



BARNARD'S WREN—WARBLER

Malurus lamberti dawsonianus.

The Emu

Official Organ of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union.

"Birds of a feather."

VOL. XVI.]

2ND OCTOBER, 1916.

[PART 2.]

A New Wren-Warbler, *Malurus lamberti daws-sonianus* (Barnard's Wren).

BY H. L. WHITE, ESQ., M.B.O.U., BELLTREES, SCONE, N.S.W.

MR. G. M. Mathews, under the generic name of *Leggeornis*, divides the species *lamberti* into six sub-species. I propose adding another, as above.

The splitting-up of genera, after the style adopted by Mr. Mathews, appears to most of us quite unnecessary and cumbersome. What is wrong about *Malurus* that we cannot retain it? Why puzzle us by adding *Hallornis*, *Leggeornis*, *Rosina*, *Ryania*, and *Nesomalurus*? The average man has enough trouble as it is in remembering generic names; it is hardly fair to add to his difficulties. The advantages conferred by the trinomial system of nomenclature are very considerably discounted by the plan adopted by Mr. Mathews of naming such a number of so-called new genera after ornithologists and his numerous relations, friends, and acquaintances.

Some two years ago Mr. H. G. Barnard sent me a *Malurus* from the Dawson River, Queensland, which appeared to differ considerably from *Malurus lamberti lamberti*. I asked him to procure more skins, which are now to hand. Our most conservative authorities have admitted *Malurus lamberti assimilis*; my new form differs from it quite as much as it (*Malurus lamberti assimilis*) in turn differs from *Malurus lamberti lamberti*. My collection contains specimens of all but one of Mr. Mathews's sub-species, so I am in a position to make comparisons. Assuming *Malurus lamberti assimilis* to be a recognized sub-species of *Malurus lamberti lamberti*, my new form differs from it in having a more robust bill, the black band at the back of the neck wider, while the blue of the head and back is of a much more purple shade, and the chestnut shoulders are considerably darker—in fact, it is as much darker than *Malurus lamberti assimilis* as that form is darker than *Malurus lamberti lamberti*. In size it is slightly smaller than either of the others mentioned.

Of the other sub-species mentioned by Mr. Mathews, my bird most nearly approaches *Malurus lamberti mastersi*, from the Northern Territory, but is easily separable from that form by the fact that its ear coverts are of a quite distinct shade, being more like those of *Malurus lamberti bernieri*, from Western Australia.