrow — but this is made up by a Very deep Keel reaching the whole length of the Sternum — the pectoral muscles are therefore of a considerable size but with short

fibers — and this lesser pectoral which (raises the wing) passes through this hole B forming a pulley is larger in proportion than in birds of more powerful flight. the Eagle for example — the parrot has therefore a Very ready [?] wing. but his flight for the reasons Stated cannot be continued without great fatigue — to be continued in our next.

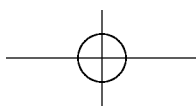
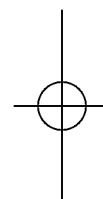
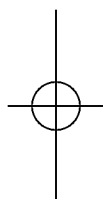
Note — As to the Nerves described in the bills of ducks & geese they are not nerves of smell at all but of Sensation for probing in the mud — they are branches of the fifth pair - the 1st pair on which the Sense of Smell depends is ramified on the Mucous membrane inside the Nostrils the Platypus has these branching of the 5th. Very large

[*Ornithorhynchus anatinus*]

[end of letter]

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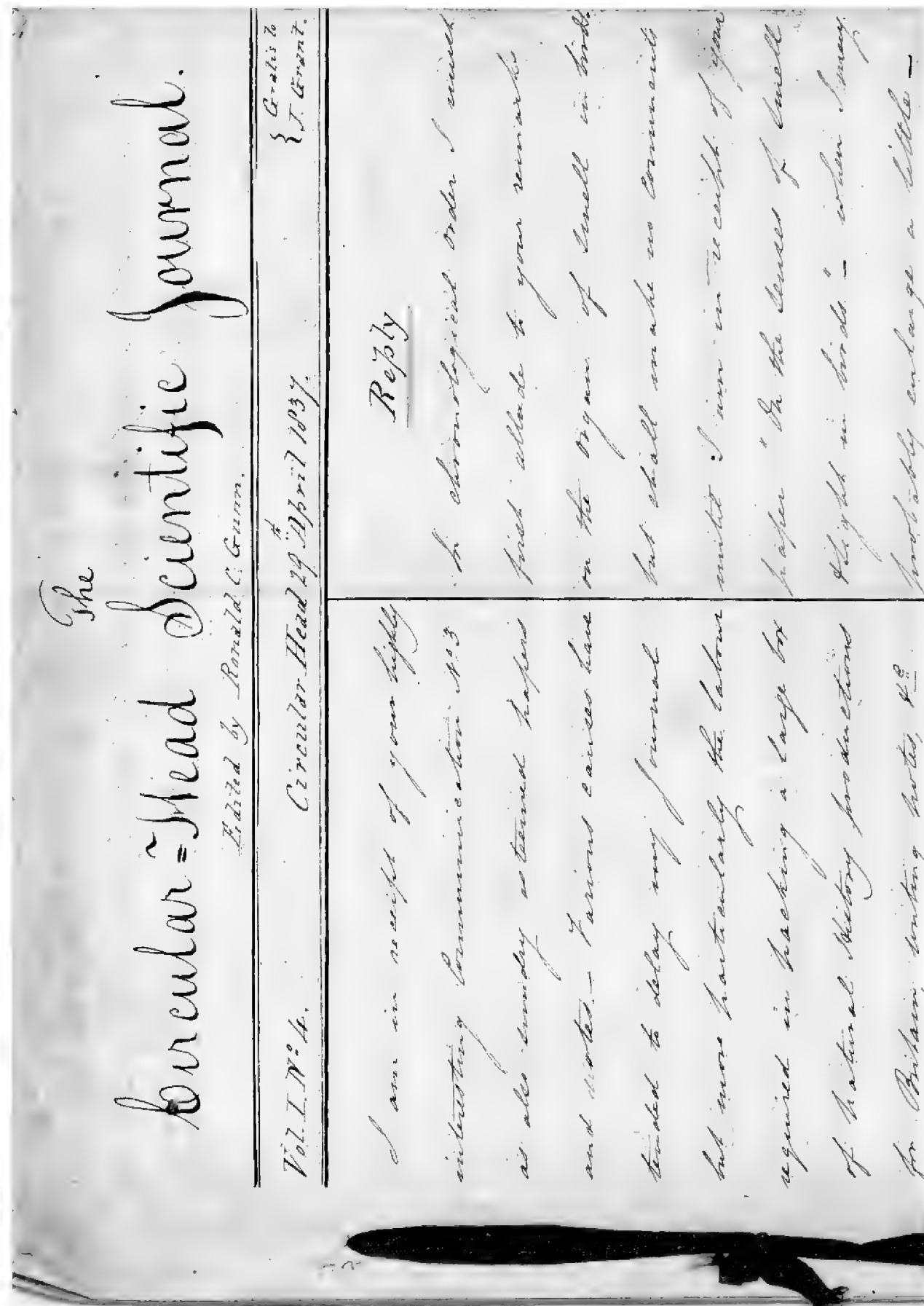


Figure 13. Circular-Head Scientific Journal, 29 April 1837.

The
Circular-Head Scientific Journal.
Edited by Ronald C. Gunn. [Figure 13]

Vol. I No. 4. Circular Head 29th April 1837. { Gratis to
J. Grant.

I am in receipt of your highly interesting Communication No. 3 as also sundry esteemed papers and notes. – Various causes have tended to delay my journal but more particularly the labour required in packing a large box of Natural History productions for Britain, writing notes, &c, frequent visits on duty at woolnorth and the time occupied in my favorite pursuit of Botany has I regret to say caused me to neglect you and my Ornithological matters to an extent which I did not at first anticipate – however it will depend much on you to brush me up from time to time, & prevent a relapse.

[column break]

Reply

In chronological order I must first allude to your remarks on the organ of smell in birds but shall make no comments until I am in receipt of your paper “On the Senses of Smell & Sight in birds” – when I may

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probably enlarge a little –

Kingfisher. Our kingfisher is, as supposed by you, of the Genus Ceyx – and thus described –

[Alcedo.]

The Genus Ceyx of Lacepede are kingfishers with the common bill but destitute of the internal toe.

Azure kingfisher – Al. Tribrachys

[Azure Kingfisher]

Shaw's Nat Mis.

[Shaw's *Natural Miscellany*, 1813 or 1814, Vol. 16, page facing Plate 681, describes *Alcedo tribrachys* as "Deep-blue KINGFISHER, ferruginous beneath, with blackish wings and tridactyle feet."]

Fine deep blue above, buff

[page break]

underneath; streaks buff & white; 7 inches – New Holland. – I shot one similar to the specimen I sent you on the South Coast of New Holland. –

Platycercus eximius. Var. lutea.

[Eastern Rosella]

I have carefully examined your specimen and have the strongest reason to believe (unless you are positively assured to the contrary) that it is only a Common Roselle Parrot the colours of which have faded by long keeping. – The skins of birds and animals

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entirely change when exposed to the atmospheric air for a length of time – either in a room or Verandah. – The Bill of the bird is evidently elongated by having been suspended by it when recently skinned – a Common practice – but a bad one – as it lengthens the neck &

[column break]

the weight of the skin gives it unnatural shape. – I recently saw a number of skins of both birds & animals so changed in Colour that it was with difficulty I could recognize the most Common species - & such I believe to be the case with yours – In every point it is precisely alike except in the paler colours of red blue & green.

Pezoporus formosus. Your

[Ground Parrot]

remarks on the anatomy of this bird are highly interesting - & if you can spare it I should gladly retain the skeleton – Your knowledge of Anatomy & Surgery renders you well fitted for the investigation of the peculiarities of Australian Zoology. – Our forms of Birds it is true do not differ widely from those of other countries, but our

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[page break]animals our extraordinary. –

[Gunn was interested in mammals as well as birds and plants and was obviously aware of how strikingly different the Australian marsupial-dominated mammalian fauna was from other areas of the world.]

Original.

I send for your inspection a specimen of the Swift alluded to in your Communication 1st it was shot on 26 Feby. near Circular Head & I regret I could not obtain a second specimen – It is a beautiful bird – the tail feathers are peculiarly pointed. – Temminck has referred these

[Temminck (1815) 1835]

sharp-tailed swallows to the Cypseli or Swifts – And Mr. Stephens separates them under

[Mr. Stephens is James Francis Stephens (1792-1853), who continued Shaw's *General Zoology* after the death of Shaw in 1813 (Whittell 1954).]

the Generic name of "Chaetura"

[Shaw 1800-1826, vol. 13, pt. 2 (1826), p. 76]

The species in question appears to be

Cypselus giganteus. Pl. Col. 364.

[White-throated Needletail]

Body, black; neck, brown; tail and wing-coverts & side of belly, bottle green; back & scapulars, dull ash; sides of belly & vent, white; tarsi naked. – No Habitat Mentioned.

[Cuvier 1827-1832 (1829), Vol. 7(2). p. 70]

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[column break]

There are two other species mentioned
as belonging to New Holland viz.
Hirundo caudacuta. Lath. (Chaetura
Australis, Step.) “Dusky, tinged

[This is again the White-throated Needletail.]

with shining green; forehead &
throat white.” – and H. Pacifica

**[Fork-tailed Swift, which on rare occasions visits Tasmania.] [the
quote about the White-throated Needletail and description of *H.*
pacifica are from Cuvier 1827-1832 (1829), Vol. 7(2), p. 70.]**

of Lath. – which last however
cannot be our bird. –

Musicapa Lathamii. I am

[Probably the Pink Robin]

enabled at last to send you a
male & female of this species
of Robin Red-Breast. – It is
usually found here in scrubby
places – and not in open
situations like our other two
species. – (Nos. 2 & 3 now sent.)

Emu Wren. Our species appears

**[Southern Emu-wren *Stipiturus malachurus littleri*, an endemic
Tasmanian subspecies]**

to be figured in Griffith’s “Cuvier”
**[probably Cuvier 1827-1832, the title of which contains, “with sup-
plementary additions to each order by Edward Griffith”]**

as *Malurus gularis* of Vieillot.
but I can see no specific description
of such species in the body of the
work – it also possess **[sic] no Index**

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or list of Synonyms – rendering

[page break]

reference exceedingly difficult –
In the descriptions the following
appears to be the species. –
Muscicapa Malachura “Lin.
Trans. – Ferruginous brown, beneath
paler; streak before the eye & eye-
brow pale blue; throat gray;
beard of tail feathers loose” –

[Cuvier 1829 (1827-1832). Volume 6, p. 468]

This agrees pretty well – except
that the throat ought to be pale
blue instead of gray –

The word Malurus is used by
Vieillot to designate as a Genus
some species of the warblers
distinguished by a gauze like
tail. –

Report on this bird.

No. 4. is here called Satin Bird
[probably the Satin Flycatcher *Myiagra cyanoleuca*]
but is different from the Bird
so called in New South Wales
The specimen is a male. – The female
is very different in Colour & I
regret I have not a specimen

[column break]

to send. – There are some of the
same genus in New Holland & I
possess a specimen possessing a
general resemblance but two

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inches longer & white on throat to the vent. – Refer to your Lin. Trans.

[Restless Flycatcher]

[Bassian Thrush] Turdus varius. I saw this bird,

mentioned by you as rare, very abundant in the dense Myrtle Forest going to, & in the neighbourhood of the Hampshire Hills. I shot six. They appear to be always in similar Situations – rarely perch on trees more than a few feet off the ground – but more usually only on the dead wood. – They are so tame that it is difficult to get far enough off to shoot them properly – that is, if you attempt to retire, the wood is usually so thick & dense that you cannot take aim – It is also at Circular Head.—

[page break]

[Gang-gang Cockatoo; not found in Tasmania today] Calyptorhynchus Galeatus. This

Bird has visited Circular Head during the last fortnight in April. – I saw one flock containing 6 to 9. Two or three have been shot by different persons, but I have been unable to procure any of them – there [**sic**] rarity I suppose making them valued. – They feed on the Seeds of the

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Eucalypti – and have a note very different to any species in V.D.L. I suppose an unusual prevalence of Northerly winds has blown them to us from King’s Island – or the South Coast of New Holland. –

[This suggests that the formerly resident population on King Island was known.]

[In the following section, Gunn proposes that he and Grant compile a “History of the Birds of V.D.L.,” an organized treatment of each group of bird species, adding to the list as additional species were found.]

As I intend visiting Launceston by this trip I shall defer various matters which I intended to have inserted in this. – I find that our publications are too irregular in their style & arrangement

[column break]

and I hope after seeing you to alter matters on this point and I hope to improve them. – As we have no true beginning – but hop from one Genus to another, I intend proposing that we make a fair start systematically – so that in fact our numbers will be a perfect “History of the Birds of V.D.L.” – And for that purpose to commence with “Raptors.” – Supplementary sheets may occasionally be

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added on Miscellaneous subjects,
and the thing got up somewhat
decently. –

In commencing upon this
plan it will not be essential
that we should possess all
the species – but set about
describing all we do possess
trusting to our good fortune

[page break]

to obtain the others in due
Course. – Classifying the Birds
in this way would lead us
to remark the peculiarities
of all the individuals of a
Certain family – much more
correctly than we can now
do by starting off at a
tangent from a Parrot to a
Wren – and back again to a
Hawk or Swallow. –

Again I find reference to
voluminous works no easy
matter where a number of
genera are concerned, whereas
were it only for one or two you
may, as it were, read straight
through. –

I shall be happy to hear
your opinion on this subject
& hope it will meet with
your Cordial approbation &
Support. –

[column break]

Reviews of Books.

Under this head some interesting articles might be written — and although a systematic Review need not be attempted, yet general observations on and opinions of a work would be useful. — Errors are also frequently published which we could more easily detect & point out. — On this point I only mean works devoted to Natural History. —

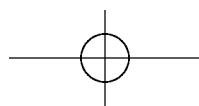
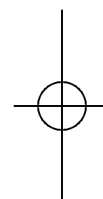
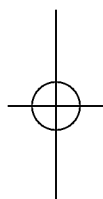
This and many other things connected with our favorite and delightful pursuit occupy my mind, and if we can bring our ideas to bear — why who knows what good may result from our enquires. We may also perhaps excite in others a taste in the same way, & thereby do much good. —

Excuse Haste.

[end of letter]

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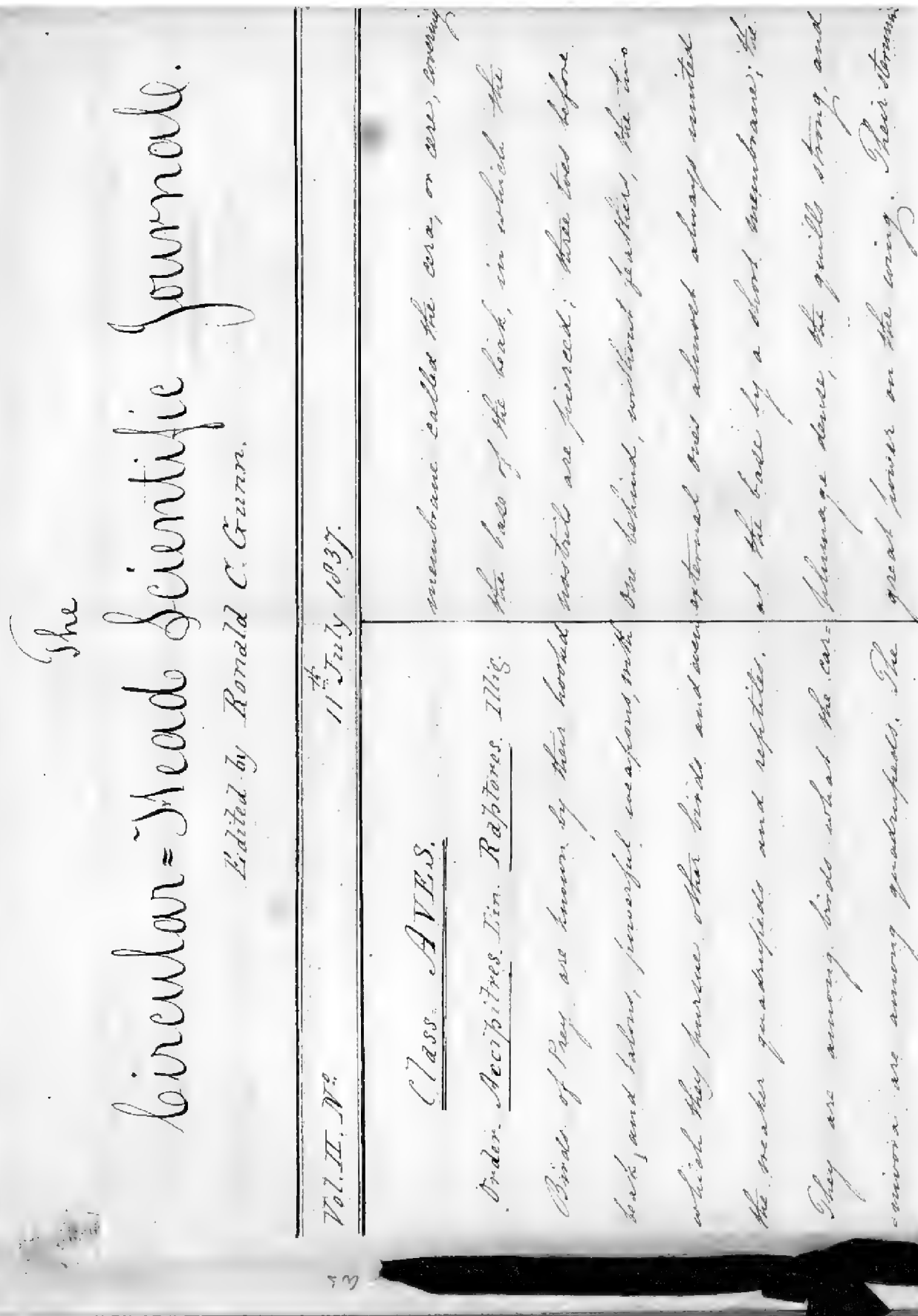


Figure 14. Circular-Head Scientific Journal, 11 July 1837.

The
Circular-Head Scientific Journal.
Edited by Ronald C. Gunn. **[Figure 14]**

Vo. II. No. **[no number given]**

11th July 1837

Class. AVES.

Order. Accipitres. Lin. Raptores. Illig.
Birds of Prey are known by their hooked
beak and talons, powerful weapons, with
which they pursue other birds and even
the weaker quadrupeds and reptiles.
They are among birds what the car-
nivora are among quadrupeds. The
muscles of their thighs and legs indicate
the strength of their claws; their tarsi
are rarely elongated; they have, all, four
toes; the nail of the thumb and that
of the internal toe are the strongest.

The **[sic]** form two families, the Diurnal
and the Nocturnal.

Family I. Diurnae.

The eyes of the Diurnal birds of prey
are directed side-ways; they have a

[column break]

membrane called the cera, or cere, covering
the base of the beak, in which the
nostrils are pierced; three toes before,
one behind, without feathers, the two
external ones almost always united
at the base by a short membrane; the

plumage dense, the quills strong, and great power on the wing. Their sternum is broad, & completely ossified, in order to give more extended attachments to the muscles of the wings, and their fourchette (furca) semicircular and widely separated, the better to resist the violent flexions of the humeri necessary to a rapid flight. Linnaeus comprehended them all under two genera, which are so many natural divisions, the vultures & the falcons.

[It would be interesting to know what Gunn meant by “natural divisions.” In pre-Darwinian times “natural divisions” could mean many things.]

[page break]

Of the Vulturidae (Vigors) I believe no species exists in this Colony.

Falconidae (Leach)

The Falcons form the second, & by far most numerous division of the diurnal birds of prey. Their head & neck are covered with feathers; their eyebrows project, which occasions the eye to appear sunk, and gives their physiognomy a character very different from that of vultures; the greater number prey on living animals, but they differ in the courage with which they pursue it. Their first plumage is often very differently coloured from that of the adult, which

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is only assumed in their third or fourth year, a circumstance which has occasioned a great multiplication of species. The female is generally one third larger than the male, which on this account is styled a tercel.

[This is an early description of reversed sexual dimorphism.]

[column break]

We should, first of all, subdivide this genus into two great Sections.

The Falcons properly so called, (commonly called the Noble birds of Prey,) Form the first. They are, for their relative size, the most courageous of the whole; their offensive arms, & the power of their wings, are proportioned to their Courage. Their beak, bending from its base, has a sharp tooth on each side, at the point. The Second quill feather is the longest; but the first is nearly as long, rendering the entire wing longer and more pointed. From these premises result peculiar habits; the length of the quill feather weakens their efforts at vertical flight, and compels them, in a calm state of the atmosphere, to fly obliquely forwards, so that when they wish to rise directly upwards, they are obliged to fly against the wind. All of them have the wings as long & longer than the tail.

[page break]

The enumeration of the species of V.D.L. "Falco", as of the other genera will follow after the introductory Remarks on the Order.

The second Section of the great genus Falco is that of birds of prey called ignoble, because they cannot be easily employed in falconry; a tribe much more numerous than that of the nobles, and which it is also necessary to subdivide Considerably. The fourth quill of their wings is almost always the longest, and the first is very short which produces the same effect as if their wing were obliquely truncated at the tip, whence, caeteris paribus, result diminished powers of flight; their beak also is not so well armed, there being no lateral tooth near its point, but a mere slight emarination about the middle of its length.

The Eagles. Aquila. (Brisson.)

[column break]

The Eagles which constitute the first tribe, have a very strong beak, straight at base, and only curved towards the point. Among them we have the largest species of the genus, and the most powerful of all the birds of prey. The Eagles, properly so called, have the tarsi feathered, even to the base of the toes. Their wings are as long as the tail, their flight both high and quick, & their courage exceeds

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that of other birds.

