



THE STRIATED GRASS-WREN
Amytornis striata

The Emu

Official Organ of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union.

"Birds of a feather."

VOL. XVIII.]

1ST OCTOBER, 1918.

[PART 2.]

Striated Grass-Wren (*Amytornis striata*, Gould).

BY A. J. CAMPBELL, C.M.B.O.U.

THERE is possibly sufficient material in the "H. L. White" and National Collections, Melbourne, to enable students to review the geographic range and colour variation of this species.

The dullest (hazel) phase appears to be the extreme eastern birds—Mallee (Victoria) and New South Wales (type locality)—while the richer-coloured (bright auburn or Sanford's brown) phase extends northward and through the great interior to western West Australia.

Of the extreme eastern birds, the true *striata* might be united with *howei* (Mathews), which is stated to differ from the former in "being red-brown above and in having the white shaft-streaks bordered by a line of black" (*Bull. B.O.C.*, xxvii., p. 100).

A pair (♂ upper fig., ♀ under fig.) of *howei*, the subject of the coloured plate, is from the "H. L. White Collection," National Museum. Gould's plate ("Birds of Australia," vol. iii., No. 29) more assimilates the richer-coloured interior form.

There is less variety among the rich auburn headed and mantled birds, which apparently come under one group, namely:—*rufa* (Campbell and Kershaw), interior of Northern Territory (*Emu*, xii., p. 274).

oweni (Mathews), interior of Western Australia (*Bull. B.O.C.*, xvii., p. 48).

whitei (Mathews), Mid-West Australia (*Bull. B.O.C.*, xxv., p. 34).

Therefore, we can, in *Amytornis striata*, recognize generally two forms, or races—*striata* proper (Eastern) and *whitei*, the more auburn phase (Interior and Western). Nestlings of the two forms can likewise be separated.

Interesting field observations on *A. striata* will be found in *The Emu*, vol. ix., by Messrs. F. L. Lawson (W.A.) and F. E. Howe (Vic.) respectively on pages 204 and 232.

Dimensions in mm. :—

Eastern—Length 160–170, wing 61, tail 80–85, tarsus 23, culmen 10.

Central—Length 165, wing 62, tail 89, tarsus 22, culmen 12.

Western—Length 165, wing 60, tail 80, tarsus 22, culmen 13.

Amytornis merrotsyi, Mellor (*Emu*, xii., p. 166), from South Australia, appears to be a robust variety of *striata*—probably a distinct species; it is not a sub-species of *textilis*, as indicated by Mathews in his "1913 List," p. 232.