

NOTES ON THE OCCURRENCE IN TASMANIA OF
THE "SOUTHERN STONE PLOVER" (*ÆDICNEMUS*
GRALLARIUS).

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The first published list of the birds of Tasmania was printed in the Proceedings of the Royal Society in Vol. III., 1854, page 142, by the Rev. T. J. Ewing, of New Town. In that list Mr. Ewing gives the numbers as follows:—Families, 28. Genera, 114. Species, 169. In 1886 Proceedings, an interesting paper, by Colonel W. V. Legge, R.A., F.Z.S., is published, entitled "Systematic List of Tasmanian Birds." In this list Colonel Legge divided the birds into the following twelve orders:—ACCIPITRES—The Hawks and Owls, Psittaci, Cockatoos and Parrots. PICARIÆ—The Cuckoos, Kingfishers, Swifts, Morepork, and Night Jar. PASSERES—The Crows, Summer Bird, Thrush, Magpie, Butcher Bird, Thickheads, Flycatchers, Robins, Wrens, Honeyeaters, etc. COLUMBÆ—The Pigeons. GALLINÆ—The Quail. FULICARIÆ—Native Hen, Coot, Rail, etc. GRALLÆ—The Snipe, Curlew, Plover, etc. GAVIÆ—The Terns, Petrels, Albatross. STEGANOPODES—The Gannet, Cormorants, and Pelican. ANSERES—The Swan and Ducks. HERODIONES—The Herons. PYGOPODES—The Grebes; and the order, IMPENNES, the Penguins, making 35 families, consisting of 186 species. Since the above was printed the following birds have been sent to the Museum, being hitherto unrecorded from Tasmania. I give them in the order as they reached me:—(1.) The Semi-palmated Goose, *Anseranas melanoleuca*, first specimen shot at the Lake River, near Cressy, June 20th, 1888. This fine bird, not quite as large as the Cape Barren goose, is found in large numbers inhabiting the swamps and lagoons of Australia. (2.) The Australian Drongo, one of the large flycatchers, *Chibia bracteata*, was shot on the East Coast in 1888. The Magpie Lark of the Colonists of New South Wales, *Grallina picata*, was secured at Stanley in the same year. During the month of May, 1892, a pair of beautiful ducks were shot at Cambridge. On examination they proved to be the Blue-billed Duck of Australia, *Erismatura australis*. Mr. North in his work, entitled "Nests and Eggs of Birds in Australia and Tasmania," page 346, writes:—"This bird is dispersed over the southern and western portions of the Continent of Australia." The latest addition to

the avifauna of Tasmania are a pair of fine specimens of the Southern Stone Plover (*Ædicnemus grallarius*). Although this is the first time this splendid example of the family *Charadriadæ* has been recorded as having been found in Tasmania, it has a very wide distribution on the Continent of Australia, being found at Derby, North-West Australia; Cape York, Rockingham Bay; through New South Wales, Victoria, South, West, and South-West of Australia. The late Mr. John Gould, in his work "The Birds of Australia," writes:—"I should suppose that there is no country on the entire face of the globe, except, perhaps, the Antarctic land, that is not inhabited by some species of this family. From Arctic America, through the course of the Andes, to Cape Horn, species occur." He further states that these birds are allied on the one hand to the Bustards, and on the other hand to the Plovers, and is the largest species of its genus yet discovered, its body being nearly the size of that of a hen pheasant. The flesh is excellent eating. The habits of this species are similar to the one found in Ceylon, *Ædicnemus scolopax*, generally found frequenting sandy plains, crowns and sides of grassy hills, and flats between the mountain ridges particularly. Gould says those that are of a rough and stony character. It is generally met with in pairs, but is occasionally seen in small companies of from eight to ten or more. It is a very shy bird, and runs with great facility, and when not disposed to take wing squats on the ground by the side of a stone or a prostrate log of wood, and there remains so close as almost to admit of being trodden upon before it will rise. Colonel W. V. Legge, in his excellent work on "The Birds of Ceylon," writes of the Ceylon species as being much smaller than the Australian are, and speaks of the Ceylon bird as being excellent in eating. The two Tasmanian specimens proved to be females. The first specimen was kindly sent me through Mr. J. McCluskey, of Spring Bay, having been shot in that locality about last April. The other was obtained at Swansea on the 28th of last month, kindly sent to the Museum by Mr. Frank Morris. Both birds were very fat, and in good plumage, although both the same sex the measurements differed. The bird from Swansea gave the following measurements:—Total length with tail, 22·5; tail, 8; wing, 12; tarsus, 7·6; mid toe, 2·2; culmen, 2·2; bill from gape, 2·5. The Spring Bay bird:—Total length with tail, 20; tail, 8·3; wing, 12; tarsus, 5·4; mid toe, 2·1; culmen, 1·8; gape, 2·3. This addition will give the number of birds known to Tasmania as 191.