The Eagles are now subdivided into Aquila proper (to which belongs our A. fuscosa),

[Wedge-tailed Eagle]

the Haliaetus of Savigny, or Fisher Eagles of Cuvier. (of which I think our Island produces one or more species), the Pandion, (Savigny,) or Osprey. — The Harpyia, (Cuv.) or Harpies, and Morphnus, (Cuv.) or Eagle Hawks. — The subdivision Haliaetus differs

[page break]

from Aquila in some minor points; they have the same wings, but the tarsi are feathered only on the upper half, and the other half shielded — They inhabit the banks of rivers and the sea shore, & live principally on fish.

The Ospreys (Pandion.) have the beak & feet of the fisher eagles, but their nails are round underneath, while in other birds of prey they are bent and channeled; their tarsi are reticulated, & the second wing feather is longest.

The Harpies differ from the fisher Eagles in having shorter wings - & the beak & talons are stronger.

The Eagle Hawks also have wings shorter than the tail like the Harpies but as I am not aware that we possess any species of either I may as well abridge the generic

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Characters.

[column break]Astur. (Bechstein.)

The Goshawks, which form the second division of the Ignobles, like the last three tribes of Eagles, have wings shorter than their tail, but their beak is curved from its base, as in all those which are to follow. We particularly designate as Goshawks those which have rather short & scutellated tarsi.

The name of Sparrowhawk (Nisus Cuv.)

[*Accipiter nisus*, the Sparrowhawk of Europe]

is generally appropriated to those whose tarsi are higher and Scutellated; but the transitions from one Division to the other are almost insensible.

Milvus. Bechstein. Kites

Pernis. Cuv. The Honey Buzzards

Buteo. Bech. Buzzards.

Circus. Bech. The Harriers.

Serpentarius. Cuv. The Secretary.

As I am not aware at this moment of any species of the last five genera existing in V.D.L. I have not attached the genetic Characters.

[The Swamp Harrier *Circus approximans* was apparently less common in Gunn and Grant's time and is now common in Tasmania, particularly in agricultural areas. The species is described by Grant from Tasmania in a 1837 letter (see pp. 157-160).]

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Here end the Diurnae.

[page break]

General Remarks on the Order
Accipitres. Fam. Diurnae.

Under this head I only intend touching on various subjects more immediately connected with the family under consideration, purposing in another number to give an introductory article on Birds in general. –

The keenness of sight possessed by the Eagles, Hawks, &c induces me to make some additional Remarks on that organ to those sent in a previous number.

Sight is extremely perfect in birds & they have the peculiar faculty of seeing objects near or distant equally well. The means by which this is effected are not satisfactorily explained, though a power of changing the Concavity of the eye is probably the proximate cause. Like all other physical peculiarities, it is admirably

[column break]

adapted to the mode of existence of the class; a quick and perfect sight of objects & perception of distances is necessary to the rapidity of movements & and the securing of their Prey to birds. All the genera, except the Owls, see a single object but with one eye.

The situation of these organs, however, enables them to take in a much larger field of view than animals whose eyes look straight before them. Not to dwell with minuteness on some peculiarities which distinguish the eyes of birds, we shall pass to an additional word or two on the third eyelid, or nictitating membrane. This is folded in the angle of the eye next to [?] the nose, and is brought over the organ like a curtain, in a vertical direction, and not horizontally, or up and down, like the ordinary eyelids. This membrane is partially transparent, & one of its purposes

[page break]

seems to be, to prevent the access of too much light into the eye, when the bird is exposed to that inconvenience. With a few exceptions, the upper eyelid of birds is fixed, the lower one only moving.

The action of the nictitating membrane is highly mechanical & curious. Being partly pervious by light, it seems necessarily to be destitute of fleshy fibres, & could not, therefore, be attached in the ordinary way to a muscle. It is elastic, & lies, when unexcited, drawn back in the angle of the eye, but, when used, is put into action by two muscles attached to the posterior part of the globe of the eye, one of which is composed of fibres descending obliquely toward the optic nerve, & terminating in a tendon of peculiar character,

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having no insertion or attachment,
but forming a cylindrical canal,
which bends round the optic nerve.
The other muscle is attached above

[column break]

the eye, near the nose, & is composed of a
little fibrous cord, which passes under
the eye, to the lower edge of the nictitating
membrane; the action of these two muscles
draws the membrane across the eye.

Birds have also in their
eyes a large quantity of aqueous
humour, especially birds of elevated
flight, that the light may be so much
the more refracted as the air in
which they rise becomes more rarified.
The reverse is the case with fishes,
for the light is sufficiently refracted
through the watery medium in which
they are immersed, & which is so
much denser than the air.

The power which, however it may be
explained, birds do certainly possess
of altering the convexity of the eye,
of rendering the sight more or less
distant, according to the wants of
the animal, by connecting the
divergence of the visual rays,

[page break]

is the reason why many birds as
well as the owl family, are nocturnal.
A considerable number are also par-
tial to twilight, as, for instance,
the majority of the grallae

Of the organs of smell I have in a former number entered into pretty full detail, and the organ of hearing except perhaps to the owls, appears not to be so very fully developed as in many Mammalia, although still very perfect; — they possess no external Conch to the ear.

The Accipitres are monogamous & seldom lay more than two to four eggs. —

Of the Falcons little can be said in addition to the early parts of this number. — They are very long lived. A Falcon belonging to James the First, in 1610, with a gold collar bearing that date, was found in 1793 at the Cape of Good Hope. This bird,

[column break]

though more than 180 years old, was still considerably vigorous.

[This is probably in error. In recent times captive bred falcons only live to about 20 years of age, although eagles and large owls may live into their fifties (David Bird pers. comm.).]

Next comes the Eagles. The eagle holds, among the feathered race, the foremost rank, & his station is analogous to that of the lion among the Mammalia. The vulgar notion of cruelty, rapine, &c, usually attached to the Carnivorous tribes, are, to say no worse of them, exceedingly silly. They may serve to embellish declamation or poetry, when Sounding words are found a convenient

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substitute for just ideas; but they are calculated only to mislead the understanding, & have no place in philosophical

[scientific]

investigation. If the Eagle, like other Carnivore, subsists on flesh, it is because he cannot help it; the structure of his stomach & intestines precludes the use of other food. Unprovided with internal Organs to reduce other aliment to a nutritive consistence, he does

[page break]

not violate, but fulfils the laws of nature, by the employment of those destructive weapons with which she has armed him. Neither do these carnivorous propensities constitute a bye-law, or an exception to the grand Code of the Universe. It is the fiat of

[It would be interesting to know what Gunn meant by “Grand Code of the Universe.”]

nature that life must subsist on life.

[This is a very modern-sounding concept. All heterotrophic organisms require food obtained from other organisms.]

The modes, indeed, are different, but the principle, the result, & the object are the same. The peaceful herds & flocks which graze on the plain, or browse upon the mountain slope, are no less destroyers of life, than the Sanguinary rangers of the forest & and the air. Even vegetation itself is sustained by what once was animal existence, to which its own origin is in all probability posterior.

We shall not have recourse here, like some writers, to the vague hypothesis of final Causes, to explain all that appears contrary to our conventional ideas of right & wrong in the great system

[column break]

of nature. The fact is, that of final Causes we know very little; all we know is, that things are so, and we may conclude that they must be so. There are certain conditions of existence without which existence could not be. Wherever we turn we find indubitable marks of that imperious necessity, to which the highest intelligence must bow, as well as the meanest worm. It is no complement to the Divinity to laud his wisdom in the provisions he has made for the preservation of any being, when we know that, without such provisions, the being could not exist at all; and it is the height of presumption to pretend to justify his operations, by arguing from an imaginary and an impossible hypothesis.

But without pretending to unravel the mystery of final causes, or to assign a reason why certain animals are endowed with a sanguinary

[page break]

instinct, we may simply observe, that the mischief operated by carnivorous animals in the creation is comparatively very small. The wolf may occasionally abstract a

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lamb from the numerous flock, the lion kill one buffalo out of the immense herd, the eagle strike a solitary kid; or the gerfalcon a single hare; but the number of victims bears no sort of proportion to the number which escape. The benevolent lord of the creation

[man]

executes more destruction among his peers in one glorious campaign, than all the Carnivora from one end of the earth to the other among the living tribes.

[This sarcasm concerning “benevolent” mankind, and his seeming placing man within the context of the rest of the natural world rather than separate from and above it is extraordinary for early nineteenth century thinking.]

Among the lower animals, as in savage and uncivilized nations, where the intellectual faculties are but slightly developed, strength & courage are the surest titles to supremacy. If then, the pre-eminent possession

[column break]

of the characteristic faculties of its class, and the resistless exercise of them in the element which constitutes its domain, give any animal a claim to exclusive superiority, the empire of the eagle cannot be disputed by any of the denizens of the air. Shooting impetuously on untiring wing to an incomprehensible distance,

or sailing majestically above the mountain and the cloud, he assumes his native place among the feathered tribes; and none can escape his pursuit or rival his elevation. No other bird can cross his path on high; all remain humbly in the lower regions, forming a graduated Scale down to the penguin, which is provided only with the rudiments of the organs essential to the capacity of flight. The eagle is distinguished by a lofty mien, an eye of piercing vivacity, a bold assured gait, and

[page break]

a general expression of commanding nobleness. That this magnificent bird should be classed among the ignoble, by the professors of falconry, because he distains a subservience to the Caprices of man, is one proof among many of the proneness of human selfishness to the perversion of words.

The female eagle usually lays two, & but seldom, three eggs, which she hatches for thirty days. —

[The clutch size of the Wedge-tailed Eagle is usually two, but the incubation period is 42-48 days (Marchant and Higgins 1993).]

I am afraid I have already made this introductory communication too long — although the subject would admit of being lengthend [**sic**] out considerably. — Most of my remarks are extracts, abridged and condensed to suit my purpose, and

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their not being original will give them a character which they would not otherwise possess.

[Although Gunn states that his philosophical remarks are not original, they clearly indicate his own philosophical disposition.]

[column break]

From Cuvier's admirabler "Animal Kingdom" I hope to derive much

[Cuvier 1827-1832]

assistance in our future papers – his opinions on all subjects connected with Zoology bear a truth which you in vain look for in other works. –

The classification of species I shall leave to you – and will only beg to suggest that in all Cases the specific descriptions should be given in full, — And I shall willingly add any additional species from time to time which you may have omitted and I possess. – If you complete the "Diurnae" in your next number I shall then proceed with the "Nochurnae" & from thence proceed with the next Order. —

[end of letter]

Circular-Head ^{The} Scientific Journal.

Edited by Ronald C. Gunn.

N^o 2. Second Series.

Circular Head, 1st August 1837.

The second Series of Paper 1st
(Acquaintance) are the

Nocturnal.

Nocturnal birds of prey have a
large head; great eyes, directed
forwards, surrounded by a circle
of slender feathers, the anterior of
which cover the ears of the head,

of hearing; but the organs of flight
are not very vigorous; their forewings
is weak; their feathers being soft,
and covered with a fine down, make
no noise in flying. They can direct
their external toe either forwards or
backwards. These birds are chiefly
on the wing during twilight, & when

Figure 15. Circular-Head Scientific Journal, 1 August 1837.

The
Circular-Head Scientific Journal
Edited by Ronald C. Gunn. **[Figure 15]**

No. 2. Second Series. Circular-Head 1st August 1837.

The Second Family of Order 1st
(Accipitres) and the
Nocturnae

Nocturnal birds of prey have a large head; great eyes, directed forwards, surrounded by a circle of slender feathers, the anterior of which cover the cera of the beak, & the posterior the opening of the ear. Their enormous pupil permits the entrance of so many rays of light, that they are dazzled by that of day. Their Cranium, which is thick, but formed of a light substance, is excavated by large sinuses, which communicate with the ear, and which probably assist in strengthening the sense

[column break]

of hearing; but the organs of flight are not very vigorous; their fourchette is weak; their feathers being soft, and covered with fine down, make no noise in flying. They can direct their external toe either forwards or backwards. These birds are chiefly on the wing during twilight, & when the Moon shines. When attacked in the day time, they do not fly off, but

stand more erect, assume odd postures, & make the most ludicrous gestures. Their gizzard is muscular, although they subsist on animal matter, principally mice, little birds & insects, but it is preceded by a large crop; their caeca are long & enlarged at the bottom. Small birds have a

[page break]

natural antipathy to these, and unite from all parts to assault them; hence they are employed to draw birds to the net. —

There is but one Genus of them Strix, Lin. Which may be divided by their tufts of feathers usually called horns, the size of their ears, the extent of the circle of feathers which surrounds their eyes, and some other characters.

Speaking of the divisions of this Genus, an excellent Ornithologist has observed “All these divisions are unsatisfactory as generic, not having, at least, external characters sufficiently distinct to constitute even Sections.”

The Divisions of Strix Lin. Are
 1 Otus. Cuvier. The Horned Owls.
 2 Ulula. Cuv. The Howlers.
 3 Strix. Savigny —
 4 Syrnium Savigny. The Syrnii

[column break]

5 Bubo. Cuv. The Ducs. [?]

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6 Noctia. Sav. The Falconine Owls.
 7 Scops. Sav. The Scops.

1. Of the Horned Owls (Otus) I am aware of no species in V.D.L They have on the forehead two plumes of feathers, which are erected at pleasure & their ear conch extends in a half circle from the beak toward the summit of the head, & is furnished in front with membranaceous opercula. Their feet have feathers down to the talons.

2. The Howlers (Ulula) have the beak & the ears of the last division, but not their crests.

3. Strix. (Savigny.) Have the ears as big as those of the eared Owls, & provided with an opercule, which is still larger than that of those species; but their elongated beak bends only towards the end, while in all the other Subgenera it is arched

[page break]

from the point. It is without crests; the tarsi are feathered, but they have nothing but hair on the toes. The mask formed by the fringed feathers which surround the eye, is of greater extent, & gives their physiognomy a more extraordinary appearance than in the other species.

To this belongs the Common White

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or Barn Owl of England.

[*Tyto alba*]

[*Surnia*]

4. Syrnium. The Syrnii have

the disk of the fringed feathers & the little collar like the last; but the Conch is reduced to an oral Cavity, which does not occupy a half of the height of the cranium. They have no crests and the feet are feathered to the nails.

5 The Ducs (Bubo) have the Conch as small, and the disk of feathers less remarkable, than the Syrnii. They have crests.

6. The Falconine Owls (Noctua)

[column break]

have neither crests nor wide or Concave Conchs to the ears, the opening of which is oval, and scarcely larger than in other birds. The disk of fringed feathers is smaller, and even less complete than in the Bubo. –
Some are remarkable by a long, wedge-shaped tail. They have the toes very feathery, & and are called Hawk-Owl.

7. The Scops (Scops) have the ears

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flush with the head, imperfect discs, and the toes naked.

Our largest Owl possesses a very peculiar pectinated claw **[the pectinated claw is used in grooming feathers]** on the second toe which I do not see alluded to in any of the divisions of the Owl Family. – It is possessed by many of the Goatsuckers – but the bill widely separates them in classification.

[page break]

General Remarks on the
Noctinae

The endless aberrations of Nature from given types; the unwillingness she seems to exhibit to be shackled by general universal rules; the excursive propensities as it were, of her creative power, which defy the faculty of the zoological systematist, are equally observable, whether we regard her works in the mass or examine them in detail. Whether we contemplate a class, a genus, or a subordinate group.

Thus, although we find, that the light and heat of the sun are agents of a most influential character in the development of life in both the animal and vegetable kingdoms; although the rule is most extensively prevalent, that the day shall be the

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period for activity, & the display of
all the ulterior objects of life, &

[column break]

the night for resuscitation & repose,
yet this rule is by no means uni-
versal. A few beings are destined
to an active existence only, while all
other creatures sleep, and among these
in the present class, stand foremost
the Nocturnal bird of prey, — the
Owls.

The nocturnal habits of these birds,
like, indeed, all the habits peculiar
to any given animals, are decidedly
predestinated by their physical char-
acters. These habits are most
evidently not the effect of accident,
the caprice of the animal, or even
of involuntary instinct, uncontrolled
by physical Causes. The Owl is
not made for the full light of day
and can live only, for all the active
purposes of life, in the partial darkness;
the dusk of the evening, or gray of
the morning, is essential to the full
exercise of her vision; the noonday

[page break]

sun, or even the presence of that
luminary anywhere above the
horizon, dazzles and blinds her by
the influx of too much light
consequent on the unusual largeness
of the disk of the eye-pupil; but
this very circumstance which is

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a source of so much inconvenience to the animal by day, is, in fact, an admirable Contrivance for the perfection of vision during the Comparative darkness of twilight or night. When the rays of light are diffused, and cannot find access in sufficient quantity to the ordinary pupils of diurnal animals, the capaciousness of those of the owl takes in enough for the perfect use of the eye; the shape of the pupil seems to be unimportant, but the Capaciousness of its disk is certainly essential to nocturnal vision.

Although, however, the eyes of these

[column break]

birds will admit light enough for all purposes of vision during twilight, they will not enable them to see sufficiently during the darkness of night; and consequently, as they cannot see from redundancy of light during the day, and from want of it during the greater part of many nights, they have very short space of time left then for procuring their food.

The owl is enabled to make the most of the short time allowed for its predatory excursions, by the exposed situation of its prey, and by some other conditions of its own, which may deserve notice. Most of the small birds and quadrupeds pursued by the Owl are the less able

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to guard themselves by flight, or
Concealment from the adversary, by
the partial darkness, which, while
it is advantageous to the owl,

[page break]

deprives them of the full advantages
of sight. The quill feathers, more-
over, of the Owl are so light and
downy, that it makes very little
noise in flight, and gives, therefore,
but little warning to its prey
through the sense of hearing. With
these advantages of its own, and dis-
advantages of its prey, therefore, the
Owl has little difficulty in redeeming
its many hours of necessary inac-
tivity; and the Capacity of its throat,
and undivided possession of its prey,
Consequent on its solitary habits,
add still more to its facilities, and
neutralize any apparent disadvan-
tages incident to its condition in
the pursuit of its food.

The owls are, Altogether, very
distinct from the diurnal rapacious
birds. The former have obtuse sight,
while the latter enjoy that sense to
an exquisite degree of perfection. The

[column break]

Owls have feathers immediately at the
base of the bill, with the upper mandible
in some degree moveable, as in the
parrots;

[The upper mandible is movable to some degree in most birds, but

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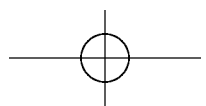
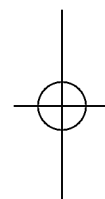
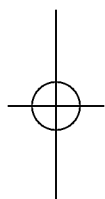
with owls it is not as flexible as in parrots, in which the maxilla has the greatest mobility.]

one of their anterior toes also is capable of being turned behind; and their flight is in general heavy and silent; while the diurnal accipitres in general, have a denuded fleshy ridge at the base of the Bill, with the upper mandible perfectly fixed, all the toes fixed, and a rapid, elevated, and noisy flight. In fact, there seems little else common to these divisions of the birds of prey than their carnivorous appetite, and Consequent predaceous habit.

[Although not expressed in terms of relatedness (the concept of common descent begins with Darwin, more than 20 years after this letter of Gunn) Gunn, in his concluding comments above, is essentially correct. Currently, the Osprey, hawks and eagles are considered closely related and thus placed in the same family, Accipitridae. The falcons (Falconidae) long considered closely related to the Accipitridae are placed in the same Order, the Falconiformes (e.g., Dickinson 2003). The typical owls, family Strigidae, and the barn owls, family Tytonidae, are in the Order Strigiformes. Gunn, without the benefit of the the concept of evolution, could only empirically describe features that birds had, or did not have, in common.]

I shall here close my present
Remarks on the Nocturnae
reserving any further ones until
the receipt of your Number with
the account of the Species.

[end of letter]



[Letter from James Grant to R. C. Gunn]

Sunday afternoon
 pen worn to a stump
[in Gunn's handwriting: Recd 11 Nov 1837]

My Dear Sir

I have just completed a paper on the diurnal birds of prey, which I have hitherto delayed from having no materials and now had it not been with a view to Show you that I am as anxious and interested about the matter as Ever, I would not have attempted it – and as a matter of course it is miserably deficient – I have hastily gone over Swainsons arrangement of the Falconidae – and in writing I have got a much better idea of the different groups than I had before -& I hope that the persual

[Grant has apparently just received Swainson's two volumes (Swainson 1836-1837) on birds, and proceeds to summarize its contents for the hawks. In doing so he copied a number of the drawings from the book and quotes (without quote marks) a number of passages. He does, however, acknowledge the source.]

will be of some use to you – I think that this arrangement is much simpler & better than that of Cuvier which you have given and multifarious as the new Systems are I thought this a good one—& therefore have inc a sketch of it

[see Figure 22]

– but if we begin in this manner [?]
 the task is Endless we must keep to one arrangement – and as this professes to be a Natural method perhaps we had better arrange our species by it – I shall be heartily glad when we get

[page break]

over the Raptores as it has hindered me from getting on with the others – I have been trying for months to shoot some hawks in order to get the descriptions from recent birds but in vain –

the Owls will not occupy us long as we have only two – belonging to *Strix* & *Flammea* — I believe there is another found about the Lakes but I have never seen it

After the Owls we shall go on to the fissirostral tribe of the *Incessores*—the

[In the old concept of Fissirostral birds, the beak is short but wide at the gape, as in swallows, swifts, and goatsuckers, which were united at one time on this basis, and considered a suborder of Incessores. The Incessores was once considered an order of “perching birds,” which included passerines and other birds such as kingfishers and swifts.]

