



THE ALLIED BUFF-RUMPED TIT-WARBLER.
(*Geobasilus hedleyi rosinæ*.)

The Emu

Official Organ of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union.

"Birds of a feather."

VOL. XIX.]

1ST OCTOBER, 1919.

[PART 2.]

The Allied Buff-rumped Tit-Warbler (*Geobasileus hedleyi rosinae*).

By CAPT. S. A. WHITE, C.M.B.O.U., "WETUNGA," FULHAM (S.A.)

THE writer had the honour of discovering this bird in 1912, and it was from specimens sent to Mr. Gregory M. Mathews that the bird was described by him in *The Austral Avian Record* (vol. ii., No. 1, p. 9) as *Acanthiza rosinae*. Prior to 1912 the writer had observed a small dark bird resembling the *Acanthiza* genus, but no specimens were secured till the type and co-types were taken. As soon as the first example of this bird was obtained it could be easily seen that it was a new bird. Mr. Mathews was at that time describing all my new material, and most kindly named this after my "life's partner"—a worthy tribute and compliment to one who has done much for ornithology by her devotion to her husband and science, for it has been through Mrs. White's loving companionship and assistance that the writer has been able to carry out so much of his field work. I take this as a fitting time to pay this tribute to my wife for the wonderful fortitude and courage displayed by her during many of our trips into the interior, and she was by my side when the type of *Geobasileus h. rosinae* was taken.

Habitat.—Frequents, as far as known, but one type of country—i.e., samphire flats along the coast, extending from Port Adelaide along the eastern shores of St. Vincent Gulf, and along the opposite or western side, where it has been recorded by Mr. F. E. Parsons, one of our young and promising South Australian ornithologists. Never has this bird been seen to leave the salt-bordered samphire flats, although the flats may be bordered by mangroves on the sea side and by low bush on the other. Another remarkable thing is that these birds have not been found to exist in quite similar country further inland. Much of the country inhabited by this bird is under tidal influence, and during high tides only the tops of the larger samphire bushes are out of water, and when the tides go out they leave large depressions and innumerable creeks holding salt water.

Habits.—It is common to see small parties of these birds, from five to six up to twenty or more, in the winter months, diligently

searching amongst the samphire bushes or hopping smartly over the damp soil in search of insect life. I found them easily alarmed, and able to avoid pursuit by splitting up into ones and twos and doubling back in the opposite direction to that in which they were travelling. When alighting they invariably disappeared in the bushes. They pair in the late spring.

Flight.—Weak, and never sustained for long. When feeding and moving from one place to another a slow, jerky flight of a few yards is taken, and the bird dwells for a moment on hovering wings before it drops into the low bush, and immediately disappears.

Food.—Insect-life constitutes two-thirds of the food, small seeds and vegetable diet making up the balance. Upon examination of one bird's stomach it was found to contain eight large green bugs, as well as three ground-beetles and some small seeds.

Note.—When feeding, a short, low, chirping sound is made, but when resting in the low bush the bird will give a very pleasing half twittering and half warbling song, not of long duration, and very low and soft. When alarmed the bird becomes silent.

Coloration of bill, feet, and legs dark blackish-brown; iris dull white or cream colour.

The reason my notes upon this bird have not been published before can be easily understood when it is known that my field notes went on with the skins to Mr. G. M. Mathews, who has not yet dealt with this species in "The Birds of Australia."

The Eastern Palæarctica and Australia.

By ROBERT HALL, C.M.B.O.U., BELLERIVE, HOBART (TAS.)

IN 1903 I visited the delta of the Lena River* (Maps II. a, VI.), and met many of the birds that annually visit Australia. To get to this Arctic section I had to go through much interesting country, and some comparison with Australia should be of interest because of affinities and stronger contrasts. The Asiatic portion is the Eastern Palæarctic Region (Map I.), the delta mentioned having remains of mammoths and fruits of, it has been claimed, an equatorial vegetation. These show Siberia was not always a country frozen in summer a foot below the surface.

One door to this fascinating region is in Manchuria (Map I., c), where faunas and floras meet. It is there the long-haired tiger of the south joins with the reindeer of the north; the conifers and twiners touch. Millions of the Waders from Australia pass here on passage to the frozen north in the same May month as a rush of Malay-Asian birds comes in to breed in Manchuria. Most of its own bird fauna at this moment is going to leave room for the southerners.

* *Ibis*, July, 1904, p. 415.