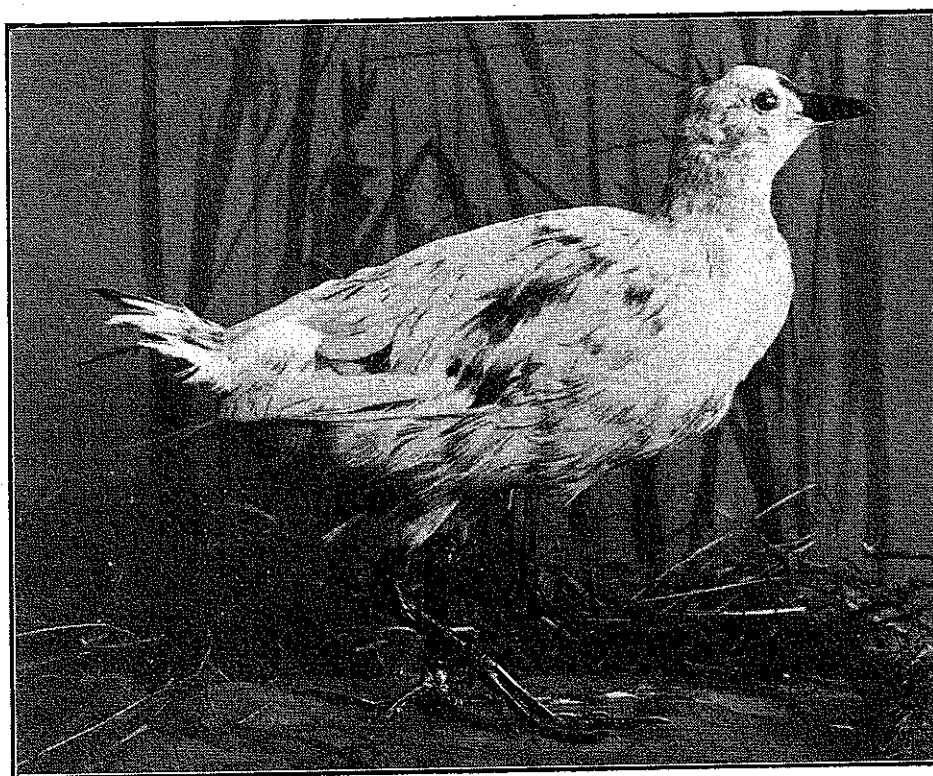


White Variety of the Black Moor-Hen (*Gallinula tenebrosa*).

By W. B. ALEXANDER, M.A., KEEPER OF BIOLOGY, MUSEUM, PERTH (W.A.)

THE specimen illustrated herewith was shot at Wanneroo, near Perth (W.A.), in March, 1916, as recorded in *The Emu*, vol. xvi., p. 42. The photograph was taken after the bird had been mounted at the Western Australian Museum. The specimen is not an albino, since a number of the feathers scattered over the



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body are almost normally dark in colour. The eye was black, the beak scarlet with yellow tip, and the legs parti-coloured green and scarlet. The colours were, however, lighter than in normal birds.

Two Australian birds have a white phase existing naturally alongside the coloured one—viz., the Reef-Heron (*Demiegretta sacra*) and the Grey Goshawk (*Astur cinereus*). The latter is specially interesting, because the white form, generally known as *Astur novæ-hollandiæ*, has a wider range than the grey bird, being found in Tasmania and North-West Australia, where the grey form is unknown. More than one observer has noted that the

White Goshawk is liable to be mistaken for a White Cockatoo, and it seems not improbable that this fact has given it an advantage by enabling it to approach small birds, which do not take it for a Hawk. It is noteworthy that the White Goshawk and White Cockatoo have almost identical geographical ranges, both being found in Tasmania, Eastern and Northern Australia, and New Guinea, and both being absent from Western Australia south of the Fitzroy River.

To return to the white variety of the Black Moor-Hen. The occurrence of such an individual in the Rail family may be regarded as of special interest in view of the former occurrence of a White Gallinule on Lord Howe Island. This bird was at one time supposed to be a species of the New Zealand genus *Notornis* (or *Mantellornis*), but Mathews showed in his "Birds of Australia" that it was really a white species of *Porphyrio*, and Iredale, who subsequently examined the only known specimen, at Vienna, confirmed this view.

Another White Gallinule, from New Zealand, is in the Liverpool Museum, and was made the type of a supposed species (*Porphyrio stanleyi*); but it is almost certain that this bird, which was subsequently also referred to *Notornis*, is only an albino specimen of *Porphyrio melanotus*. Probably the White Gallinule (*Porphyrio albus*) of Lord Howe Island furnishes us with an example of a white form which had entirely replaced the original-coloured species from which it sprang. If the Grey Goshawk should become extinct in Australia, the White Goshawk would provide a similar instance, and this may be what has actually happened in Tasmania.

The White-winged Wrens.

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I HAVE been much interested in Mr. Campbell's various notes on *Malurus leucopterus* and its allies published in recent numbers of *The Emu* (xvii., p. 177; xviii., p. 260; xix., p. 1). Of the three forms figured in the coloured plate (Plate I., vol. xix.), this museum possesses three adult males of *Malurus leucopterus* from Dirk Hartog Island, three adult males (including the type) of *M. edouardi* from Barrow Island, and 21 adult males of *M. cyanotus* from a number of localities in Western Australia and one each from South Australia and the Riverina (N.S.W.) (For the insular forms, except the type, we are indebted to Messrs. H. L. White and T. Carter.)

The names given on the plate make it appear that the three forms are considered as distinct species. Mr. Campbell, in his