Swallows, goatsuckers & King fishers. – Todys & bee Eaters – then the *Dentirostres* beginning

[The *Dentirostres* was another suborder so named because of the “tooth” in the cutting edge of the upper mandible, in for example, shrikes and many other insectiverous birds.]

with the Shrikes, Rollers & *Merulidae* & —

[The Rollers are the modern family *Coraciidae*, which contains the Dollarbird *Eurystomus orientalis* of Australia. The *Merulidae* is an old name for the group that now includes the thrushes.]

If you know of any other species than those described – let me have the description and send me a specimen if you have one – I must Send this on board in the first place in case of any thing occurring to prevent me – and I can afterwards send the box of species [?]

Write by next trip & believe me –

Yours very truly

JG

CORRESPONDENCE

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[page break]

1

- 1 Falco { The most perfectly organized in their
respective circles
- 2 Accipiter { The most conspicuously toothed; wings rounded
rather short —
- 3 Buteo {Wings very long; hunt upon the wing
- 4 Cymindis { Feet remarkably short; wings long; the upper
mandible considerably projecting.

[kite]

- 5 Aquila { Size large; body heavy, feet very thick
and strong, head frequently crested —

**[The above enumerated list is a quote from Swainson 1836-1837,
Vol. 1, p. 291.]**

This is the arrangement of Falconidae in a work
which is the most recent I believe, Viz Swainsons
“Birds” in the Cabinet Cyclopaedia of Dr [?] Lardner —

[Swainson 1836-1837]

and I think better (because simpler) — than that of
Cuvier in the abridged Edition of the “Animal Kingdom”

[Cuvier 1833]

(which I have fortunately received from home the other day)
— he commences with Falco ‘as being most typical of
the whole family’, because in them we find the highest de-
velopment of that structure which is best adapted for
rapine, — their wings although not so long as in some of
the Kites and buzzards are yet more pointed — the second
and third quills being longest, and although the character
is applicable only to the typical Species, it is never

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so far lost sight of as to make it difficult to discriminate between a Falcon and a hawk — — The most prevalent distinction of the group lies in the Bill which is always

[page break]

2

always short, and the tooth near the tip invariably angulated – there is great diversity in the relative length of the lateral toes in the typical Falcon which is remarkable as being the only Subgenus in Ornithology in which such a disproportion occurs – the Subgenera of Falco he arranges thus –

1st Typical Group

Falco { Pre-Eminently typical; Bill acutely toothed, wings pointed rather long. —

2d Subtypical Group

Harpagrus { wings shorter, rounded, Tarsi with Entire transverse scales

3 Aberrant Group

Lophotes { Feet Short; head crested, wings long.

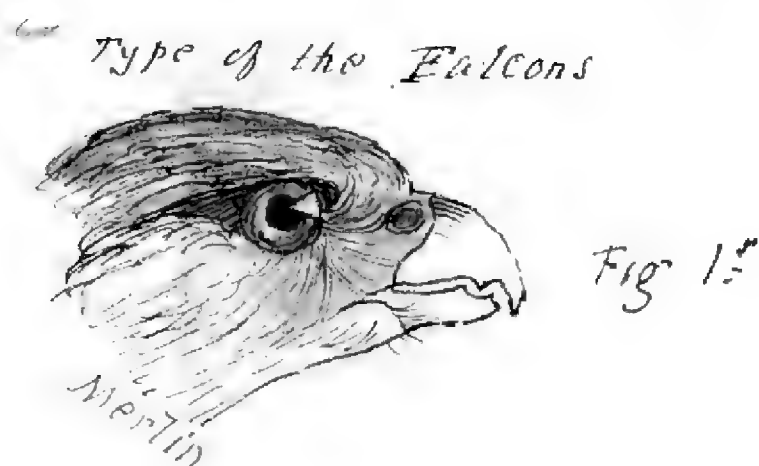
Aviceda { Feet small very short, soles broad and flattened; outer claw and toe shortest

Gampsonyx { Bill neither notched nor festooned, head small feet strong –

[The above list is from Swainson 1836-1837, Vol. 1, p. 302.]

Type of the Falcons

Fig. 1st [Figure 16]



[Figure 16. Head of a Merlin (*Falco columbarius*), after Swainson 1836-1837, not found in Australia]

[page break]

3

Type of the Hawks

Fig 2' [Figure 17]



[Figure 17. Head of Northern Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*) (old name *A. palumbarius*), not found in Australia. This figure is a copy from Swainson 1826-1837, Vol. 1, figure 98, p. 305. Grant was a talented artist and the copy is an excellent one, but is a copy, not a tracing, as is the case with all the copied figures.]

The Subgenera of Accipiter are at present proposed

1st Ictinea – 2d Accipiter, 3 Astur, 4. Haliaetus.

— of the 1st Ictinea there is only one Species known, and it seems difficult to refer it either to Falco or Accipiter as it partakes of the characters of each. but is more closely allied to Accipiter and is therefore placed at present as the first Subgenus – it has long wings and Short [illegible] tail, the feet resemble those of Astur, and the bill is neither altogether toothed nor festooned but as it were between the two – it is a buzzard in its wings, an Astur in its feet and as much of a hawk as of a falcon in its bill

Fig 3'. [Figure 18]



[Figure 18. Head of a Plumbeous Kite (*Ictinea plumbea*), which does not occur in Australia. This figure is a copy of Swainson 1836-1837, vol. 1, figure 97, p. 304.]

2d Accipiter – Comprises the delicate Sparrow hawks which are [Collared Sparrowhawk *Accipiter cirrhocephalus* in Tasmania] distinguished from 3d Astur chiefly by their slight form – slender and delicate tarsi the scales of which are smooth but their divisions are scarcely perceptible in Accipiter, while in Astur the front and back of the leg are protected by many broad but short plates disposed transversely, and in some of the Species as. Astur Novae Hollandiae our White hawk part of the upper [Grey Goshawk] half of the tarsus is clothed with feathers

[page break]

4

the 4th is Haliaetus which seems to connect the Hawks with the Eagles – “Pandion” being now restricted to the Ospreys or fishing Eagles the feet of Haliaetus [Figure 19] resemble those of Astur but are rather smaller in their details, both



[Figure 19. Head of a probable Brahminy Kite (*Haliastur indus*). This drawing was copied from Swainson 1836-1837, vol. 1, figure 99, p. 306. The figured bird is probably the Brahminy Kite *Haliastur indus* (*Haliastur pondicerianus* is an old name for this species), which does not occur in Tasmania.]

anterior and posterior scales are smooth but the first are broader, and the latter appear to be composed of but one piece, the soles of the feet are very rough, the Nails are groved underneath, and the wings are very long Reaching to the End of the tail, – this last [Much of this information is from Swainson 1836-1837, vol. 1, p. 306.]

Subgenus is not yet Established, and it is thought that another will yet be discovered – I should therefore like very much to Examine our fishing hawk – the Subgenus we speak of being suspected to prey on fish – it might belong to it – more likely than to Pandion – the proper “Osprey” –

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The Subgenera of Aquila are four
Pandion, Harpya, Aquila & Ibycter

The upper mandible of Pandion shows little or no indication
 Either of the Acute tooth of the falcons or of the prominent
 but rounder Lobe [?] of the hawks, and as we approach the
 more typical Eagles, the length of the bill is augmented –
 the size of the body is greater, and all indications of

Accipitrine

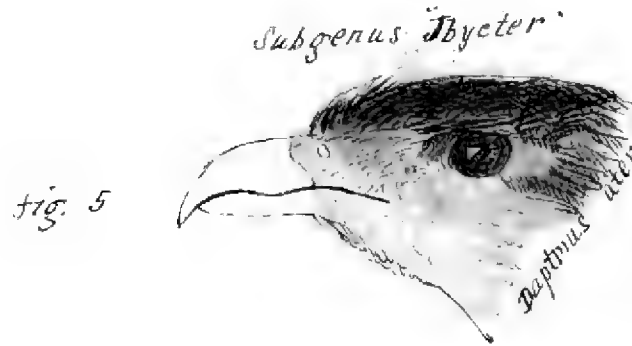
[page break]

5

of accipitrine structure are lost –
Harpya includes also Cuvier's genus Morphnus
Aquila is restricted to those whose wings, like
 the Golden Eagle, are, more or less lengthened
 the legs of this Subgenus are all more or less plumed
 and in our Wedge tailed Eagle, the tarsus is
 completely feathered to the toes –
Ibycter is remarkable for three characters
 1st The Slight curvature of its bill, more like that
 of a gallinaceous bird than that of an Eagle
 2d The nakedness of the face chin and throat
 3 The uncommon breadth of its fan-shaped tail

Subgenus "Ibycter"

fig. 5 [Figure 20]



Genus "Cymindis" follows, all
 as yet only been found in
 America, and therefore with
 it, the Subgenera are
Polyborus, Cymindis, Elanus
Nauclerus -



is nearly the same as in
 very like the preceding & very

[Figure 20. Above is head of a Black Caracara (*Daptrius ater*). Below is *Polyborus* sp., This figure copied from Swainson 1836-1837, vol. 1, figure 103, p. 310. Neither bird occurs in Australia.]

The Genus "Cymindis" follows, all the Subgenera and Species of which have as yet only been found in the warm latitudes of America, and therefore with it we have little to do, the Subgenera are

Polyborus, Cymindis, Elanus, Nauclerus, and Circaetus -

[Figure 20 below]

this is one form of the bill and -

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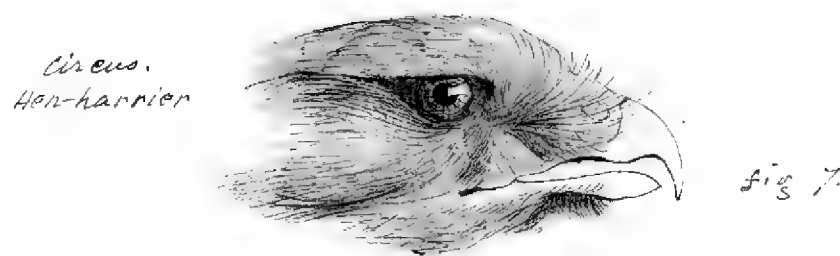
this is nearly the same in the other Subgenera
it is very like the preceding in regard to weakness.

[page break]

6

Buteo – the Buzzard.

is the last, and I think, (notwithstanding your
remark that we have no Species of this genus
here) that the Specimen No 4 undoubtedly belongs
to it — Buteo comprises not only the Buzzards



[Figure 21. Head of a Northern Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*). The closely related Swamp Harrier *Circus approximans* in Tasmania. Figure 21 is copied from Swainson 1836-1837, vol. 1, figure 107, p. 314.]

Circus.
Hen-harrier

fig 7. [Figure 21]

but also the Kites and Harriers — in Sub.
genera, as at present known are
Buteo Milvus and Circus —
fig 7. Represents Subgenus Circus being the head of a hen harrier
which is reckoned the type of the Genus although Buteo
is the name given to it —
The hen harriers have very slender bodies and remarkably long
wings tail and legs, they have also Large Ears —
partially surrounded by a tuff of short and rather
Stiff feathers, which form a semi circle round the

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outer portion of the head on each side, and meet under the chin, the bill (fig 7) is comparatively Small, unusually Elevated at the base – but very narrow and feeble towards its outer half, now these last two characters are peculiar to this group and connect the Falcons with the Owls

[page break]

7

the tip of the bill is lengthened and very acute, while the festoon of the upper mandible is either Entirely wanting, or scarcely to be perceived – the legs of these birds are remarkably long. and more resemble those of the Sparrow hawks, but they have a very short hind toe. of which the claw occupies one half of the total length. the hind toe is consequently very much Shorter than Either of the lateral ones

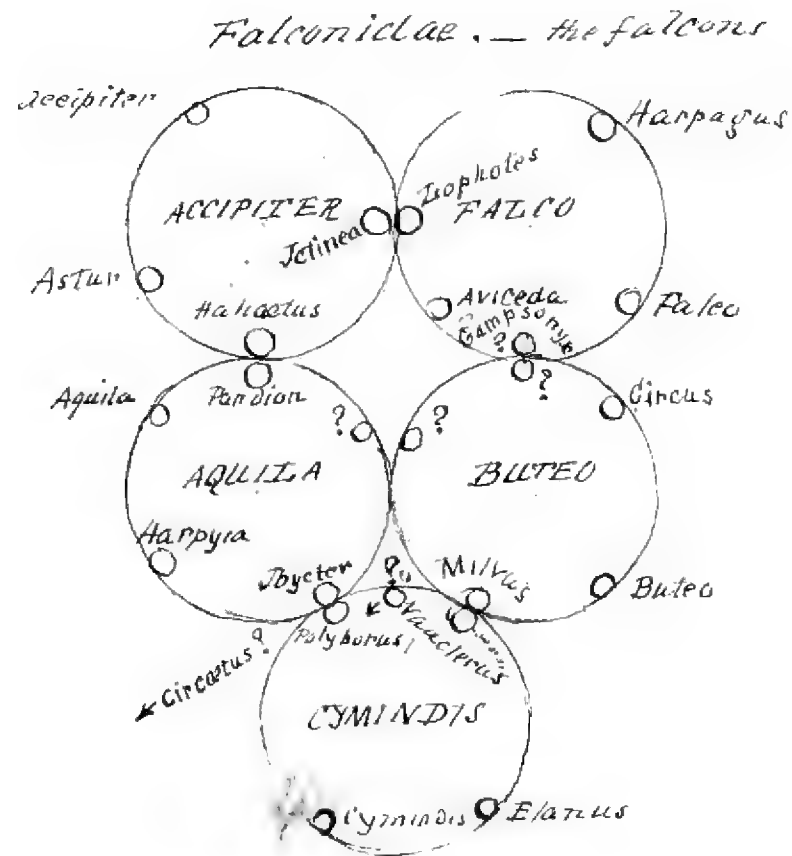
Buteo – the third Subgenus has the feet Short and remarkably robust, and with the Exception of a Short hind toe might be mistaken for those of an Astur, the wings are very long and the tarsi feathers halfway.

Milvus seems to differ chiefly in having the tail forked – there are probably other Subgenera which are not yet discovered –

Falconidae. – the falcons

this diagram shows

[Figure 22] the supposed situations of all the Subgenera of the Falconidae



[Figure 22. The classification system for hawks and falcons of William Swainson (1836-1837). This diagram is copied from Swainson 1836-1837, vol. 1, p. 318.]

[It appears that Grant does not fully accept the fanciful Quinary system of Swainson and Vigors. For an explanation of the quinary system, see Vigors (1825) and Swainson (1836-1837). For a discussion of the shortcomings of the quinary system see Newton (1893-1896; Introduction, pp. 30-35) or Walters (2003).]

[page break]

8

Genus Falco
Subgenus Aviceda

[Bazas or crested hawks are members of the Accipitridae, not Falconidae.]

The Specimen No 1 would seem to belong to this Subgenus

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the feet being comparatively Small, and the Soles broad and flattened – the bill is certainly that of a true falcon the wings are long and pointed. the first quill being longer than that of the hawks, and the second although not so long as the third, is only three lines shorter;

[A “line” is a unit of length equal to one-twelfth of an inch.]

in the recent specimens I believe they reach to the End of the tail – the feet are very peculiar, and different from any which I have yet noticed among the birds of prey – they are more like those of a gallinaceous bird – the scales 8 or 9 in no on the inner side of the tarsus are the largest, and overlap each other transversely — those in front are of an irregular pentagonal figure*

[The line below was vertical in the page margin.]

with five narrow imbricate Scales below and on the External side they are so small as to give to that part merely a reticulated appearance – — the toes are rather short and strong, with a round pad under Each joint – the hind toe is the shortest but has the longest claw, the outer? toe is next to

[inner scratched out]

it in length, and in the size of its claw – the middle

[in margin: 2nd]

toe is much longer & is connected to the outer by a short web. –

The colour of the dorsal aspect is a deep brown – varied with spots . **[sic]** and small bars of a rufous or rather reddish brown – the crown of the head has longitudinal streaks of a very dark brown – in the centre of each feather — the forehead is lighter – the Scapulars are dusky the quill feathers have five or six reddish spots on

[page break]

9

on the outer web – beginning at the fourth, in which they are very small, & placed near the shaft, they gradually become more defined as they proceed

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backward — the inner web is of a rufous colour with dusky bars which also increase in size as they go backward – but in the tertials they again diminish – the first two quill feathers are notched near the End, and the feathers of the whole wing are dark at the tips with a narrow margin of light — The tail is beautifully barred with a deep reddish brown on a dusky almost black ground the points are tipped like the wings with a narrow border of light – — (not always)

[in margin: cream]

the throat breast and vent are of a nankeen colour with a Kind of collar of the same passing backwards on the sides of the neck & joining the Ear coverts which are of the same with a dark streak on Each side – there is a light streak also above & behind the Eye –

[in margin: Front of breast just black lines]

Far [?] sides and front of the breast, the belly and thighs are of a very dusky almost black colour – the underwing coverts are nankeen, irregularly spotted & patched with dusky – wings below pale rufous – bill and feet – pale lead=colour, — Eyes dark hazel

[page break]

10	inches
Length from the tip of the bill to the End of the tail	18 . 19
“ of the tail _____	9 .
“ of the longish quill feather (3d) _____	11 . lines
“ of the next in length 2d _____	10 . 10
“ of the first quill _____	10 . –
“ of the bill from the angle of the mouth _____	1 . . 3
“ of the bill along its ridge _____	1 . 2
“ of the tarsus _____	2 . 9
“ of the middle toe _____	2 . 3/20
“ of its claw _____	7/10
“ of the hind toe _____	1 . 3/10

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“ of its claw _____ 11 [?] 8/10
weight ____ ?

I have not been able to procure a decent
Specimen, and these measurements are in
all probability far from being quite correct
which of course they ought to be –

I think we may in the meantime call this
Falco Berigora – the cream bellied falcon

**[Brown Falcon *Falco berigora tasmanicus*, an endemic Tasmanian
subspecies]**

of Latham – as the description by Vigors and
Horsfield will apply to our bird –

Falco peregrinus – of this bird I have neither

[Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*]

seen nor can procure a specimen, though I
believe it is to be found in the Colony – have
you seen it? or have you a specimen?

[page break]

11

I know of no other true falcon – and Even the
one which I have thus imperfectly described
Viz the “Falco Berigora” although a falcon in
form – has more the habits of a buzzard, as
it will sit on a tree for a length of time, watching
all around & then dart on the ground, catch its
prey & return to the tree – I have generally found
crickets in the stomach and remains of snail
Shells – it is by no means a handsome bird –

Genus. Accipiter

Subgenus. Accipiter

**[in margin: Doubtful] Species. Accipiter torquatus
[Collared Sparrowhawk]**

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The Specimen No 2 – agrees accurately with the description of the young bird by Vigors and Horsfield

“Acc: supernè cineraceo-fuscus, albido-variegatus,

“Subtus albidus, pectore fusco-lineato, abdomine fasciis

“Rufo-fuscis latis notato” –

[Vigors and Horsfield 1827, p. 132]

The older bird is not variagated with white, and there is no mention made of the breast being streaked with dusky lines – the length of the male is said to be 12 ½ inches that of the female 14 ½ and this last is about the dimentions of our specimen –

[page break]

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Genus Accipiter
Subgenus. “Astur” –

No 5.

Astur Novae Hollandiae – White Hawk –

[Grey Goshawk]

Colour white, beak black, cere, orbits, and feet yellow –

This seems to be the only milk white hawk known – it is a noble bird, Cuvier in the Regne Animal’

[Cuvier 1827-1832, (1829)]

Suggests that it may be merely a white variety of another!! but in his day few Specimens had

[Grant argued this point in print (1846b), but Cuvier was correct. The “White Hawk” is a white color morph of the Grey Goshawk, but only the white morph occurs in Tasmania.]

been seen – its weight is [illegible] 12 oz – the irides are light olive with a shade of yellow – you will find on comparison that the shape of the bill is very like that of the Gos-hawk fig 2d I understand that they prey a good deal on Snakes — it is becoming a very rare bird –

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Astur fasciatus – Specimen no 3 which I believe
[Brown Goshawk *Accipiter fasciatus*]
 is a female, is the one figured by Dr. Richardson –

“Upper parts dusky brown; under parts white
[There are no quote marks ending this quote.]
 closely marked with bands of a dusky brown, thighs
 with rufous bands – beak black, quills dusky
 brown above, the inner web with a rufous margin
 having dusky bands – tail feathers dusky brown
 above, whitish below, marked with numerous black
 bands – the inner web above being rufous with dusky
 bands – Length of the male $18 \frac{1}{2}$ — of the female $19 \frac{1}{2}$
 from the Carpus to the fourth quill in the male $10 \frac{1}{4}$ female 12

[page break]

13

tail of the male 8 – Female 9 – of the upper man-
 dible of the Male $\frac{7}{8}$ of the female $\frac{15}{16}$; of the inferior man-
 dible of the male $\frac{3}{4}$; of the female $\frac{13}{16}$; tarsi-male $2 \frac{3}{4}$
 of the female $3 \frac{1}{4}$ —

Gen. Buteo. – Buzzard
 Subgen. Circus. hen harrier

[Swamp Harrier in Tasmania]

Species ??

