

# The Emu

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"Birds of a feather."

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[PART I.]

## Note on *Rhipidura phasiana*, De Vis.

BY GREGORY M. MATHEWS, F.L.S., &c.

*Rhipidura phasiana*, De Vis, Proc. Roy. Soc. Queensland, i., p. 158 (1884); Rams., Add. to Tab. List Austr. Birds (1891); Math., Handl. B. Austr., p. 65, No. 477 (1908).

THE type of this bird was collected near the mouth of the Norman River by Mr. Kendall Broadbent. It belongs to the group of *R. albiscapa* and *R. preissi*, but differs in its pale ochreous-ashy colouration, the head being nearly of the same ash colour as the back. There is no black collar on the fore-neck, which is light ashy-grey, and the rest of the under surface is fawn-buff of about the same tint as in *R. albiscapa*. The principal difference in *R. phasiana* seems to be in the much greater extent of the white spotting on the wing coverts, which form two rows of white spots in the likeness of bands, the spots in *R. albiscapa* being rounded and terminal. In *R. phasiana* the primary coverts are also tipped with white.

The following description is taken from the typical specimen, which Mr. De Vis has kindly allowed to be brought to England by Mr. D. Le Souëf, C.M.Z.S.:—"General colour above ashy-brown, with an ochreous tinge; the wing coverts dusky-brown, with large white spots at the ends; primary coverts dusky-brown, fringed with white; quills dusky-brown, the innermost secondaries edged with white; upper tail coverts and central tail feathers dull ashy-brown, with dusky cross-bars under certain lights; remainder of tail feathers dusky-brown, with white shafts and a considerable amount of white towards the ends, which are also white, the outermost feather being white for nearly the whole length, with the base dark brown; crown of the head somewhat darker ashy than the back, with a slight evidence of a pale ochreous collar on the nape; lores conspicuous, with a faintly indicated white eyebrow; feathers below the eye and ear coverts dusky ash colour; cheeks and throat white, followed by a shade of ashy-grey on the fore-neck; remainder of under surface from the fore-neck downwards pale isabelline-buff."

This bird looks like an immature one. If so, what is it the



J. G. Keulemans, del.  
H. Grönvold, lith.

Witherby & Co

†  
**RHIPIDURA PHASIANA .**  
( WHITE - FRONTED FANTAIL ).

immature of? How many species have been discovered? Perhaps some of our brother ornithologists can tell us more.

Our artist has given us an excellent plate, but the wing coverts should be dusky-brown, not grey.

Mr. D. Le Souëf (*Emu*, iii., p. 54, 1903) has described the nest and eggs of this species.

### Bird Life on the Kermadec Islands.

BY TOM IREDALE, NEW ZEALAND.

IN 1907 an expedition was organized in New Zealand for the purpose of making collections in every branch of natural history, and otherwise observing data of use to any of the sciences, on Raoul or Sunday Island, the chief island of the Kermadec Group.

This group, situated to the north-east of New Zealand, is politically a part of the Dominion, and biologically is included in the New Zealand region. Its geographical position invited investigation, but its inaccessibility had hitherto defied any who may have cast longing eyes upon it. Though discovered as long ago as 1788, it had remained practically unexplored, and nothing was known of the lower forms of life existing thereon.

In 1854 Sunday Island was surveyed by H.M.S. *Herald*, to which vessel was attached John Macgillivray, as naturalist. The botanical collection he made was almost immediately reported upon by Sir J. F. Hooker, and important deductions drawn from it. His collections of the fauna deposited in the British Museum were, however, never worked out, and whatever notes he handed in with them were overlooked, which is a matter for regret, as Macgillivray was a keen bird observer. In or about 1870 Dr. Graeffe, a naturalist in the employ of the Godeffroys, visited the island, but records of whatever collections he made, save a few land snails, do not appear to have been published.

In 1887 the group was annexed to New Zealand, and Mr. T. F. Cheeseman, of the Auckland Museum, accompanied the Government steamer. He made a botanical survey of Sunday Island, and also took notes concerning the birds. At the end of his paper, "On the Flora of the Kermadec Islands," published in the *Transactions of the New Zealand Institute* for 1887, he added a list of birds, with short notes. In the same periodical for 1890 he published a more exhaustive article, "On the Birds of the Kermadec Islands." This latter was written as a result of further information, with bird skins and eggs, received from the settlers on Sunday Island. About the same time he handed to Captain F. W. Hutton a collection of Petrels for study; the results were published in the *Proceedings of the*