The Specimen no 4 (not in my poss.) you will find by the preceding
 discriptions **[sic]** must belong to the Harriers – I shot
 it in Septr/36 while devouring the Eggs of the water-
 hen in the swamp, I think it is this bird which
[possibly Purple Swamphen *Porphyrio porphyrio*]
 flies over the swamps of an Evening uttering
 Such loud Shrieks – I fired at one the other Evening
 while in the act of doing so; but did not succeed
 in bringing him down. – though excessively anxious

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to determine what hawk has that habit –

the slender lengthened body of this bird, the form of its beak, its large Ears, surrounded with stiff feathers [?] its long wings and very long legs with Short hind toe all confirm the conjecture that it belongs to this subfamily

Description

Upper parts dusky brown, with violet Reflections – the feathers bordered & mottled with a lighter brown, most apparent in the neck and head where it assumes the Shape of streaks –

outer

[page break]

14

outer webs of the primaries, secondaries, and greater wing-coverts, ash coloured with dusky bands inner web of a dusky ash for three or four inches at the End, the rest of a delicate buff colour, ashy grey near the Shafts – they are marked with three or four dusky bars — upper tail coverts white with a reddish stripe near the tips tail white at the base, the two centre feathers ashy grey with a tinge of buff – the others reddish buff, with from four to Eight narrow transverse dusky bars – Shafts Smoky Straw colour above white beneath –

under surface rufous with longitudinal dusky lines there is a kind of collar of white mottled with dusky brown behind the Ear coverts – under surface of wings pale buff – under wing-coverts under tail coverts and thighs bright rufous – shafts of wing feathers of a smoky brown above, white below bill bluish black – feet yellow – iris ! [?]

form &c [?]

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— the bill is compressed with a rounder ridge from the cere to the tip, is the arc of a Small circle of about six lines radius, the cutting margin of the upper mandible is distinctly lobed, the cere covers about one third the ridge of the bill, and together

[page break]

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with the lores is covered with a short down, over which there is an arrangement of Stiff black hairs, covering & partly concealing the nostrils and curving over the ridge to meet those of the opposite side
Nostrils broadly open — oval, longitudinal
Wings when folded are rather more than two inches

[in margin: 3rd longer in one wing]

short of the End of the tail, the 4th quill feather is the longest, the 3d is only two lines Shorter — the 2d which is a trifle longer than the 5th is Eight lines Shorter than the 4th — the 1st and 6th are nearly Equal and three inches & six lines Shorter than the 4th — from the sixth they gradually diminish —

the outer webs of the primaries are narrow & the 2d 3d 4th & 5 sinuated

[bent in and out, winding]

— the inner web of the 1st 2d 3d 4th 5th is slightly sinuated also but very obliquely —
tail long, and rather rounded. the outer feathers being about an inch shorter than the middle ones
thighs & tarsi are long and slender, the outer thigh feathers Each half way Down the tarsus, the latter is clothed anteriorly with Short close feathers for about an inch — the rest with 14 or 15 large transverse Scales latterly they are reticulated — and posteriorly — Nearly Entire — the divisions being scarcely discernible —

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[page break]

16

toes Slender middle one the longest, outer and inner of the same length when the claws are included, that (the claw) of the inner being as large as that of the hind one which is the shortest toe
Claws acute, channeled below. – middle claw has a very sharp & projecting inner margin –

dried

["Dried" means measurements are taken from dried, prepared skins, rather than from fresh, unprepared carcasses.]

dimensions of new Specimen No 4 Circus
Considered at present a female "Harrier" Diemenicus

[Swamp Harrier]

	inches
Length from tip of bill to end of tail _____	22
“ of the tail _____	9 “ 8 lines
“ “ longest quill (4th) _____	12 “ 7
“ “ bill from angle of mouth _____	1 “ 5
“ “ along the ridge _____	1 “ 5
“ of the tarsus _____	3 “ 6
“ middle toe _____	2 “ 2
of its claw _____	“ 8
hind toe _____	1 “ 4
of its claw _____	8
weight ?	

No 6

Aquila fucosa – I have forgot, but it

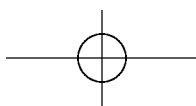
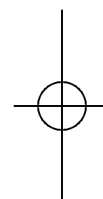
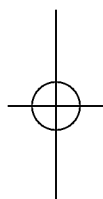
[Wedge-tailed Eagle]

will come in here as much or better than Elsewhere

[end of letter]

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Notes on the
 Birds of Van Diemen's Land.
 by Gould & Semon

No. 1. Picnican Head 20 November 1837.

I have looked very carefully over Swainson's arrangement of the Falconidae and can see no reason to desire a better - they are so very natural a group that they can hardly be disarranged, and they run on chances of being associated with any other family - indeed all the present subdivisions run so into one another that it is hard to define the termination of one and

Figure 23. Notes on the birds of Van Diemen's Land, 20 November 1837.

Notes on the
Birds of Van Diemen's Land
by Ronald C. Gunn **[Figure 23]**

No. 1. Circular Head 20th Novemb. 1837

I have looked over Swainson's arrange-
-ment of the Falconidae and can see no reason to desire
[Swainson 1836-1837]

a better — they are so very natural a group that they
can hardly be disarranged, and they run no chance
of being associated with any other family — indeed
all the present sub divisions run so into one another
that it is hard to define the termination of one and
the Commencement of another, — but the nearest approach
to a Natural arrangement is assuredly the best, and I
am glad you have adopted it —

**[It would be interesting, once again, to know exactly what Gunn
meant by "Natural arrangement," as it would provide some
insight into how taxonomists dealt with similarities and dissimilar-
ities among birds in pre-Darwinian times.]**

In naming the species in our possession there
will be no necessity for our possessing all the species
of the respective genera — by naming what we have
already got we will be enabled to ascertain what is
in each other's collections — and additional species can
easily be added from time to time. — I only hope
nothing now will cause a delay in the Continuation
of your journal.

[page break]

Remarks on Specimens Nos 1 to 6.
No 1. Falco Berigora. Lath. (Aviceda Swains.) —
[Brown Falcon]

Outer toes next shorter to the hind ones — not the inner as in your Description — and which is the Char. of the Subgenus', The Claws of the inner are however longer than the outer. My specimens differ a good deal from yours in colour — the throat and breast might be termed Cream coloured instead of Nankeen — and the Vent white. — The front of the breast is much lighter than yours and the centres of the feathers have longitudinal black lines shaded off into brown widening at the extremities of the feathers.

With reference to the Correctness of the name I can hardly say anything as you possess Vigor & Horsfield work on the Subject — The specific characters as published in Cuviers work want minute points of distinction and the colours of Hawks generally approach one another very closely — The description in the Regne Animal is as follows.

Falco Berigora. Vigors. Orange, speckled Hawk.

[Brown Falcon]

Reddish brown: throat & neck pale orange; quills and Coverts brown, speckled with red; tail grey-brown, banded, with rufous tips, New Holland. Length 10 inches.

[Cuvier (1827-1832) 1829, vol. 6, p. 29.; this is an English translation of *Régne Animal*.]

[page break]

I need hardly observe how widely this description differs from our bird — both in size and markings. — One of its **[Brown Falcons are highly variable in plumage, have brown and rufous color phases, and have marked age-related plumage differences.]**

most striking individual Characters is only partially noticed even by you and that is the two black marks which descend on each side **[of]** the throat from the corners of the mouth, the contrast of which on the white ground affords a peculiar appearance to the bird. —

The points of the tail feathers are not always tipped with a narrow border of light — in one of my specimens

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it is wanting.

This species is Common at Circular Head and is very fearless — pouncing on chickens quite close to the house. — A specimen of mine sent for reference, & to be returned!

[last sentence may be Grant's handwriting]

Falco peregrinus I have not seen. —

[Peregrine Falcon]

No 2. Accipiter torquatus. Your specimen and mine

[Collared Sparrowhawk]

agree minutely — Cuviers Description is —

Falco torquatus. Cuv. The Collared falcon.

Ash-coloured brown; neck reddish; beneath white, banded with red; quill and tail feathers banded with brown; length 12 in.

New Holl. Mus. Lin. Soc.

[Cuvier (1827-1832) 1829, vol. 6, p. 54]

A very vague description indeed.

[page break]

No 5 (not Nos by Grant.)

Astur Novae Hollandiae. White Hawk. —

[Grey Goshawk]

I have the colours of the irides noted as crome yellow but is possible I may be wrong — It is not an un[?]common species still in the wilder and more unsettled districts — but I think **[illegible]** will soon become very scarce.

Mr. D. Douglas the great Botanical Collector (for

[David Douglas]

Horticultural Socty &c) and also a zealous Ornithologist, in his account of the Zoology of the River Columbia, North West Coast of North America, — mentions his seeing a pure white Hawk about the size of a

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Sparrow Hawk, a very active bird and in constant
[probably an albino or leucino]
 pursuit of all the other birds, [?] which specimens [?] shuns
 its society. —

No 3. *Astur fasciatus*. Agrees with the specimen in my
[Brown Goshawk]
 possession.

No 4. *Circus* _____? — I am a little inclined to
[This bird was probably a Swamp Harrier, a species that is currently common in Tasmania. It was apparently less so in Gunn's time.]

doubt this being a Buzzard notwithstanding your
 very excellent and well written Remarks — although it
 is a species with which until now I was unacquainted
 not having a specimen in my possession.

[page break]

The only book I possess is Cuvier's large Animal Kingdom **[Cuvier 1827-1832]**

to which I can refer for Generic Characters,
 (The abridgement is too abridged) and in the genus
Buteo — (Bechstein) & *Circus* of Veillot, von Bechstein) is thus
 described — “Long wings; the tail feathers of equal length;
the beak bent from its base; the interval and between it and
the eyes featherless; the legs strong. Some have the tarsi
 feathered to the toes. They are distinguished from the eagles
 by the beak curved from the base, & from the Goshawks
 by the feathered tarsi & long wings.” —

[Cuvier (1827-1832) 1829, vol. 6, p. 60]

“*Circus* of Bechstein only differs from the above by having
 the tarsi more elevated, & by a sort of collar which the
 tips of the feathers covering the ears form on each side
 of the neck.”

[Cuvier (1829-1832) 1829, vol. 6, p. 65]

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Now to judge of your No 4 by the above Generic Characters, and also by your own notes — I find it fails in having the tail feathers not of equal length but in reality **[illegible]** like your No 3. — The beak is certainly not so much bent from the base as No 3 or as most of the Genera. — The interval between the beak and the eyes is not featherless —. The legs are not peculiarly strong — and the tarsi are not feathered. Of the ruff of stiff feathers I can hardly judge from the specimen — The want of

[page break]

the same books of reference prevents my pursuing this much further — and in making the preceding Remarks it is more with the view to drawing your attention to the points I have mentioned than any other. — I do not observe anything very remarkable in the characters of the hind toe — it not being so much so as in No 1 — and very little more than Nos 2 & 5. — The 3d feather of one wing is longish and the other the 4th — You have adopted the latter. — Which is correct? Until a better name is obtained we shall however adopt it as of the Genus "Circus" (Bechstein) and what specific name.? — What do you say to C. Diemenicus Any name is better than none. — And I find they make our Country into a specific name as above. —

I have given the White Hawk a No viz. [?] No 5 and **[Grey Goshawk]**

Aquila fuscosa may as well be called No 6 — which will **[Wedge-tailed Eagle]**

close all the species of Diurnal Birds of Prey now in our possession. — Of the Eagles I think no additional particulars can be Communicated beyond what has already passed between us. —

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[page break]

I have failed in obtaining a specimen of the
Sea Eagle. — I have seen many in the neighborhood —
[White-bellied Sea-Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster*]

I also saw it in the Tamar at Captn Hailleys [?] perched
on a tree overhanging the River, and I have seen them
in a similar situation on the Detention River. —

Dr Richardson informed me that there is a smaller
species of fishing Hawk — but I have not seen it. —

There is another small species of Hawk in this
Quarter of which I sent home two specimens, but
unfortunately retained none. — It is like a Merlin

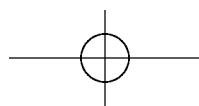
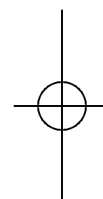
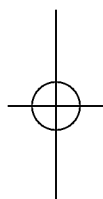
& does not exceed 10 to 12 inches in length & I think
[probably an Australian Hobby *Falco longipennis*]
sometimes less — I am looking out for specimens.

I beg you will at once proceed with the owls —
and from them we shall be able to do some work [?] —
the other birds having generally more striking
individual features.

[end of letter]

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Remarks on the Birds of Van Deimen's Land

by Wm. A. G. G. G.

Amsterdam, 1st January 1838.

Your Paper on the "Thryalidae" Bird being the true Thry
Thryalidae was most welcome. Thryalidae of Europe - and I
 although incomplete - it shows must say my specimens do
 the inward spirit although band not unmistakably agree with the
 of Linnæus may prevent your doing descriptions given of that bird,
 it both justice you would then besides it would be strange if
 - since do. However to the subject. it should prove to be identical

Figure 24. Remarks on the birds of Van Deimen's Land, 1 January 1838.

Remarks on the Birds of Van Diemen's Land
by Ronald C. Gunn [Figure 24]

Circular Head, 1st January 1838

Your paper on "Strigidae"
& Fissirostes was most welcome.
although incomplete — it shows
the inward spirit although want
of time may prevent your doing
it that justice you would other-
-wise do. — However to the subject.

Our number of owls are too
few to make it material what
system is pursued — more parti-
cularly as we cannot err in
placing them immediately after
the Diurnal birds of Prey —
the Noctua maculata I

[Southern Boobook]

possess.

Messrs Vigors and Horsfield do
not appear to be satisfied of our

[column break]

Bird being the true Strix
flammea of Europe — and I

[Barn Owl]

must say my specimens do
not minutely agree with the
description given of that bird,
besides it would be strange if
it should prove to be identical
with an European species and
form, with the Falco peregrinis,

[Peregrine Falcon]

(of which I doubt,) the only two

species Common to both Hemispheres —, at least so far as I am acquainted. It is more likely to be much alike, but specifically different — as in the Swallow, Swift, Eagle &c.

The fullest account I possess

[page break]

of the *Strix Flammea* is in Wilson's American Ornithology — a **[Barn Owl]**

book justly esteemed for the Correctness of the descriptions. "The White or Barn Owl is 14 inches long, and upwards of three feet six inches in extent; bill is whitish horn colour, longer than is usual among its tribe; space surrounding each eye remarkably concave, the radiating feathers meeting in a high projecting ridge, arching from the bill upwards; between these lies a thick tuft of bright tawny feathers, that are scarcely seen, unless the ridges be separated; face, white, surrounded by a border of narrow thickset velvety feathers, of a reddish cream colour at the tips, fine silvery white below, & finely shafted with black; whole upper parts, a bright tawny yellow, thickly sprinkled with whitish & pale purple, & beautifully interspersed with larger drops of white, each feather of the back and wing - coverts ending in an oblong spot of white bounded by black; head large, tumid; sides of the neck, pale yellow ochre, thinly sprinkled with small touches of dusky; primaries & secondaries the same, thinly barred, & thickly sprinkled with dull purplish brown; tail two inches shorter than the tips of the wings, even, or very slightly forked, pale yellowish, crossed with five bars of brown, & thickly dotted with the same; whole lower parts, pure white, thickly interspersed with small round spots of blackish; thighs, the same; legs long, thinly covered with short white down

[page break]

nearly to the feet, which are of a dirty white, & thickly warted;

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toes, thinly clad with white hairs; legs & feet large and clumsy; the ridge, or shoulder of the wing is tinged with bright orange brown. The aged bird is more white; in some the spots of black on the breast are wanting, & the colour below, a pale yellow; in others, a pure white.

The Female measured 15 ½ inches in length & 3 8/12 feet in extent; is much darker above; the lower parts tinged with tawny, & marked also with some spots of black.”

[probably the Wilson 1828 edition, vol. 1, pp. 125-126]

Latham's description is not so full, but he alludes to the edge of the middle claw being serrated.

I possess two fine specimens Male & female shot at the same time and place, which differ in the following particulars –

[The following description is probably of the Masked Owl, which is similar in appearance to the Barn Owl, but Tasmanian birds are much larger and darker. The Tasmanian form of the Masked Owl is considered by some as a separate species *Tyto castanops*, e.g., Sibley and Monroe 1990, but as a subspecies *T. novaehollandiae castanops* by others, e.g., Christidis and Boles 2008. *T. novaehollandiae* was described by Stephens (1826), and *T. castanops* by Gould (1837).]

Male 16 inches long. Female 19 inches. Face not white but of a reddish brown; surrounded by a border of feathers black at the tips. Upper parts dark brown to black mottled with tawny yellow — the feathers at the back of the neck being tawny yellow with all the extremities very dark brown, and lower down the back the feathers become banded. — The back is interspersed with very minute spots of white giving it a grey appearance, a larger spot of white, not oblong or of any regular figure being near the extremity of each feather; — tail equal in length to the

[page break]

wings — dark brown — banded;
lower parts all tawny yellow

(I have seen some white). The shoulders are not particularly tinged with light orange brown. The male is a little lighter than the female. —

I think the above differences, joined to some smaller ones, amply sufficient to authorize a doubt at best of its being identical with the White or Barn Owl of the Northern World — as assuredly ours possesses no appearance to justify its receiving the name White Owl — I have had many specimens through my hands are they were all much alike.

I cannot at this moment state if I ever saw any of the other species alluded to by you.

[column break]

P.S. Before closing the Raptores I may as well remark that it is my opinion your Falco Berigora is the species said to be

[Brown Falcon]

the true Peregrine Falcon of New Holland — to which it certainly approaches very closely — The

[Gunn may be confusing the Brown Falcon and Peregrine Falcon. The Brown Falcon also has a black stripe below the eye.]

most striking feature of the Peregrine is the broad patch of black dropping below the eye, running off like mustaches — a point I particularly

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remarked in ours. — Indeed the description of Wilson in the American Ornithology would apply pretty closely to ours, but, as with *Strix flammea*, I am inclined to believe the species are much alike, but truly differ.

What is your opinion on this subject? — as I want your nice discrimination in detecting specific differences.

[page break]

Fissirostres

Hirundo Pyrrhonota. In Cuvier there is a Paraguay species
 [Tree Martin]
 [Cuvier lists *H. pyrrhonota* as from India (Cuvier 1827-1832(1829), Vol 7(2), p. 68). Here Gunn has confused the Australian species with a North American one because he relied on non-Australian books. The species *pyrrhonota* is the Cliff Swallow of North America, which migrates to South America in the non-breeding season. The bird in question is the Tree Martin *Petrochelidon nigricans*.]

under that name — not Latham's. — My observations on their migrations do not appear to have been correctly made; during the early part of Sept^r of two years I have been absent from Home — but my dates are about the 16th to 10th Their departure I do not find noted.

[The Tree Martin is one of the about 20 species of Tasmanian birds that have a pattern of at least partial migration to the mainland.]

Hirundo Javanica. Lath. I send a specimen of what I presume [Welcome Swallow *Hirundo neoxena*] [*Hirundo tahitica javanica* is a closely related Asian swallow that was named in 1789 and that

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Cuvier undoubtedly knew about. The very similar Welcome Swallow was not named until 1842.]

to be this species — it is thus described in Cuvier —
 “Blackish shinning blue; beneath ash; forehead, throat, & crop,
 ferruginous; side tail feathers spotted white at tip.”

[Cuvier 1827-1832 (1829), Vol 7, p. 68.]

This would be too meagre a description were I not influenced
 by the following remark.

“The *Hirundo Javanica* has been sometimes confounded with
[Welcome Swallow]

our *rustica*, from which, however, it differs (according to Mrs
[messrs] [Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*]

Vigors & Dr Horsfield) chiefly in its inferior size. The side
[Vigors and Horsfield 1827, p. 191]

feathers of the tail are also shorter & less slender; the frontal
 band is wider, & the ferruginous colour extends over the breast,
 instead of the broad black band which distinguishes ours.

It is a native to Australia as well as Java.—” Mr Caley in
**[The birds are actually of two species, *H. neoxena* of Australia and
H. tahitica of Asia. George Caley sent back bird specimens from
 New South Wales to England and for a brief period collected birds
 in Tasmania. For a review of Caley’s ornithological work see
 Whittell (1954) 1993 pp. 99-100. See also Webb (1995).]**

New South Wales thus remarks their migration — “first appearance
 12 July — latest period 30 May.” — I have little doubt
[Caley in Vigors and Horsfield 1827, p. 192]

therefore that my specimen is of this species. — For many

[page break]

years the same pair regularly returned to a nest close to
 my back door in Launceston under the Veranda — and did not
 appear to be at all disturbed by the increased thoroughfare
 within a few feet of their nest. — It was built of mud
 fixed against the perpendicular wall. — One year it was knocked
 down, (much against my will,) but they built it again
 next season in the old place — During my last visit to
 Launceston I was sorry to perceive my old friends of six

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years duration had been driven away & their nest removed. They brought out two broods a year — and arrived about a week after the other swallows. — My specimen is a young bird. —

[It would be interesting to know how Gunn concluded that this was the same pair returning year after year. Did they have distinctive plumage patterns? Did he mark the birds in any way? Or did he simply assume that they were the same pair because the nest was placed in the same place every year?]

I find you make no allusion to this species — although you must have (I should think) remarked them. —

Cypselus. — (Chaetura. (Stephens))

Chaetura Australis. Stevens. (Hir. Caudacuta, Lath.) appears **[White-throated Needletail]**

to be our swift as near as their imperfect description will enable me to judge. It is as follows.

“Dusky tinged with shining green; forehead and throat white. New Holland.” — And as there are so few species

[Cuvier 1827-1832, vol. 7, p. 70]

with tail feathers ending in a point — the above may be deemed sufficient.

[page break]

My specimen was shot on 26th Febr on some plains near Circular Head. — I suspect their migration to be not so strange as you imagine — but that they, as well as the swallows were on their departure area on 26 March. — I saw them in considerable numbers flying high in the air over my House on 3 Oct. 1837. — At least their size led my servant at first to suppose them Hawks — but their numbers, &c induced me to think them Swifts. — Their usual altitude I expect leads us to remark them seldomer than other

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birds. — Mr Hoblen had a fine specimen — and had often remarked them about Killafaddy but usually too high to be shot. — I shall look out for them this season.

In Cuvier's Animal Kingdom I find other
[1827-1832]

species of Swallow mentioned as inhabiting New
[Presumably Cuvier and Gunn confused swallows and swifts at some level.]

Holland — but I cannot say I have seen any but the three now named — One has elongated lateral tail feathers.

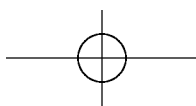
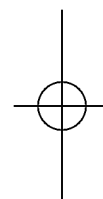
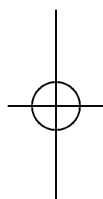
[Fork-tailed Swift]

Your notes on Caprimulgidae being incomplete I shall postpone my remarks on them to my next.

[end of letter]

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Notes on some
of the Birds of Van Diemen's Land.
by Ronald B. Gunn.

Circular Road 15th February 1838.

In reference to Swires Animal Kingdom I find a
most meagre account of the Caprimulgidae. Throughout
the whole book I complain of the want of proper
systematic arrangement of species - and equally so of
the imperfect descriptions of each species - take for
example -

Podiceps Swirei. Coloured varied tints of Ash, White
and Blackish; as big as a Crow.

How poor such a Description: what can be made?

Figure 25. Notes on some of the Birds of Van Diemen's Land, 15 February 1838.

Notes on Some
of the Birds of Van Diemen's Land
by Ronald C. Gunn **[Figure 25]**

Circular Head 15th February 1838.

In reference to Cuviers Animal Kingdom I find a
[1827-1832]

most meagre account of the Caprimulgidae. — Throughout the whole book I complain of the want of proper Systematic arrangement of species — and equally so of the imperfect descriptions of each species — take for example —

Podargus Cuvieri. **[sic]** “Coloured varied tints of ash, whitish and blackish; as big as a crow.”

[Cuvier (1827-1832) 1829, vol. 7, p. 80]

Now from such a Description what can be made? No habitat is even mentioned — in fact it will answer for almost any specimen. I therefore depend solely on your examination.

[Gunn once again is critical of European ornithological practices. He is well aware of the importance of habitat and behavior in the description of a species.]

The Podargus Cuvierii is Commonly Called in the
[Tawny Frogmouth]

Colony “More-Pork” from its peculiar note very closely resembling these words — and many humorous anecdotes
[This is a mistaken belief, still held today by some. The “More-Pork” is actually the call of the Southern Boobook.]

are told of frights sustained by parties in search of land &c in the early days of the colony from this bird. Bush ranging at the time lending its terrors to a night in the bush. — A Martley **[?]** Justice of the Peace

[page break]

and once a Captain H. M. Army is said not many years ago to have beat a retreat from our “Nocturnal disturber” whilst in search of runaways. — I shot one recently at Circular Head in the day time — it had been disturbed by my firing and flew a short distance pursued by some smaller birds. — I am not aware of anything remarkable in its habits beyond others of the family — The Podargi do not possess pectinated claw.

Aegotheles albo-gularis. Of this species I have seen

[Australian Owlet-nightjar]

so few specimens that I can add little to your stock of information — A fine specimen was picked up a few weeks ago on the road down to Mr Bickfords lying dead and uninjured on the ground. It was however utterly destroyed by an attempt being made to skin it by one who could not. It appears to be a remarkable Circumstance that specimens of these birds & others of the family should be found dead — As you mention with reference to the specimen of the true Goatsucker. — How can you account for it? — May it arise from injuries sustained in flying during the day (when disturbed) from their imperfect vision? — Or is it likely the powerful sun’s rays reaching them in some exposed place during this season would kill them? Let me

[page break]

hear any opinions you have formed on the subject. Of the habits of *A. albogularis* I know Nothing.

Having now gone through a certain portion of our labours I subjoin a list of species described by us — or at least the names of which have been to a certain extent ascertained.

Falconidae (Raptores.)

1. *Falco Berigora*? **[word unintelligible]** **[Brown Falcon]**

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2. *Accipiter Torquatus* [**Collared Sparrowhawk**]
 6 *Aquila fuscosa* [**Wedge-tailed Eagle**]
 5 *Astur Nova Hollandiae* [**Grey Goshawk**]
 3 *Astur fasciatus* [**Brown Goshawk**]
 4 *Circus Diemenicus* ? [**Swamp Harrier**]
 7 *Falco* (To be added.)
- Strigidae
Noctua maculata [**Southern Boobook**]
Strix, (non-flammea.) [**Masked Owl?**]
 Fissirostres.
 Hirundinae
Hirundo Pyrrhonota [**Tree Martin**]
 “ *Javanica*. [**Welcome Swallow**]
Chaetura Australis. [**White-throated Needletail**]
- Fissirostes Contd
 —————
 Caprimulgidae
Agotheles albogularis
 [**Australian Owlet-nightjar**]
 Podargus Cuvier
 [**Tawny Frogmouth**]
 Making 13 species. — not
 incld *Falco* now sent.

[page break]

Addenda.

I send a specimen of the small species of *Falco* to which I alluded in my earlier *Nos.* and of which I had retained no specimen. It was shot during my absence at Launceston.

You will perceive that it is a true Falcon — having the Second quill feather the longest. — The Iris is a dark brown. — A specimen shot some time ago at Woolnorth was sitting on the extremity of the dead branch of a high tree. — Dr Richardson calls it a Merlin or Hobby — But I hardly see good causes for [**Australian Hobby**]

adopting English names to our V.D.L. species thereby confounding them with those of Europe. — why not say *Berigora* Falcon? — Banded Hawk? — Spotted Owl? &c

Send me the names in your next & any particulars from Vigors & Horsfield. I see no account of it in

[1827]

Cuvier. —

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[1827-1832]

By the Bye I do not remember if I mentioned that the F. Berigora of Vigors is described in Cuvier as “Length 10 inches.” — And F. Peregrinus as having the feet & Cere of the beak sometimes blue & sometimes yellowish.

[page break]

Since writing the preceding part of this Communication I have obtained another specimen of the small Falcon now sent — and which I request you to name —

I have been fortunate in obtaining another species of Falcon, but I think not the true Peregrine yet — It is a male, length 15 inches — and

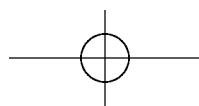
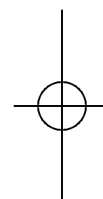
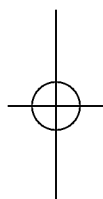
[Peregrine Falcon?]

very similar in general colour and markings to the small specimen now sent — it is a very handsome bird. The legs are yellow and very short — the arrangement of the Scales on the tarsi differs from the small species — The Skin is not yet dry enough to send you but I will do so by next opportunity. Possessing as you do the Only work on the subject, I do not venture on attempting to ascertain the species.

[end of letter]

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MS 2036/4: 2

continued from our last

or

The Birds of Van Diemen's Land.

May 30 1838

Dedicated to the
Light of the North

Ornithological Journal.

Edited by
J. Grant

— King - Fishers —

I have not aware that we have any of the genera of the family *Halcyonidae* with the exception of *Ceryx*, the *Phaethon*, King, Fisher, and *Scolopax* we possess but one species, the *C. Agurea* it is thus described by Latham

C. adiantum Agurea; *C. fuscata*, *C. leucogaster*, *C. leucostictus*, *C. lateralis*, *C. colli*, *C. maculata*, *C. obliqua* alba

C. Agurea: Lath. Ind. Austr.

Alcedo Agurea Swains Zool.

— it is a very shy bird and rare about

only one species in this colony - so far as I have been able to observe in its flight, it resembles the Swallow, but alights frequently on steeples and the dead limbs of trees, shooting out with an easy swiftness, flight, making short curved and turning about. In some birds as *C. adiantum*, being away from the end of March to the 14th or 18th of September, however Mr. Colley in his notes says: "I do not think

Figure 26. Birds of Van Diemen's land, 30 May 1838.

[What follows is a document apparently written by James Grant dated May 30 1938. The first 2 ½ pages (five columns) are in an unknown hand, with beautiful handwriting, small in size and in perfect lines. The remaining 5 ½ pages (11 columns) are in Grant's typical bold but difficult handwriting. Perhaps Grant had someone else transcribe the first part of this document from his handwritten text.]

continued from Our last
on
The Birds of Van Diemens Land [**Figure 26**]
May 30 1838

Dedicated to the
Light of the North

Ornithological Journal..

Edited by
J Grant

— King – Fishers –

I am not aware that we have any
of the genera of the family Halcyonidae
with the exception of Ceyx, the three toed
King Fisher, and I believe we possess
but one species, the “C Azurea” [?] it is thus

[Azure Kingfisher]

described by Latham

“Cd Saturati Azurea Corpore Subtus, Lorisque
flavescentibus, lateribus. colli maculâ — .
obliquâ alba”

[Vigors and Horsfield 1827, p. 208]

Lyn. Alcedo Azurea: Lath. Ind.Ov [?].n.

Alcedo Azurea Swains Zool:

— it is a very shy bird and never about [?]
this part of the Country. I have seen only
one or two specimens

The Bee Eaters “Meropitae” seem to be
entirely unknown in this Country, although

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they occur in New. South Wales

[This is correct. the Rainbow Bee-eater *Merops ornatus* is found on the mainland but not in Tasmania.]

– Shrikes –

Tribe. Dentirostres Cuv.

Fam: Lanidae

Subfam: Dicrurina Swains

Gen: Artamus Vieill

Species Artam. Albovittatus – Vig:

[Dusky Woodswallow *Artamus cyanopterus*]

Ocypterus. albovittatus Valen :

["Valen" is an abbreviation of A. Valenciennes, assistant in the Paris Museum, who coined the name *Ocypterus albovittatus*.]

The bill of this bird is blue with a black tip – it is our Swallow Shrike, there is

[column break]

only one species in this Colony – so far as I have hitherto observed – in its flight, it resembles the Swallow, but alights . —.. frequently on stumps and the dead limbs of trees shooting out with an easy swimming flight, making short curves [?] and returning again to the perch, they are migratory and leave this Country and return about the same time as the Swallows, being away from about the end of March to the 17th or 18th of September, however Mr Caley in his notes, says – “I do not think them migratory” and possibly they may

[Caley in Vigors and Horsfield 1827, p. 211]

remain all the year round, in warmer Latitudes, where their food is always abundant. – The young bird is of an

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ashy grey on the upper parts
 Subfam Thamnophilina Sws.
 Genus Vanga Vieill
 V. Destructor Vig & Horsf

[Grey Butcherbird]

V. Suprà Cinereo fuscus, subtus albidus
 capite, genis, remigibus reatricibusque,
 nigris; illis albo-strigatis, his apice albo-
 marginatis.

[Vigors and Horsfield 1827, p. 213]

This bird is here called the Laughing
Jackass. being in Sydney the same

[page break]

name is applied to a very different
 bird – the gigantic King fisher Dacelo
 gigantea

[Laughing Kookaburra]

The Vanga is a solitary bird or at
 least associated only with its mate
 they seem to keep to the same beat [?] as
 we know several pairs which frequent
 the same spot year after year, they
 generally sit on tall trees at some dis-
 -tance from each other and keep up a
 continual call and response which is
 very musical, during the breeding Season
 they are very noisy

I find that Mr. Gould has described under
 this Genus a bird which Vigors and
 Horsfield, have placed in the Genus
Cracticus

Vanga negrogularis of Gould cracticus
 varius of Vigors being synonymous

[Pied Butcherbird (*Cracticus nigrogularis*)]

in the absence of specimens we
 must leave this point for the present

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undetermined

Genus *Colluricincla*Species — *Coll. Cinerea***[Grey Shrike-thrush]**

This bird in its general appearance resembles both the Shrike and Thrush, and indeed its name is derived from *Κολλυριων* a Shrike & *Χιγγλος* a thrush – the form of the bill is however more that of the Shrike and it is accordingly placed in that family – I have seen it tearing up the dead bark on the limbs of the Gum tree to get at the insects

[Grey Shrike-thrushes forage more on bark in Tasmania than they do on the mainland. This is presumably a response to the absence of the mainland bark-foraging guild of birds in Tasmania (e.g., treecreepers and sittellas).]

[column break]

concealed beneath for which its strong compressed form is admirably adapted while thus employed it occasionally hangs from the under surface of the branches in the manner of the *Meliphagidae*

Subfam. *Campephagina* Cuv*Grauculus Melanops* “Vig*Corvus Melanops* Lath*Cablepyris* [?] *melanops* Femin.

Rollier à Masque Noir Le Vail.

This is our summer bird. Mr. Caley does**[Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina novaehollandiae*]**

not consider it migratory but with us it is probably so, as I do not recollect to have seen them during the winter the male and female are exactly alike

— Thrushes —Fam. *Merulidae*

CORRESPONDENCE

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Subfam Merulinae [?]
 Genus Turdus Sin Vig & Hors
 Species Turdus Varius

[Bassian Thrush]

This is rather a rare bird found only
 in wild deep creeks and gullies it
 lives on the ground and probably feeds
 on Helices the bill is a good deal

[snails]

like that of Colluricincla. but rather
 stronger and not so much compressed
 at the base, — it differs essentially
 —however in the form both of the wings
 and feet, the latter being comparatively
 weak, formed for running on the ground
 the strong hallux of the Shrike family
 being wanting

[page break]

Subfamily Cossyphina
 Genus Cinclosoma
 Cinclosoma punctatum “Vig
 Turdus punctatus Lath: Index

[Spotted Quail-thrush] [Latham (1790)]

Punctated Thrush Lath: Gen. Hist
 This is our common ground thrush or ground
dove as some erroneously call it. a
 very handsome bird and common
 enough in this neighbourhood

— Warblers —

Fam Sylviidae
 Genus Malurus Voli
 Malurus Cyaneus Vigors

[Superb Fairy-wren]

Motacilla cyanea Gmel
 Sylvia Cyanea Lath Ind. Or

[Latham (1790)]

Superb Warbler. Phillips Bot. Bay
 Our beautiful little blue Warbler
 we have only one species that I am
 aware of they seem to be gregarious and
 probably polygamus as they are found
 in little troops of five or six there being
 only one and rarely two blue or cock birds
 in the number. Mr Caley states this in
 his notes, and is of [the] opinion that they
 are probably only the young of the year. this

[Caley in Vigors and Horsfield 1827, p. 221]

requires observation and I think I have
 seen some of these little brown birds
 with a few blue feathers, but by shooting
 the whole troop and dissecting them this
 point might be readily ascertained

[Grant barely scratches the surface of this interesting species. Superb Fairy-wrens are territorial, cooperatively breeding, socially monogamous but sexually promiscuous birds (Rowley and Russell 1997). The young remain in the group until the females disperse, the young males remaining for a year or more, becoming helpers that help defend the territory and feed the young.]

[column break]

[In Grant's normal handwriting]

Genus *Acanthiza* Vigors

Rostrum gracile, breve, rectum, basi

[missing line in letter: depressum, apice compressum]

[sub] depressum, culmine apicem versus
 leviter arcuato; mandibulâ superiori sub-
 Emarginatâ; naribus linearibus, longitudin-
 -alibus, supra membrana tectis, setis
 plumulisque partim opertis; rietu
 setis parcè instructo.

Alae subbreves, rotundatae; remge

CORRESPONDENCE

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primâ brevi, secundâ et tertiâ gra
datim longioribus, quartâ longissimâ
secundâ et decimâ aequalibus.

Pedes graciles, acrotarsiis paratarsiisque
integris

Cauda mediocris, apice subrotundata

[Vigors and Horsfield 1827, p. 224]

I have transcribed from
Vigors and Horsfield the generic
characters of this group, as it may
not perhaps be found in other work
—the typical species they consider
to be Acanth. Pusilla

[Brown Thornbill]

Ac. fusco-brunnea, fronte fulvo-variegatâ,
subtus albida, gutture pectoreque
fusco-striatis, uropygio rufescente,
rectricibus in medio fusco-fasciatis,
apice pallido.

[Vigors and Horsfield 1827, p. 227]

Synon. Motacilla pusilla. White
Dwarf warbler. Latham.

The weight of one now before me
is 109 grains I believe that it is
the smallest bird in the country –
— the iris is a blood red –

[pagebreak]

The little yellow rump seems to be
[Yellow-rumped Thornbill]

long to this genus the form of its bill
and feet being similar – but in the
wing there is a slight difference, and

I have on that account some doubt
as to its proper place, — I cannot
find it described — suppose we
in the mean time give it a name
from its yellow tail —

[what follows appears to be Grant's own description in Latin]

Acanthiza flavicerca! [?]

Ac. suprâ viridescenti-grisea, subtus
hallide fulva, fronti nigrâ, maculis
albis notatâ, taeniâ superciliari albidâ
uropygio, caudaeque basi, sulphureo-flavo,
hâe medio nigrâ, apice pallidâ.

Alae rotundatae, remige prima brevey [?]
secundâ duplo longiori, tertiâ, quartâ
quintâ, et dextrâ, ferè aequalibus longissi
mis; secundâ, nonâ, et decimâquoque,
Aequalibus — irides albae.

Rostrum. Pedesque nigres

Longitudo Corporis -----4 6/10
“ Alae à carpo and } - 2 3/10
remigem quartam }
“ ad remigem primam [?] 1
“ Rostrum à fronte7/20
“ “ a [illegible]8/20
“ tarsi15/20

The difference in the wing to which
I have alluded, consists in its greater
length —, and
also in the relative proportion between
the first and second quills — in the
present species the second is twice the

[column break]

length of the first while in the former
“*A. pusilla*” the difference is not so great
— the tail too is broader, and almost

CORRESPONDENCE

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even –

Still these I should conceive
are not sufficient to constitute Generic
distinctions and the leading characters
being so much alike we may safely
let this species rest here for the present.

[The following list is in Gunn's handwriting]

Ceyx Azurea
[Azure Kingfisher]
Ocypterus albobittatus
[Dusky Woodswallow]
Vanga destructor
[Grey Butcherbird]
Colluricincla Cinerea
[Grey Shrike-thrush]
Turdus varius
[Bassian Thrush]
Cinclosoma punctata
[Spotted Quail-thrush]
Malurus Cyaneus
[Superb Fairy-wren]
Acanthiza pusilla
[Brown Thornbill]
flavicerca

—
added by me

Vanga Cinerea Campbell Town sp.
[possibly an immature Grey Butcherbird]
My No. 32

Malurus gularis suggests
[Southern Emu-wren]
Acanthiza flavicerca supposed
[Yellow-rumped Thornbill]

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to be A Reguloides of V.&H.
[Buff-rumped Thornbill] [Vigors and Horsefield 1827, p. 226]

[page break]

[continues in Grant's hand]

Supplimentary **[sic]**

Falconidae:

We have several species
of true falcons to add
to those already mentioned
No 1. is a very fine bird
which you received from
Mr Robinson the only other
Specimen which I have seen
was in the possession of the
Revd Mr Garrett of Bothwell
it is evidently Exceedingly rare
Mr. G. stated that it struck
a pigeon when at full flight
with the utmost force &
its powers of flight must
indeed be great as it is
a perfect model of strength
and swiftness it is by
far the noblest of the Falcon
family which I have yet
had an opportunity of inspecting

Falco Cinerea

A

**[From the following description, this bird was probably a Peregrine
Falcon.]**

Head neck cheeks and sides

CORRESPONDENCE

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of the throat black; upper parts dusky, the feathers bordered with ashy-grey obscure about the shoulders – more marked and of a lighter shade towards the tail – the

[column break]

latter alternately marked with grey and black transverse wavy bands & tipped slightly with pale – quills dusky grey with reddish grey bands – chin throat and breast of a nankeen colour. Narrow above broader on the sides of the neck and breast the feathers on the latter slightly margined with white & marked here and there with little streaks and spots of black in the centre –

Under parts ashy-grey with a reddish tinge Extending from the tawny

[pale orange-brown]

colours of the breast along the abdomen & beautifully marked with black bands – thighs striped with black and grey the loose feathers reaching to the toes – Cere & feet yellow bill bluish black – yellow band on base of upper & under Mandible.

Dimenions

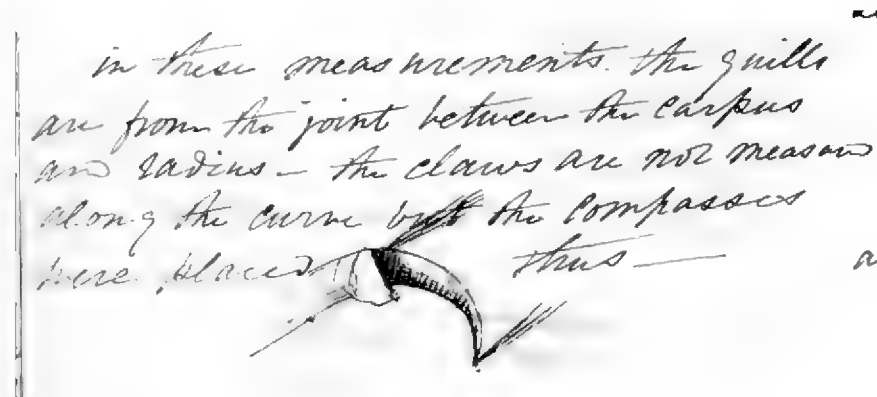
Total Length	-----	18
Bill along curve		1 3/10
“ from rictus		1 3/10
Wing from carpal joint	}	. . . 13
to 1st quill		
“ 2d quill		13 4/10
3 “		13
4 “		12 3/10

[page break]

Tarsus -----	2 1/10
Middle toe. -----	2 1/10
“ its claw -----	8/10
hind toe -----	9/10
“ its claw -----	9/10
inner toe -----	1 3/10
“ its claw -----	17/20
outer toe -----	1 11/20
“ its claw -----	15/20

in these measurement the quills are from the joint between the carpus and radius – the claws are not measured along the curve but the compasses were placed thus

[Figure 27]



[Figure 27. Figure of claw measurement.]

CORRESPONDENCE

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Falco ?

B

[From the following description, this bird was probably a Peregrine Falcon. Based on differences in size from the previous bird, this was probably a male and the other bird a female. The plumage description suggests that this was a young bird, further accentuating the differences.]

Head cheeks ear coverts and
 Submaxilla dusky black
 black shoulders and wings of the
 same running into grey towards
 the tail. these feathers all tipped
 with a delicate border of brown
 Very minute above border as
 they descend until the wing feathers
 become borderd with a pale
 brown – almost white
 tail dusky tipped with dirty white the side of feathers
 marked with rufous, those in the
 centre with grey bands
 Chin throat and breast of a Nankeen
 passing into rufous on the belly
 Extending on the sides of the neck

[column break]

behind the Ear coverts, and
 in a narrow mottled band
 across the nape
 lower neck and breast marked
 with streaks of dusky brown
 becoming on the belly of a
 darker colour & small
 semilunar forms

thighs rufous with black bands
 Cere & feet yellow –
 bill bluish black – yellowish mark
 at base of both Mandibles.

Total Length	15 3/10
first quill. from carpus	11 2/10
Second “ “ “	11 5/10
third “ “ “	11 2/10
Bill along curve	1 2/10
“ from gape	1 2/10

Tarsus	1 9/10
Middle toe -----	1 9/10
“ “ its claw -----	13/20
hind toe -----	9/10
“ “ its claw -----	15/20
inner toe -----	1 2/10
its claw	7/10
outer toe	1 4/10
claw	6/10

—————there seems to be such a
 marked similarity in the form
 of this and the preceding
 falcon that there is some
 reason to consider the latter
 as the male. the former the
 female – and we had better
 perhaps let them remain
 so provisionally –

[page break]

Falco ?
 C

—

CORRESPONDENCE

201

[From the following description, this bird was probably an Australian Hobby.]

Wings and upper parts dusky
Black tinged with grey – head
cheeks and submaxillary stripe
black, a few pale feathers above
and in front of Eye –

Chin throat and sides of neck
whitish, the shafts faintly streaked
with blackish brown; lower
breast and belly mottled with
ferruginous & dusky spots
and streaks – thighs rufous
Shafts dark –

quills dusky. with rufous spots
and bars; side feathers of tail
dusky with rufous bands, middle
feathers ashy with lighter
spots and bars ———-

Bill bluish

Cere and feet yellow

Dimensions

Total Length	-----	13 2/10
Extent of wing	-----	31
{ first quill	-----	8
	Second & third	-----
Length of tail	-----	6 2/10
{ Bill from gape	-----	19/20
	along ridge	-----
width at rictus	-----	1
Tibit (bone)	-----	2 6/10
Tarsus	-----	1 6/10
Middle toe	-----	1 4/10 claw 5/10
inner toe	-----	9/10
its claw	-----	5/10
outer toe	-----	1 claw 9/20

202

[column break]

Falco
C variety Δ

[From the following description, this bird was probably a male Australian Hobby.]

The only difference between this and the last consists merely in size. the total length of the present specimen being only (11) eleven inches – the markings are similar. but on the back the smallest is browner, not so tinged with ash as the larger — they may probably be male & female. and like the preceding pair A & B. we shall for the present consider them in that relation –

[It is possible that the “female” was a young bird.]

Accipiter. ?
 O

I should consider Specimen O as a true hawk – the bulk of the body is not so great as that of the Goshawk – (Astur) – the lobe is nearer the middle of the bill and the hind toe is shorter than the inner one – Still these Genera are so closely connected that it is difficult to determine sometimes to which of them a bird belongs – I have Subjoined the

CORRESPONDENCE

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[page break]

discription **[sic]** of this bird but
we must endeavour to procure
Some more Specimens as I
rather think that it is a young
bird – or at least in a state of
Moulting –

Upper parts variagated with dusky,
brown and black; under parts
banded with alternate transverse
narrow bars of white dusky and darkish

**[Although Grant does not mention moult, the description suggests
a bird moulting from juvenile to adult plumage.]**

brown – throat faintly banded
with dusky grey – thighs with rufous
& white bars – middle tail feathers
ashy grey those in the middle of
a brownish grey – all marked
with transverse sooty brown bars

Total Length 19 4/10

**[The length is consistent with a female Brown Goshawk, and the
above description suggests a first-year bird.]**

1st quill	-----	-8 2/10
2d “	-----	-8 7/10
3 “	-----	-11 3/10
4th “	-----	-11 5/10
5	-----	-10 3/10
tail	-----	-10
tarsus	-----	-3 2/10
hind toe	-----	-19/20
“ “ claw	-----	-19/20
inner toe	-----	-1 1/10
“ “ claw	-----	-9/10
mid. toe	-----	-1 15/20
“ “ claw	-----	-15/20
outer toe	-----	-1 3/10

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“ “ claw -----6/10
 Bill from gape -----1 2/10
 along ridge -----1 2/10

[column break]

Buteo. = Buzzard

=

θ

Specimen θ is a true buzzard

[There are no “**Buzzards**,” genus *Buteo* in Australia. However, Gunn and Grant considered *Circus* to be a subgenus of *Buteo*; the description below best fits a Swamp Harrier.]

which I received from
 Mr Robinson & the only
 one which I have yet seen
 it was shot in a swamp
 at Formosa. they are said

[“**Formosa**” is the name of one of the Lawrence family properties near Cressy, northern Tasmania.]

to prey on frogs and
 the eggs of birds – the one
 now before us had several
 of the former in his crop

—upper parts dark Shining
 brown. rump tawny, tail tipped
 slightly with dirty white – under
 parts sooty brown – thighs reddish
 brown – inner webs of wing
 feathers on under surface
 white tinged with red, and
 margins with grey.
 outer tail feathers with reddish
 markings – tarsus long – slender
 hind toe shorter than the inner
 mottled semi-circle on nape of neck

CORRESPONDENCE

205

pale red & dusky –

Length. 20

from shoulder

to 1st quill 13 6/10

2d “ do [?] 16 5/20

3 “ 17

4 16 9/10

5 13 6/10

Tarsus 4

mid. toe 1 8/10

“ claw 9/10

in. toe 1

“ “ claw 1

hind toe 9/10

claw do [?] 1

out. toe 1 3/10

“ “ claw 8/20

[written sideways in margin: Bill from gape 1 1/2

“ along ridge 1 1/2

Depth at base 9/20]

[end of letter]

Notes

to the Birds of Van Diemen's Land.

Circular Head 26 June 1838.

You truly invaluable Ornithological Journal has been
 perused with much interest - and all the Birds therein
 described and named have been identified.

Ceryx alcyon - Common on our rivers here - best unknown.

Artamus albobittatus. Not very common here - and extremely
 rare the last season.

Panga destructor. My specimens are very much brown
 than described by Gould - being indeed brown where

Figure 28. Notes on the birds of Van Diemen's Land, 26 June 1838.

[Letter from Gunn to Grant]

Notes

On the Birds of Van Diemen's Land

Circular Head 26 June 1838. **[Figure 28]**

Your truly invaluable Ornithological journal has been perused with much interest — and all the birds therein described and named have been identified.

Ceyx azurea — Common on our rivers here. — Nest unknown.

[Azure Kingfisher]

Artamus albovittatus. Not very common here — and extremely

[Dusky Woodswallow]

rare the last season.

Vanga destructor. My specimens are very much browner than described by Gould — being indeed brown where

[Grey Butcherbird; Gunn's specimens were probably immature birds.]

he described it as black. — It is however easily recognized.

Vanga cinerea. This species is entirely omitted by you although a Native of V.D.L. & a specimen sent you by me about Nov. 1836!!! to look at. I found it common about Campbell Town. It differs from my specimens of *V. destructor* in being quite black on the head. — the rump more obviously white — the tail black — the feathers largely tipped with white on their inner webs. — The two specimens approach

[Gunn is describing an adult Grey Butcherbird. The Grey Butcherbird of Tasmania is an endemic subspecies *Cracticus torquatus cinereus* that is larger and darker than the southeastern mainland subspecies *C. t. torquatus*. It appears that Gunn considered them separate species, or is considering browner immature birds as a separate species.]

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[page break]

very closely indeed in Gould's descriptions — but I thought them distinct many years ago & sent them home under separate Numbers. — Look out for specimens.

Colluricincla cinerea. Common at Circular head &

[Grey Shrike-thrush]

in the District generally.

Turdus varius. very common in the densely shaded

[Bassian Thrush]

Forests near the Hampshire Hills — where perpetual darkness or twilight reigns — and the only surface vegetation — Cryptogamids. At Circular head in the Winter & Spring Months when their food is to be procured in the thickets (Colonially Serribs [?]) we find them pretty near — and at that season they visit Mr. Curr's Shrubberies; — in the Summer however they appear to retire to the damper and more shaded thickets & forests. I see no difference in the markings of the sexes.

Cinclosoma punctata. You are I presume aware of the

[Spotted Quail-thrush]

differences in colour between Male and Female of this species — which is more striking than in Many other of our birds. — It is a very pretty bird.

Malurus cyaneus. I am inclined to think the little troops

[Superb Fairy-wren]

of these birds consist of a Male, Female, and brood of the Season, as I have often obtained

[page break]

Males wholly brown, and others changing their more somber livery for the gay blue adult dress.

Acanthiza pusilla. Not Common at Circular Head. —

[Brown Thornbill]

I think the weight of a specimen of "Malurus gularis" would be less. — By the bye in what part

CORRESPONDENCE

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[Southern Emu-wren]

of Vigors and Horsfields system does the little Malurus above alluded to (Our Emu Wren) come in? I should have supposed, if still retained in that genus, that you would have inserted it with the *M. cyaneus*. — Refer. *Acanthiza flavicerca*. (Grant.) will I think be found to be

[Yellow-rumped Thornbill]

Acanthiza Reguloides of Vigors & Horsfield. — Refer, — It is

[The Yellow-rumped Thornbill is again confused with the Buff-rumped Thornbill.]

thus described in Cuvier — but of Course, as with every other species — imperfectly.

“Olive green above; beneath yellowish; white forehead; front of occiput ferruginous; rump and base and tip of tail fulvous yellow; middle black; length 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Nov. Holl”.

[Cuvier (1827-1832) 1829, vol. 6, p. 471]

The above description agrees as closely as possible presuming as we may that their, perhaps solitary, specimen has not in all things like the Majority. This species does not exist at Circular Head nor have I seen it anywhere in the Neighborhood. — I wish you could obtain me a few specimens as they are abundant near Launceston.

[page break]

Having now by dint of indefatigable exertion in the space of two years got through somewhat less than the eighth part of the Birds of Van Diemen's Land — we may hope that in the course of fourteen years more we may by strenuous efforts get through the Classification and naming of the other Seven-eighths — This is encouraging as it clearly points out — when we May terminate if we wish — do not therefore flag — but like the Barber of Gottingen shaving the Devil — brush away — brush away — brush away. —

From time to time we shall be enabled to dovetail

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into the Series any odd species we may kick up
& it is possible by & bye — when attention is drawn
to the Subject — that occasional New Holland Birds
will be blown across, fished up & added to our
Tasmanian Fauna.

By the bye you have a most injurious habit
of removing the Wrappers in which my specimens
are sent to you — and on which are marked the
Sexes — &c — In the very last Case you have returned
me two of my specimens minus the said envelopes, and
I cannot therefore now tell the sexes — and their value
is most considerably diminished.

[page break]

Supplementary

Falconidae

Having been able to examine several specimens since
I left Launceston, I am enabled to make a few
remarks on the specimens last examined by you.
Falco cinerea. A & B. I have no doubt now that your
opinion as to these being Male & Female is correct —
I obtained a beautiful specimen of a Male agreeing
in size with the specimen B (also a Male) but marked
more like Mr Robertson's specimen — it in fact connected
the two Completely — and I therefore think the specimen
you saw was a young bird. — I am inclined to think
this is the Falco peregrinus described by Vigors and Horsfield —

[Peregrine Falcon]

& the description tallies very well — both with Wilson &
Richardson's North American Fauna.

[Richardson 1832]

Falco C. & var Δ. I also feel satisfied that your
opinion with reference to these is correct — & that they
also are Male & female. — I have not been able to
procure any additional specimens — but I think

CORRESPONDENCE

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there can be little doubt upon the subject. — Why did you not give it a name?

[page break]

The examination of a beautiful specimen shot at Woolnorth, (but I regret to say not in my possession) somewhat similar to the One marked by you Accipiter?

[p. 202]

leads me to believe that it is the adult state of Astur fasciatus. The Woolnorth specimen is sooty

[Brown Goshawk]

black in the back — the breast very red cinnamon colour with very indistinct whitish transverse bands which become more distinct — & the colours lighter towards the vent. At this Age the bird appears to be wholly black above, and almost red below —

The very young birds of your Astur fasciatus having the round dark spots on the breast — inclines me to think the present state the adult — if indeed it proves not to be a distinct species — to which however I am not anxious to lead — as it agrees so well in size, bill — feet — irides — wings & tail — so that for a time at least, until more specimens are obtained, I should propose that the Accipiter? last examined be considered as the adult state of Astur fasciatus.

P.S. — Further examination has shaken the above opinion — but I cannot yet prove it to be distinct.

[This sentence was later inserted between lines and may be in Grant's handwriting.]

Of the Buteo I can say nothing beyond remarking that to me it is New — & distinct from anything I possess.

[page break]

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I have been fortunate during the past week
in seeing two specimens of the Fish Eagle – One

[White-bellied Sea-Eagle]

of which I obtained — the other is in the possession
of a pseudo-scientific chap down here — who knows
sufficiently about Ornithology & Britain that a Roast duck
if young and tender, eats uncommonly well with
green peas.

(specimen not in poss.)

This Eagle is a Large Bird measuring 34 inches
in length from the end of the Bill to the tip of the tail —
& 7 feet from tip to tip of the wings when stretched
out. — Colour. Crown of head grey — feathers being brown
ending in white tips. — Back — very dark brown to black,
the feathers ending, as on the head, in fine white tips, — the
Colors gradually whitening to the tail — which is white —
but slightly marked with brown near the tip giving it a
grey appearance. Shoulders black, with the ends of the
feathers white — and the wings gradually darker until
they become sooty black at the extremities. Throat a
dirty white deepening on the breast to a dark brown with
the ends of the feathers white. Belly & thighs nankeen &
brown mixed. — Under side of Wings Nankeen Colour — with a
large spot of white on the under side of the primaries
but not visible on top of wing. — Vent & under tail white.

[This description suggests that the specimen was a first-year bird.]

[page break]

Bill and cere dark horn colour to pale black — the
bill longer and more slender than in *Aquila fuscosa*,

[Wedge-tailed Eagle]

Irides — brown. — Tarsi - white. — Claws — black.

Length of Bill measured along the curve from the feathers 2 4/12 in.

“ “ from corner of mouth to tip 2 5/12 “

3rd quill feather the longest — & 25 inches from bend of wing.

2nd “ “ shorter than the 3rd by 1 2/12 inch.

1st “ “ “ “ by 4 4/12 [?] “

[Note that they counted primary feathers from the outside in

CORRESPONDENCE

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rather than from the inside (wrist) out, as is the common practice today.]

4th “ “ “ “ by 0 2/12 in.

Length of tail about 14 inches — 12 tail feathers graduated — the 4 middle Ones about a length — but the Outside Ones 3 inches shorter than the middle 4. — rest in proportion.

8 to 9 broad plates on front of tarsus — in. Straight

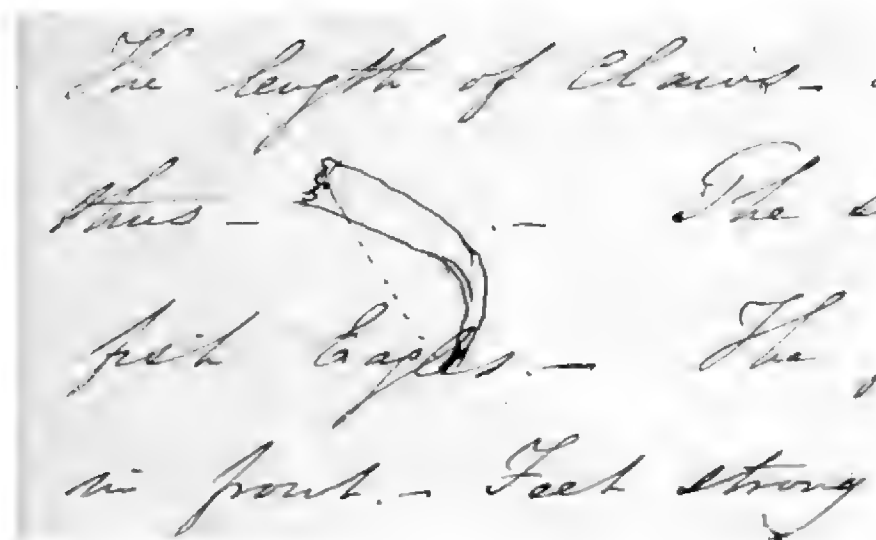
12 plates on middle toe. - length of claws by Curve 1 2/12 1 2/12

5 “ “ inner toe “ “ 2 - 1 5/12

7 “ “ Outer toe “ “ 1 4/12 - 0 11/12

4 “ “ hind toe “ “ 2 - 1 5/12.

The length of the Claws - called straight - is with the compasses. - thus — [Figure 29].



[Figure 29. Figure of how a claw is measured with a compass.]

— The soles of the feet are as described in other fish Eagles. — The feathers reach a little below the knee in front. — Feet strong. — The wings when folded reach to within almost half an inch of the extremity of the tail.

[added comment in what appears to be Grant's handwriting:

[illegible] my specimen is a female — a little smaller than the above, & different in Colour in some points. I think an older bird than the above. This not yet measured [illegible]

[end of letter]

Appendix to the Scientific Journal

December 1838

Strigidae

The Owl -

Genera

- 1 Typical Group - Ears large, operculum; no spots. Strix
- 2 Sub-type Ears smaller, no operculum; spots, Bubo

Ears small; ^{NOISIA} spots or operculum; disk imperfect.

- 3 Aberrant { Head small; claws feathered; tail short. Nyctale
- { Ears large; claws naked; tail moderate. Nyctipetes
- { Head small; claws feathered; tail wedged. Surnia

Known and well what arrangement is kept for this group, which is certainly in a very confused state.

Figure 30. Supplement to the Scientific Journal, December 1838.

[Letter from Grant to Gunn]

Supplement
to the
Scientific Journal [Figure 30]

December Launceston 1838

Strigidae
The Owls —

[The following grouping is a direct quote from Swainson 1836-1837, Vol. 1, p. 332.]

	Genera
1 Typical Group – Ears large, operculated; no Egrets	<u>Strix</u>
2nd Sub-typical ... Ears Smaller, no operculum; Egrets,	<u>Asio</u>
Ears Small; no Egrets or Operculum; disk imperfect.	
3rd Aberrant	{ Head Small; claws feathered; tail Short . . . <u>Nyctea</u>
	{ Head large; claws naked; tail moderate . <u>Nyctipetes</u>
	{ Head Small; claws feathered; tail wedged . . <u>Surnia</u>

I know not well what arrangement to adopt for this group, which is certainly in a very confused State, — in a late paper of yours on the Nocturnae I find that the arrangement is very different from the one above, and much more complicated, there being seven genera; still the one above is at present in such an imperfect State — although professing to be natural — that to prevent loss of time we had better in the mean time use the one which you have followed — And in fact our species are so few that it is immaterial.

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Noctua**[page break]**

Gen. Noctua = Savigny

Sp. Noct. maculata – Vig. & Horsf.**[Southern Boobook]**

The specific description of this our little falconine Owl by Vigors & Horsfield is so minutely correct

[1827]

that I think it unnecessary to transcribe it
I have shot this bird in the daytime –
there is another Species mentioned by them
the Noctua Boobook – larger than the former
more ferruginous and the white Spots not so
distinctly marked – I have not however seen
it –

[There is no other small owl in Tasmania. Vigors and Horsfield used *maculata* for Tasmanian birds, and *boobook* for those of the south-eastern mainland. These were treated as separate species well into the twentieth century.]

Genus – Strix . Lin.

Species – Strix flammea?

Barn or White Owl

Strix. corpore luteo punctis albis; subtus albido
punctis nigricantibus. Lin –

[Vigors and Horsfield 1827, p. 190]

They do not seem very sure about the name of this bird Else why the mark ? – the markings however agree very well with our bird, and in fact I see no difference between it and the bird of Europe Except perhaps a little deeper tinge of tawny colour in that of VDL. – the form is Exactly similar – it Seems to be rather

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a rare bird – as I have never Shot
one. — —

[This may once again be a confusion between the Barn Owl of Europe and the Masked Owl of Tasmania, but the closeness of the description of the Barn Owl and the comment on its rareness suggests that this probably was a Barn Owl.]

There are I believe two others – one
very small. the other very large — the latter is found
[The “very large” may refer to the Masked Owl.]
at the Great Western lakes – but at present

[page break]

we must look on both as more than doubtful

Fissirostres

Ordo. – 2d.

Tribus [?] — Fissi rostres Cuv.

Fam. Hirundinae

Genus Hirundo

Species Hir. Pyrrhonota. Lath. Refs [?]

[Tree Martin]

Dun – rumped Swallow Lath

Hir. Suprà Caeruleo – nigra, subtus fulvescens, fasciâ
frontali ferrugineâ, uropygio fulvo, alis caudâque Sub
furcatâ fuscis, — Remiges retricesque subtus pallidè
fuscae; Tectrices inferioris fulvae. Longitudo corporis
is $4 \frac{9}{10}$, rostri ad frontem $\frac{1}{5}$, ad rictum $\frac{1}{2}$
— alae à carpo ad remigen primam $4 \frac{3}{10}$; Caudae $1 \frac{1}{3}$
tarsi $\frac{9}{20}$ — — This is evidently our common swallow

[Vigors and Horsfield 1827, p. 190]

the time of whose arrival and departure you
have no doubt noted; — I find on referring
to my note book that they appear about the
1st or 2d of September. and leave us in

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the latter End of March – the 28th is marked as the last day they were seen – and they were then, “congregated among the high trees over the river as if ready for departure” –
— do these dates agree with yours?

Cypselus

[page break]

Genus Cypselus.

Swift

[in pencil in Gunn's hand?: H. Caudacuta Lath.]

Species?

Chatura Australis. Stephens.

[White-throated Needletail]

The specific characters of our very handsome Swift I hope you will send in your next, it is a very rare bird & I hope you have not already Sent it to England without noting them down minutely as it will leave a great blank in our list. – I have noted March 26/37 – “A few Swifts were seen playing about the Swamp – and a few days ago at Mount Direction –” On the following day not a single bird was to be seen — — the same occurrence happened last year — they were then in much greater numbers but disappeared Equally soon — they are here only a few hours and just at the time when the swallows depart – this is really a very Singular migration! – do you know whether they are Ever seen about Sydney? – if you know any one there perhaps you might ascertain —. I shall make Enquires in Hobarton — they are not taken notice of among the “Birds of New Holland” – and

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[probably Shaw 1794 or Vigors and Horsfield 1827]

[page break]

I therefore conclude that they must be as rare in Sydney as here – these papers were however read to the Lin. Society in 1826 so that many specimens may have been Sent home & described since then –

Fam. Caprimulgidae

There are only two birds belonging to this family of which I am aware. there is a true Goatsucker described – but the specimen was unique and very imperfect – it was found dead in a garden – it has the serrated claw of which we have heard so much – about the use of which there has been so much difference of opinion, and which is still undetermined – You have noticed the same structure in the Strix flammea

[Barn Owl/Masked Owl]

— & I in the Bittern

[Australian Bittern *Botaurus poiciloptilus*]

Genus. Aegotheles. Αίγοθηλης

Rostrum breve, crassiusculum, latissimum, basi depressum, tomiis integris, rictu amplissimo. Culmen carinatum, rotundatum, dextro unguiculato, subadunco Mandibula inferior apice ad accipiendum superioris dertrum canaliculata

Vibrissae mastacles ad apicem simplices, ad basin pectinatae; capistrales numerosae, longissimae, porrectae, utrinque pectinatae. Nares in medio rostri positae, lineares, obliquae subpatulae, posticè angustiores. Alae breves, rotundatae Remiges prima et sexta ferè aequales brevissimae,
secunda

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[page break]

secunda [sic] et quinta aequales longiores, tertia et quarta aequales longissimae; secundae pogonio externo leviter, tertiae ad quintam inclusam pogoniis externis profundè Emarginatis: secundae ad quintam inclusam pogoniis internis Emarginatis

Pedes congrui. Tarsi elongati, subgraciles, compressi, nudi. digiti liberi, subgraciles, ferè aequales. Hallux longus, debilis, Ungues compressissimi, medio integro, Acrotarsia acro=podiaque scutulata; horum scutis confertis approximantibus Cauda mediocris, rotundata

[Vigors and Horsfield 1827, pp. 194-195]

The Genus Aigotheles [sic] as thus defined seems to hold an intermediate place between Caprimulgus and Podargus – the bill is more depressed than in podargus – the tarsi are weaker and more compressed and comparatively more Elongated – the toes also are nearly Even while in podargus the middle toe is the longest –

Aigotheles [sic] Albo-gularis – I send two specimens

[Australian Owlet-nightjar]

of what appears to be this bird – there

is another Species the Aigoth. [sic] Novae Hollandiae

[There is a single species in Australia, the Australian Owlet-nightjar, with a mainland subspecies *Aegotheles cristatus cristatus* and the Tasmanian endemic subspecies *A. c. tasmanicus*. There is confusion here with names. Vigors and Horsfield used the name *Caprimulgus albogularis* for the White-throated Nightjar *Eurostopodus mystacalis*. Gunn and Grant seem to have switched the name to the owlet-nightjar.]

but it seems to have an Erect setaceous [?] crest and is of a dusky black – While the specimen sent is of a deepash colour with faint whitish transverse bands. – the imperfect specimen belongs to you it was in such a decomposed state (when I got it from

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Mr Charles Thomson to skin for you). that it was

[page break]

with difficulty preserved – the other which is I think a female you will be kind Enough to return — — I am not sure of this species and as our specimens are so imperfect we can return to the subject again – they belong however to the Genus Aigotheles **[sic]** & that is so far satisfactory –

Podargus

of this genus there are three species Described by Vig. & Horsf. – the one sent is in all

[Vigors and Horsfield 1827, pp. 197-201]

probability the Podargus Cuvieri **[sic]** – the others

[Tawny Frogmouth]

being described as much larger – and the Markings are sufficiently near – the irides however are said to be brown while our bird has them of a fine yellow colour

[page break]

[The following list appears to be in Gunn's handwriting, and is written on the back of the previous page]

Raptores.

Falconidae

1 Falco Berigora? Grant

[Brown Falcon]

Falco.

2 Accipiter torquatus? Grant.

[Collared Sparrowhawk]

6 Aquila fuscosa

[Wedge-tailed Eagle]

5 Astur Novae Hollandiae

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[Grey Goshawk]3 *Astur fasciatus*.**[Brown Goshawk]**4 *Circus Diemenicus?***[Swamp Harrier]**

Strigidae.

Noctura maculata.**[Southern Boobook]***Strix* (not [?] [or note?] *flammea*.)

Fissirostres.

Hirundinae

Hirundo Pyrrhonota.**[Tree Martin]**“ *Javanica*.**[Welcome Swallow]***Chaetura Australis*.**[White-throated Needletail]**

Caprimulgidae.

*Aegotheles albogularis***[Australian Owlet-nightjar]***Podargus Cuvierii***[Tawny Frogmouth][end of list]****[page break]****[Grant continued]**Jany 30/38 Addenda et Corrigenda

I am glad to find that you have a

Specimen of the *Hirundo Javanica*, and**[Welcome Swallow]**

although it is a very young bird, quite difficult to identify the species – in addition to the discriminating marks Mentioned by you Viz — “the broader ferruginous band on the front & Extending to the cheeks and breast,” We must at once remark that it has not the Dun Rump

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from which Latham took his trivial name that the abdomen is much whiter, and the External feathers of the tail are (in the middle!) marked with oblique white bands wanting in the two middle feathers. but of a rounded shape in the others – the blue colour of the back appears to have a greenish reflection, while in the Pyrrhonota it is purple

[Tree Martin]

As to the size we cannot say much having such a young bird – it is better to leave that until we procure an adult bird – as to the remark by Vigors & Horsfield about the relative size & strength of the tail feathers you must bear in mind that it was in comparison with the European Swallow – not with the Hir

[Considered conspecific with the Barn Swallow]

Pyrrhonota – both our Swallows have I think less

[page break]

deeply forked tails than the Hir. Rustica

[Barn Swallow]

to which Vig. & Horsf. alluded –

As to your conjecture that the Falco

Berigora [**Brown Falcon**] is the Same as the Perigrina

[Peregrine Falcon]

I should be inclined to doubt it –

as, although you justly remark that both are discribed [**sic**] as having the very curious black beard or streak from the sides of the Lower Mandible – the feet of F. perigrina are yellowish – while those of Berigora are bluish – the colours too are different the peregrine being of an ash colour above, with dusky bands and below of a reddish white – however we must at present leave this, we

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can determine nothing with certainty
 unless the specimens be produced
 Vigors & Horsf. State that Their Specimen of the
 Australian peregrine was in a fine state of preservation
 & that after a minute comparison with the European
 bird they could discover “No material difference
 between them” –

[Vigors and Horsfield 1827, p. 183]

[page break]

— As to the *Strix flammea* I think
 your remarks are very just – we are
 too apt to conclude at once, from the very
 imperfect descriptions, that birds are specifically
 the same when they **[are]** totally distinct in
 reality —.

The descriptions of the *Chatura Australis*
[White-throated Needletail]

is very imperfect – and I will thank you
 to draw up a more correct one from your
 very fine specimen, as I think it a pity
 that such a Splendid bird should be passed
 over so carelessly – You mention that
 they probably feed very high in the air and
 that that would account for their being
 so seldom met with – but I was continually
 watching for them last season and one
 would conclude that their prey would change
 according to the state of the atmosphere – from
 the higher to the lower regions of the air –
 I am still in great doubt about them –
 Mr Neile Mentions that when coming to

[page break]

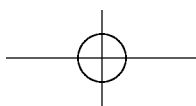
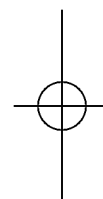
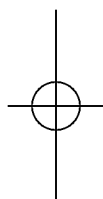
VDland and being 400 miles! from this
 country a swallow flew on board – I

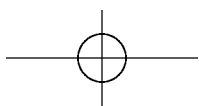
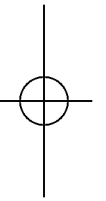
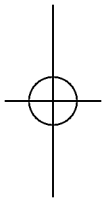
CORRESPONDENCE

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will ascertain from him the latt. & long.
also the state of the winds & when this
curious event happened –

[end of letter]





[The following taxonomic synopsis is in Gunn's handwriting and contains dates as late as 1840. It appears to be the taxonomic order and divisions of birds that Gunn and Grant had decided upon. Grant has made occasional notes indicating that this is the product of both their efforts. The list shares with the lists of higher order categories by earlier and contemporary European ornithologists some categories and their sequence. For example, Linnaeus and Vieillot also began their lists with Order Accipitres, and many lists began with raptors (for a detailed list of early classification systems and references see Walters 2003). The list of J. J. Tschudi (1844) is close to that of Gunn-Grant in the sequence of orders, but varies in other regards and may postdate the Gunn-Grant list. It is clear the Gunn and Grant were influenced in developing their classification system by other authors.

Taxonomies before Darwin and evolution by natural selection were problematic because they were not predicated on relatedness or common ancestry. Clearly, Gunn and Grant recognized that a particular bird species more closely resembles some species than others and grouped the species that were most alike together. The higher taxonomic categories (e.g., order, family) have changed enormously since the time of Gunn and Grant and are currently in a state of flux, largely due to the advent of DNA techniques, and competing classifications of birds are now under consideration by the ornithological community. For example, currently, Australian birds are distributed in 23 orders (Christidis and Boles 2008) but were distributed in 21 orders in 1994 (Christidis and Boles 1994). In the list below a few of the present locations of bird families in orders are given in brackets along with the current names of orders that have survived since the 1800s.]

Ord. 1. Accipitres
 [Accipitriformes]
 Sub Ord. 1 – Do [ditto] diurni
 [Diurnal birds of prey]
 Fam. 2 Falconidae
 Subfam 3 Aquilinae
 Aquila Briss. 1760
 Pandion Sav. 1809

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Haliaetus (Autig [?]) Sav. 1809

Subfam 4. Falconinae
Falco. L**["L" is the standard abbreviation for Linnaeus when used with scientific names.]**Subfam 6. Ieracidea Gould 1837
Accipitrinae
Daedalion Sav 1809 **[illegible]** for Astur
Accipiter Antiq [?]. Briss. 1760
7. Circinae
Circus. Antiq [?]. Lacep. 1800:1801.**[Lacepède]**Suborder. 2. Accipitres Nocturni
Fam 3. Strigidae**[Owls are in the Order Strigiformes.]**Subfam. 1 Surninae
Athene. Boise 1822Subfam. 4. Striginae
Strix L.**[page break]**

Ord. II. Passeres. L.

[Passeriformes]Tribe 1. Fissirostres
Sub tribe 1. Viz Nocturnae
Family 1. Caprimulgidae**[The frogmouths and owlet-nightjars have been placed in the Order Caprimulgiformes (Dickinson 2003).]**Subfam. 1. Podarginae
Aegotheles vig. & Hors. 1825.
Podargus Cuv. 1829.
Subtribe 2. Fissirostres Diurnae
Fam. 2. Hirundinidae
Sub fam. 1. Cypselinae
Acanthylis Boie 1826.
Subfam. 2. Hirundininae
Hirundo L.

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Chelidon ? probably Martin
 Family 4 [?]. Alcedinidae
 Subfam 5. Alcedininae
 Alcyone Swains. 1837.

[page break]

Tribe II. Tenuirostres

Fam. 4. Meliphagidae

Subfam. 1. Myzomalinae

Acanthorhynchus Gould 1837.

Glyciphilae Swains 1827

Subfam. 2. Meliphaginae

Ptilotis Sw. 1837.

Melephaga Lewin 1808.

Anthochaera Vig & Hors. 1825.

Subfam 3. Melithreptinae

Manorhina Vieill [**Vieillot**] 1816 (Myzantha Gould)**[old name for *Manorina*, of which Gould was author]**Melithreptus Vieill. 1816 [**illegible**] Gould. [?]

Tribe III Deutirostres

Fam. 1. Suscinidae

Subfam. 1. Malurinae

Malurus Vieill 1816.

Stipiturus. is not this the Emu Wren

Subfam 3. Saxicolinae Calamanthus Gould.

Petroica Sw. 1832

Subfam 4. Accentorinae

Sericornis Gould 1837

Acanthiza V. & H 1825

[page break]

Subfam 6. Sylvicolinae

Zosterops V & H 1825

Sub fam 7. Motacillanae

Anthus Bechst. 1802.

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Fam. 2. Turdidae
 Subfam. 2. Turdinae
 Oreocincla Gould 1837
 Subfam 3. Timalinae
 Cinclosoma V & H 1825
 Fam 3. Muscicapidae
 Subfam. 5. Muscicapinae
 Myiagra V & H 1825
 Rhipidura Do **[ditto]**
 Fam 4. Ampelidae
 Subfam 1. Pachycephalinae
 Pachycephala Sw. 1825
 Subfam 2. Piprinae
 Pardalotus Viell. 1816.

[page break]

Subfam 4. Campephaginae
 Graucalus Cuv. 1817.

[in Grant's hand: Must be altered]**[*Graucalus* is a synonym of *Coracina* cuckoo-shrikes.]**

Subfam 5. Dicrurinae
 Artamus Vieill. 1826. Ocypterus Cuv.

Fam 5. Lanidae
 Subfam 1. Laninae
 Colluriocincla V & H 1825.

Subfam 2. Thamnophlinae
 Cracticus cinereus Viell. 1816.

[in Grant's hand: is not this Colluricinca of [illegible]]

Tribe IV Conirostres

Fam. 1. Corvidae
 Subfam 1. Phonygaminae
 Gymnorhina Gray 1840
 Strepara Less. 1831. Coronica Gould

Subfam 4. Corvinae
 Corvus L

Fam. 4 Fringillidae
 Subfam. 4 Fringillinae

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Amadina Sw. 1827.

[page break]

Order III Scansores

No [?] Tribes

Fam 2. Psittacidae

[The parrots and cockatoos are in the Order Psittaciformes.]

Subfam. 1.

[in Grant's hand: Pezoporinae]

Platycerus Vig. 1825

Pezoporus Ill. 1811. **[Illiger]**

Eouphanis [?] **[illegible]** 1830

Trichoglossus V. & H. 1826.

Subfam. 5. Cacatuinae.

Calyptorhynchus V & H 1826

[in Grant's hand: black]

Callocephalon Less. 1837

[in Grant's hand: Is I think white one – but is the CH? [?] **[illegible]]**

Fam 4. Cuculidae

[The cuckoos are now in the Order Cuculiformes]

Subfam 5. Cuculinae

Cuculus L

Chrysococcyx Boie 1826. is chalcites

Order 4. Columbidae

[added later in Grant's hand?] **[Columbiformes]**

Fam. Columbidae

Subfam 2. Columbinae

? Lophorhynchus Sw 1837.

Subfam 3. Gourinae

Phaps Selby 1835. [?]

[page break]

Ord. 5. Gallinae

[added later in Grant's hand?] **[Galliformes]**

Fam 3. Tetraonidae

Subfam 1. Perdicinae

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Coturnix Antiq [?] [illegible] 1752.

Fam 6. Tinamidae

[Tinamous are now in the Order Tinamiformes.]

Taruix Boru. [?] 1790 [?]

Ord 6. Struthiones

[added later in Grant's hand?] [Struthioniformes]

Fam 1. Struthionidae

Subfamily 1. Struthioninae

Dromaius Viell.

Ord 7. Grallae

[added later in Grant's hand?]

Fam 1. Charadriidae

[The sandpipers, plovers, and allies are in the Order Charadriiformes.]

Subfam. 3. Charadrinae

Vanellus L. 1735

Charadrius L

Hiaticula Antiq [?] GM Gray 1840

Subfamily 5. Haematopodinae

Haematopus L.

Fam 2. Ardeidae

[The herons are in the Order Ciconiiformes.]

Sunfam 3. Arдинаe

Ardea L

[page break]

Fam 3. Scolopacidae

Subfam 1. Limosinae

Limosa. Briss. 1760

Subfam 3. Recurvorostrinae

Recurvirostres L

Himantopus Antiq [?] Briss. 1760.

Subfam 4 Tringinae

Tringa L 1755

Subfam 5. Scolopacinae

Scolopax L

Numenius L

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Fam 5. Rallidae

[The rails and allies are in the Order Gruiformes.]

Subfam 1. Rallinae

Porzana Viell. 1816 is Zaporina

} Rallus L. or

} ? Ocydromus Wagl. 1830. **[Wagler]**

Subfam 2 Gallinulinae

Porphyrio Briss. 1760

[page break]

Ord VIII Anseres

[Now Anseriformes]

Fam 1. Anatidae

Subfam. 3 Anserinae

Ceropsis Lath.

Subfam 4. Cygninae

Cygnus L. 1755

Subfam 5. Anatinae

Anas L

Spatula Boie 1822 is Rhynchaspis

[An old synonym of *Spatula* (shovellers), itself a synonym of *Anas*]

as also is

Erismatura Bonap 1832. of Subfam Erismaturinae

[C. L. Bonaparte] [This is an old synonym of *Oxyura*, stiff-tailed ducks]

Fam 2. Colymbidae

[The grebes are in the Order Podicipediformes.]

Subfam 2. Podcipinae

Podiceps Lath.

Fam 3. Alcidae

[The alcids are in the Order Charadriiformes.]

Subfam. 3 Spheniscinae

[The penguins are in the Order Sphenisciformes.]

Eudyptes Viell. 1816. is Aptenodytes Chrysocome

which is now E. demersus

[The penguin *demersus*, is the Jackass penguin *Spheniscus demerus*, *chrysocome* is the Rockhopper Penguin *Eudyptes chryso-*

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come.]

Aptenodytes Forst. [?] 1788. A. patagonica

[page break]

Fam 4. Procellaridae

[The petrels, shearwaters, albatrosses and allies are in the Order Procellariiformes.]

Subfam 1. Procellarinae

Procellaria L.

Prion Lacep 1800-1. is Pachyptila

[Lacepède]

Diomedea L

Fam 5 Laridae

[The gulls are in Order Charadriiformes.]

Subfam 1 Larinae

Larus L.

Subfam 3. Sterninae

Sterna L

Fam 6. Pelecanidae

[The pelicans, cormorants, gannets, and allies are in the Order Pelecaniformes.]

Subfam 3 Pelecaninae

Sula Bay [?] Briss 1760

Pelecanus L.

Graucalus L. 1755 for Phalacrocorax.

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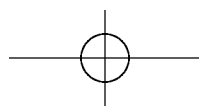
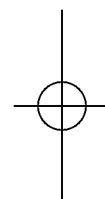
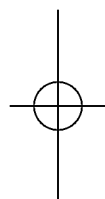
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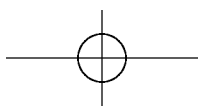
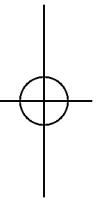
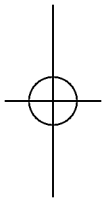
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APPENDIX I

List of birds mentioned in the letters

[An * indicates species mentioned in the letters that are not native to Tasmania.]

Current name	Gunn and Grant's name, or name used by a European authority
Bee-eater, Rainbow* <i>Merops ornatus</i> Latham, 1802	Bee Eater
Bittern, Australian <i>Botaurus poiciloptilus</i> (Wagler, 1827)	Bittern
Boobook, Southern <i>Ninox novaeseelandiae leucopsis</i> (Gould, 1838)	small spotted owl <u>Noctua maculata</u> N. Boolbook; Strix Boolbook; Buck'buck
Butcherbird, Grey <i>Cracticus torquatus cinereus</i> (Gould, 1837)	Laughing Jack-ass <u>Vanga destructor</u> Laughing Jack Ass; Vanga cinerea
Butcherbird, Pied* <i>Cracticus nigrogularis</i> (Gould, 1837)	Cracticus varius; Vanga negrogularis
Caracara, Black* <i>Daptrius ater</i> Vieillot, 1816	<u>Daptrius ater</u>
Cockatoo, Gang-gang* <i>Callocephalon fimbriatum</i> (Grant, 1803)	Red Crowned parrot <u>Calyptorhynchus</u> <u>Galeatus</u>
Cockatoo, Sulphur-crested <i>Cacatua galerita</i> (Latham, 1790)	Greater Sulphur crested Cockatoo; <u>Plyctolophus</u> <u>galeritus</u> ; Psittacus galeritus
Cuckoo, Common* <i>Cuculus canorus</i> Linnaeus, 1758	European Cuckoo
Cuckoo-shrike, Black-faced <i>Coracina novaehollandiae</i> (J. F. Gmelin, 1789)	<u>Summer bird</u> ; Grauculus Melanops; Corvus Melanops; Cablepyris melanops; Rollier à

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Currawong, Black <i>Strepera fuliginosa</i> (Gould, 1837)	Masque Noir [described but did not name]
Currawong, Grey <i>Strepera versicolor arguta</i> Gould, 1846	Noisy Grakle; White Vented Black Magpie <i>Coracias strepera</i> White-vented Crow <i>Corvus graculinus</i> <u>Gracula strepera</u> ; Black Magpie
Eagle, Bald* <i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i> (Linnaeus, 1766)	American White- Headed Sea Eagle
Eagle, Golden* <i>Aquila chrysaetos</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	Golden Eagle
Eagle, Wedge-tailed <i>Aquila audax fleayi</i> (Condon and Amadon, 1954)	Wedge tailed Eagle <u>Aquila fucosa</u> ; <u>Aquila</u> <u>fucosa</u>
Emu <i>Dromaius novaehollandiae diemenensis</i> (Le Soüef, 1907)	Emu <u>Dromaius Nova</u> <u>Hollandiae</u>
Emu-wren, Southern <i>Stipiturus malachurus littleri</i> Mathews, 1912	Emu Wren; <i>Malurus</i> <i>gularis</i> <i>Muscicapa malachura</i>
Falcon, Brown <i>Falco berigora tasmanicus</i> (Mathews, 1916)	<u>Falco Berigora</u> ; cream bellied falcon
Falcon, Peregrine <i>Falco peregrinus</i> Tunstall, 1771	Peregrine; <u>Falco</u> <u>peregrinus</u>
Fairy-wren, Superb <i>Malurus cyaneus cyaneus</i> (Ellis, 1782)	Superb Warbler; Blue Wren <u>Silvia cyanea</u> <u>Malurus Superbus</u> ; <i>M.</i> <i>cyanea</i> ; <i>M. cyaneus</i> <i>Mottacilla cyanea</i> ; blue warbler
Fantail, Grey <i>Rhipidura albiscapa albiscapa</i> Gould, 1840	Fan tailed Flycatcher <u>Muscicapa</u> <u>flabellifera</u> ; <u>Rhipidura</u> <u>flabellifera</u>
Firetail, Beautiful <i>Stagonopleura bella</i> (Latham, 1802)	<u>Fringilla bella</u> ; Nitid Grosbeak <u>Loxia Nitida</u> <i>Loxia bella</i> ; black lined grosbeak
Flycatcher, Restless* <i>Myiagra inquieta</i> (Latham, 1802)	volatile flycatcher <i>Seisura volitans</i>
Flycatcher, Satin <i>Myiagra cyanoleuca</i>	Satin Bird

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(Vieillot, 1818)	
Frogmouth, Tawny <i>Podargus strigoides</i> Latham, 1802	Podargus or common Mope-Hawk; More- Pork; Podargus Cuvierii
Giant Petrel, Southern <i>Macronectes giganteus</i> (J. F. Gmelin, 1789) or Northern <i>M. halli</i> Mathews, 1912	Giant Petrel <u>Procellaria</u> <u>gigantea</u>
Goose, Cape Barren <i>Cereopsis novaehollandiae</i> (Latham, 1802)	Cape Barren Goose <u>Cereopsis Novae</u> <u>Hollandiae</u>
Goshawk, Brown <i>Accipiter fasciatus</i> (Vigors and Horsfield, 1827)	<u>Astur fasciatus</u>
Goshawk, Grey <i>Accipiter novaehollandiae</i> (J. F. Gmelin, 1788)	White Hawk <u>Falco</u> <u>albus</u> ; <u>Astur</u> <u>Novae Hollandiae</u>
Goshawk, Northern* <i>Accipiter gentilis</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	Falco Albus Accipiter palumbarius
Harrier, Northern* <i>Circus cyaneus</i> (Linnaeus, 1766)	Hen Harrier
Harrier, Swamp <i>Circus approximans</i> Peale, 1848	Hen Harrier; Circus Diemenicus
Hobby, Australian <i>Falco longipennis</i> Swainson, 1837	Merlin or Hobby
Honeyeater, Crescent <i>Phylidonyris pyrrhopterus</i> (Latham, 1802)	<u>Meliphaga fulvifrons</u>
Honeyeater, New Holland <i>Phylidonyris</i> <i>novaehollandiae canescens</i> (Latham, 1790)	Honeysuckle Bird Meliphaga Novae Hollandiae; Common Honeysuckle
Kingfisher, Azure <i>Alcedo azurea diemenensis</i> (Gould, 1846)	Kingfisher <u>Ceyx azurea</u> Azure kingfisher Al. <u>Tibrachys</u> ; Halcyon Cinnammominus Alcedo Azurea
Kite, Brahminy* <i>Haliastur indus</i> (Boddaert, 1873)	Haliastur pondicirianus
Kite, Plumbeous* <i>Ictinia plumbea</i> (J. F. Gmelin, 1788)	Ictinea plumbea
Kokako* <i>Callaeas cinerea</i> (J. F. Gmelin, 1788)	Cinereous Wattle-bird <u>Glaucopis cinerea</u>
Kookaburra, Laughing* <i>Dacelo novaeguineae</i>	Dacelo gigantea; Giant

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(Hermann, 1783)	King fisher
Lammergeier* <i>Gypaetus barbatus</i>	<u>Gypaëtus barbatus</u>
(Linnaeus, 1758)	
Lapwing, Masked <i>Vanellus miles</i> (Boddaert, 1783)	Vanellus Gallinaceous
Lorikeet, Little* <i>Glossopsitta pusilla</i> (Shaw, 1790)	Perruche á face rouge
	Small Parakeet
Lorikeet, Musk <i>Glossopsitta concinna</i>	<u>Trichoglossus</u>
(Shaw, 1791)	<u>concinus</u> ; Psittacus
	concinus; Perruche à
	bandeu rouge; crimson
	fronted parakeet
Magpie, Australian <i>Gymnorhina tibicen hypoleuca</i>	Piping Crow <u>Barita</u>
(Gould, 1837)	<u>Tibicen</u> ; Gracula
	tibicen
Martin, Tree <i>Petrochelidon nigricans</i>	common swallow
(Vieillot, 1817)	<u>Hirundo Pyrrhonota</u>
	Dun-rumped Swallow
Merlin* <i>Falco columbarius</i> Linnaeus, 1758	merlin
Miner, Noisy <i>Manorina melanocephala leachi</i>	Miner
(Mathews, 1912)	
Needletail, White-throated <i>Hirundapus caudacutus</i>	Swift <u>Cypselus</u>
(Latham, 1802)	<u>giganteus</u> <u>Hirundo</u>
	caudacuta; Chaetura
	Australis
Osprey* <i>Pandion haliaetus</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	Pandion
Owl, Barn <i>Tyto alba</i>	barn or White; <u>Strix</u>
(Scopoli, 1769)	<u>flammea</u> ; Common
	White
Owl, Masked <i>Tyto novaehollandiae castanops</i>	confused with Barn
(Gould, 1837)	Owl?
Owlet-nightjar, Australian <i>Aegotheles cristatus</i>	Agotheles
<i>tasmanicus</i> Mathews, 1918	albogularis; Agotheles
	albo-gularis
Pardalote, Forty-spotted <i>Pardalotus quadragintus</i>	Spotted Winged
Gould, 1838	Pardalotus [?]
Pardalote, Spotted <i>Pardalotus punctatus</i>	Spotted manakin
(Shaw, 1792)	Diamond Bird
	<u>Pardalotus punctatus</u>
Pardalote, Striated <i>Pardalotus striatus striatus</i>	Streaked Manakin
(J. F. Gmelin, 1789)	<u>Pardalotus striatus</u>
	Striped-headed Manakin
	<u>Pipra striata</u>

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Parrot, Ground <i>Pezoporus wallicus leachi</i> Mathews, 1912	Ground Parrot <u>Psittacus</u> <u>terrestris</u> ; P. formosus P. terrestris; Perruche ingambe; <u>Pezoporus</u> <u>formosus</u> ; ground parakeet
Parrot, Swift <i>Lathamus discolor</i> (Shaw, 1790)	Parakeet; <u>Psittacus</u> <u>sanguinolentus</u>
Petrel, Cape <i>Daption capense</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	Pintado petrel Procellaria capensis
Pipit, Australian <i>Anthus australis bistriatus</i> (Swainson, 1837)	New Zealand Lark <u>Aluda Novae</u> <u>Zealandiae</u>
Quail-thrush, Spotted <i>Cinclosoma punctatum</i> <i>dovei</i> Mathews, 1912	Spotted Shouldered Thrush <u>Turdus punctatus</u> ground Dove <u>Cinclostoma punctatum</u> C. punctata Crow
Raven, Forest <i>Corvus tasmanicus</i> Mathews, 1912	
Robin, Dusky <i>Melanodryas vittata</i> (Quoy and Gaimard, 1830)	<u>Monarcha Carinata</u> <u>Muscicapa Carinata</u> Common Sparrow [does not name]
Robin, Flame <i>Petroica phoenicea</i> Gould, 1837	<u>Muscicapa Lathamii</u>
Robin, Pink <i>Petroica rodinogaster</i> (Drapiez, 1819 or 1820)	
Robin, Red-capped <i>Petroica goodenovii</i> (Vigors and Horsfield, 1827)	<u>Muscicapa Goodenovii</u>
Robin, Scarlet <i>Petroica boodang leggi</i> Sharpe, 1879	Red bellied Flycatcher <u>Muscicapa flabellifera</u> M. multicolor; M. erythrogastra
Rook* <i>Corvus frugilegus</i> Linnaeus, 1758	Rook
Rosella, Eastern <i>Platycerus eximius diemenensis</i> North, 1911	Non-pareil Parrot <u>Psittacus eximus</u> Rose-Hill; Rosella Parrot; Rosella Parakeet; Platycerus Eximus; Perruche omni- colore; Rosella
Rosella, Green <i>Platycerus caledonicus</i>	Common green Parrot

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(J. F. Gmelin, 1788)

Sea Eagle, White-bellied *Haliaeetus leucogaster*
(J. F. Gmelin, 1788)Shrike-thrush, Grey *Colluricincla harmonica*
strigata Swainson, 1837Sparrowhawk, Collared *Accipiter cirrhocephalus*
(Vieillot, 1817)Spinebill, Eastern *Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris*
dubius Gould, 1837Swallow, Barn* *Hirundo rustica* Linnaeus, 1758Swallow, Welcome *Hirundo neoxena* Gould, 1842Swamphen, Purple *Porphyrio porphyrio*
(Linnaeus, 1758)Swan, Black *Cygnus atratus* (Latham, 1790)Swift, Fork-tailed *Apus pacificus*
(Latham, 1802)Thornbill, Brown *Acanthiza pusilla diemenensis*
Gould, 1838Thornbill, Yellow-rumped *Acanthiza chrysorrhoa*
leachi Mathews, 1912Thrush, Bassian *Zoothera lunulata* (Latham, 1802)Wattlebird, Red* *Anthochaera carunculata*
(Shaw, 1790)Wattlebird, Yellow *Anthochaera paradoxa*
(Daudin, 1800)Psittacusverticalis; Common

Rosella Parrot

Sea Eagle; Fish Eagle

Brown thrush

Colluricincla cinerea

Common Thrush

Accipiter torquatus

Slender billed Honey

Eater; Meliphagatenuirostris; Certhia

tenuirostris

Hir. rusticaHirundo Javanica

water-hen [?]

Black Swan Cygnusatratus

H. Pacifica

New Zealand titmouse

Acanthiza pusilla

Motacilla pusilia; Dwarf

warbler

yellow rump

Acanthiza flavicerca; A.

Reguloides

Turdus varius; Brown

ground thrush

Wattled honey Eater

Anthochaeracarunculata; Meropscarunculata; M.

Carunculatus; Pie à

pendeloque; Corvus

carunculata; C.

paradoxus; Wattled bee

eater

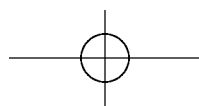
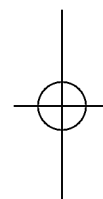
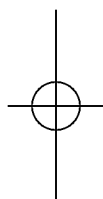
Wattle-bird; Meropscarunculatus; Corvus

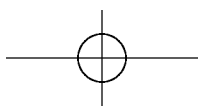
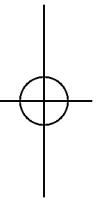
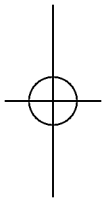
APPENDIX I

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Whistler, Olive *Pachycephala olivacea apatetes*
Schodde and Mason, 1999
Woodswallow, Dusky *Artamus cyanopterus*
(Latham, 1802)

carunculatus; C.
paradoxus
Pachycephala olivacea;
Pachycephalus olivacea
Artamus Albovillatus;
Ocypterus albovittatus





APPENDIX II
List of birds by Gunn, August 1837

(This is apparently a list of bird specimens that were in Gunn's possession or that had been shipped to England or John Grant. There is no mention of whether or not all these birds were collected in Tasmania. The M = male, F = female, and the number indicates the number of specimens.)

List of Birds. [in pencil: Augst 1837.]

	[This column is in pencil.]
No. 1. Aquila fuscosa	1 M. [Wedge-tailed Eagle]
2. Gull brown.	[probably an immature Pacific Gull <i>Larus pacificus</i> , or Kelp Gull <i>L. dominicanus</i>]
3. Shag.	[could be any of the five cormorant species found in Tasmania]
4. Miner	2. M 2 [Noisy Miner]
5. Owl. Large brown.	2. M1 F1 [probably Masked Owl]
6. Quail large	3. M1 F2 [probably Stubble Quail <i>Coturnix pectoralis</i>]
7. Quail – brush –	
8. Land Rail	1. M1 [probably Buff-banded Rail <i>Gallirallus philippensis</i>]
9. Sand Piper	2. M1 F1
10. Thrush Common	5. M3 F2 [Grey Shrike-thrush]
11. Cockatoo – black	2. M1 & F1 [Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo <i>Calyptorhynchus funereus</i>]
12. Cockatoo – white	[Sulphur-crested Cockatoo]
13. Teal [in pencil: See No 78]	[Grey Teal <i>Anas gracilis</i> or Chestnut Teal <i>A. castanea</i>]
14. Bald coot	2. M1 F1 [Eurasian Coot <i>Fulica atra</i>]
15. Pigeon – bronze winged	1. M [either Brush Bronzewing or Common Bronzewing <i>Phaps chalcoptera</i>]
16. Ground lark	[probably Australian Pipit <i>Anthus australis</i>]

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- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| 17. Parroquet - blue winged | 4. M2 F2 [probably Blue-winged Parrot <i>Neophema chrysostoma</i>] |
| 18. Parroquet – red cheeked | 5. M3 F2 [Musk Lorikeet] |
| 19. Parroquet – swift | 3. M2 F1 [Swift Parrot] |
| 20. Crow – white iris | [Forest Raven, adult] |
| 21. Crow brown iris | [Forest Raven, immature] |
| 22. Owl. Small spotted | 1. F [Southern Boobook] |
| 23. Thrush – Spotted Shouldered. | 2. M1 F1 [Spotted Quail-thrush] |
| 24. Thrush – pheasant - | 23. M 9 F13 ?1 |
| 25. Manakin – striped | 9. M5 F3 ?1 [Striated Pardalote] |
| 26. Swallow – wood | 4. M2 F2 [probably Dusky Woodswallow] |
| 27. White Throat | 2. M2. F4 – the F. sent as No 73? |
| 28. Trumpeter | [Grey or Black Currawong] |
| 29. Black Magpie | [Masked Lapwing] |
| 30. Plover – horn [?] winged – | [Grey Butcherbird] |
| 31. do. – | 3. M.1 F1 ?1 |
| 32. Laughing Jackass | 4 M2 F2 [Yellow-throated Honeyeater] |
| 33. do do | 2. F1 ?1 [Australian Magpie] |
| 34. Yellow Throat | [Swamp Harrier] |
| 35. Barita tibicen | [probably Collared Sparrowhawk] |
| 36. Hawk – Swamp. | [Tawny Frogmouth] |
| 37. Hawk sparrow | |
| 38. More Pork. | |
| 39. Gull –Macharel | |

[end of page]

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| 40. Snipe | [probably Latham's Snipe <i>Gallinago hardwickii</i>] |
| 41. Titmouse | 10. M9 ?1 [Brown or Tasmanian Thornbill] |
| 42. Robin – Scarlet | 5. M5 [Scarlet Robin] |
| 43. Do red | 7 M4 F3 & 5 F [illegible]
[Flame Robin?] |
| 44. Fantail | 4. M2 F2 [Grey Fantail] |
| 45. Wren | 2 M1 F1 [Superb Fairy-wren] |

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46. Do - ? same as 45.
47. Cuckoo – large 2. M1 F1 [**probably Pallid Cuckoo *Cuculus pallidus***]
48. Do small. 2 M2 [**probably either Shining Bronze-Cuckoo *Chalcites lucidus*, or Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo *C. basalis***]
49. Parrot – green 4. M2 F2 [**Green Rosella**]
50. Shoemaker 3 M2 F1 [**possibly a petrel or shearwater**]
51. Yellow tail 2. M1 F1
52. Parrot – roselle 2. M2 [**Eastern Rosella**]
53. Swamp Wren 2. M1 F1 [**possibly Southern Emu-wren**]
54. Swallow – Country 11. M6 F3 ?2 [**possibly the Welcome Swallow**]
55. Swallow – house 2 M1 F1 [**probably either Fairy Martin *Petrochelidon ariel* or Tree Martin *P. nigricans***]
56. Ring-head. 3 M2 F1
57. Wattle - bird 2. M & ? [**Yellow Wattlebird**]
58. Wattle – Smaller. 3. M1 ?2 [**Little Wattlebird**]
59. Summer bird 2 M2 [**Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike**]
60. Grosbeak 7 M4 F3 [**Beautiful Firetail**]
- 61 Honeysuckle – white iris 6. M2 F2 ?2 [**New Holland Honeyeater**]
62. Do. Red iris 10. M3 F7 [**possibly Crescent Honeyeater *Phylidonyris pyrrhoptera***]
- ?63. Do ?fem do[?] of 62.
64. Black Cap - 5. M2 F3 [**possibly Black-headed Honeyeater *Melithreptus affinis***]
65. [**in pencil:** Young of 64? Same as 456.]
66. Green head & rump -. 6 m3 f2 ?1
67. Diamond bird 4. M1 F3 [**Spotted Pardalote**]
68. [**illegible**] Wren 6. M4 F2
69. [**in pencil:** Brown – big head – mottled breast] 5. M3 F2
- 70.
71. Sparrow – large 12 [**possibly Dusky Robin**]

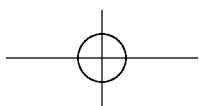
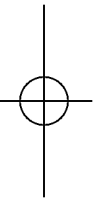
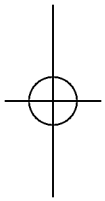
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72. Do small Lee these
4 F4
73. **[in pencil: Female of 27?]** 4. F4
74. Penguin **[Little Penguin *Eudyptula minor*]**
75. Cuckoo – smallish. **[probably Fan-tailed Cuckoo *Cacomantis flabelliformis*]**
- =
- 76 Emu **[Emu]**
- 77 **[in pencil: Forgot to note this? Merlin?]** **[possibly Australian Hobby]**
- 78 Teal **[in pencil: ?same as No13]** 2. M1 F1 **[probably Chestnut Teal]**
- 79 Pigeons – CMobronze. **[Common Bronzewing]**
- 80 Quail – black breast. **[Stubble Quail *Coturnix pectoralis*]**
- [end page]**
81. Gull – Saddleback.
82. Hawks – pigeon **[possibly Australian Hobby]**
83. Native Hen **[Tasmanian Native-hen *Gallinula mortierii*]**
84. Heron **[probably White-faced Heron *Egretta novaehollandiae*]**
85. Godwit 1 M **[probably Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*]**
86. Manakin spotted winged. 2. M1 F1 **[either Spotted Pardalote or Forty-spotted Pardalote]**
87. Reed Sparrow Swain n 3 M1 F2 **[probably Australian Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus australis*]**
88. Dabchick **[either Australasian Grebe *Tachybaptus novaehollandiae* or Hoary-headed Grebe *Poliiocephalus poliocephalus*]**
89. Melliphaga – brown headed. 4. F4 **[honeyeater]**
90. Satin Bird 1 M **[Satin Flycatcher *Myiagra cyanoleuca*]**
91. Curlew **[probably Eastern Curlew *Numenius madagascarensis*]**

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92. Booby	[Australian Gannet <i>Morus serrator</i>]
93. Duck – black.	[Pacific Black Duck <i>Anas superciliosa</i>]
94. Parrot ground	4 M2 F2 [Ground Parrot]
95. Kingfisher	3. M1 F1 ?1 [either Azure or Sacred Kingfisher]
96. Duck. Pink Cheek. Richardson.	
[remainder of column in pencil:]	
Quail Painted	2 M1 F1 [probably Painted Button-quail]
Falcon	1. M1
Hawk	2. F
Do Small	1 F.
Swift	1 M [either Fork-tailed Swift or White-throated Needletail]
Red Bill	1? [Purple Swamphen]
Olive belly – drab eye hew	1 F.
99 Bronze Cuckoo	2 M F. [either Shining or Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo]
98 Pink Robin	9. M7 F2 [Pink Robin]
Like Fun [?] Robin [illegible]	3 M2 F1
97 Cockatoo Parrot	
As [?] of [illegible] No 70	



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