

The Many-Coloured Cassowary: A Correction

By J. R. KINGHORN, C.M.Z.S.

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Sydney.)

Casuarius mitratus, Rothschild.

Casuarius unappendiculatus mitratus, Rothschild, Bull. Brit. Ornith. Club, XIV., 1904, p. 38. Novitatæ Zoologicæ, XIV., 1907, p. 504, pl. VI.

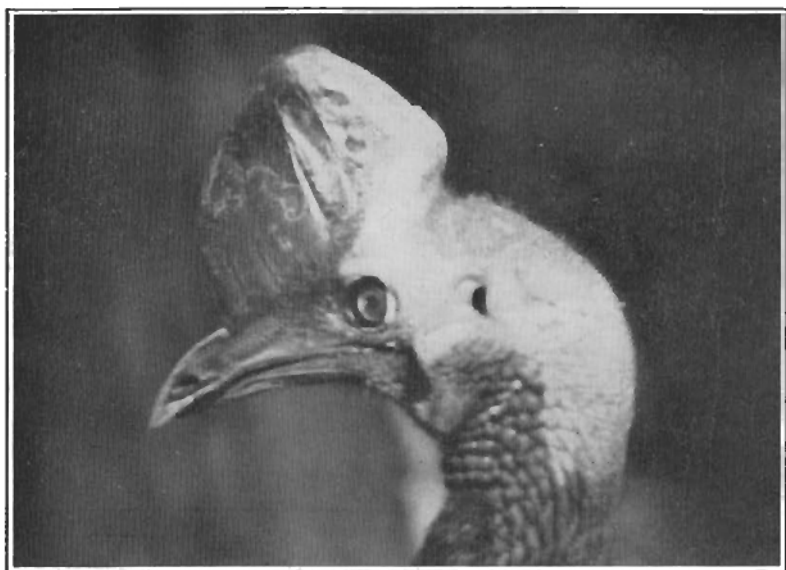
Casuarius mitratus, Rothschild, Bull. Brit. Ornith. Club, XLVII., 1926, p. 27. Hartert (note from Rothschild), Novit. Zoologicæ, XXXIV., 1927, p. 35.

Casuaris unappendiculatus multicolor, Le Souef, *The Emu*, XXXIX., 4, 1930, p. 242, pl. 39.

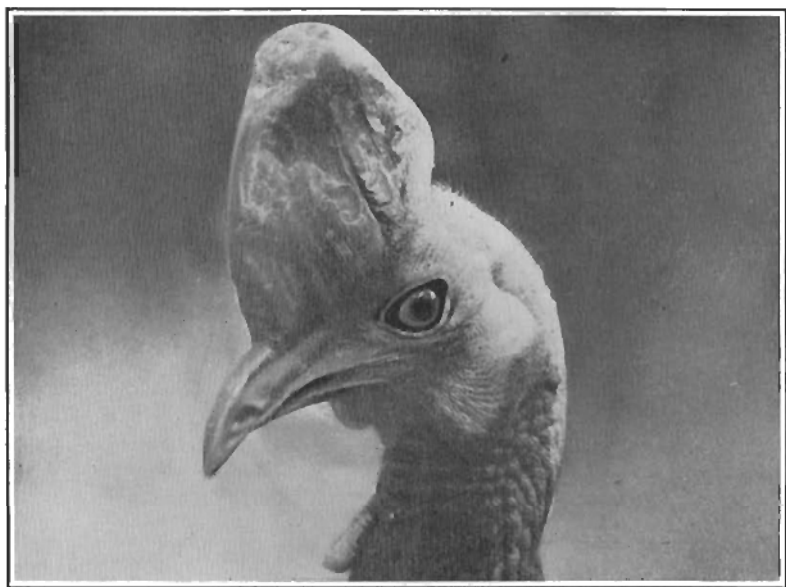
After an examination of the living specimen of the bird described as the Many-coloured Cassowary in Taronga Zoological Park, Sydney, I was convinced, some time ago, that it would prove to be identical with *Casuarius mitratus*, Rothschild. I forwarded a note to the editor of *The Emu* to that effect, to be published in the last issue (April, 1930), but unfortunately it could not then be included. Wishing to make sure of the identification of the bird, I had a number of photographs taken and a coloured sketch made by Miss E. A. King, and early in March, 1930, I sent them to the Zoological Museum, Tring, England, for examination by Lord Rothschild and Mr. Ernst Hartert. The reply from the latter confirmed my opinion and stated that Lord Rothschild, after examining the coloured sketch and photographs, was of the opinion that the Cassowary in Taronga Park is undoubtedly the *second known specimen* of his *Casuarius mitratus*.

The casque of the bird is abnormal in shape, and probably was damaged when the Cassowary was quite a chick. Abnormal casques are very common throughout the group, and several papers by eminent workers have drawn attention to this fact, one by D'Alberti and Salvadori (Ann. Civ. Mus., Genova, XIV., 1879, pp. 136-145) being worthy of note.

Casuarius mitratus (*multicolor* Le Souef) is somewhat closely related to *C. unappendiculatus rufotinctus*, as Le Souef states, and the following note by Lord Rothschild is interesting in this regard (Roth. Nov. Zool., XXXIV., 1927, p. 35):—"I think it advisable, from the large size of this bird, the purity of the turquoise blue of the head and its



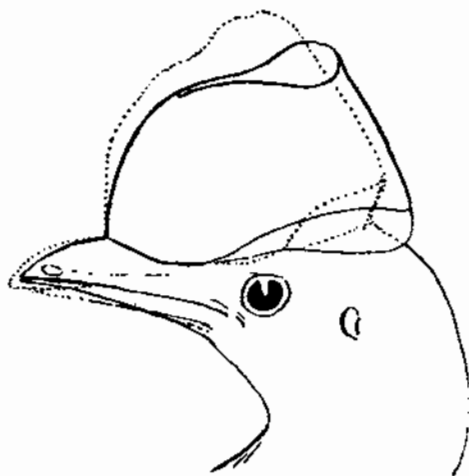
Casuarius mitratus, Rothschild.
Specimen in Taronga Zoological Park, Sydney.



Casuarius mitratus—Three-quarter view of above bird.
Photos. by K. C. McKeown.

great disparity from *unappendiculatus unappendiculatus*, to keep this form as a species, though, when we know the distribution of all the Cassowaries, it may possibly prove to be after all an extreme race of *unappendiculatus*. *C. mitratus* differs at first sight from *rufotinctus* by lacking the orange occipital patch, but it has the intensely crimson lower sides of the neck like *unappendiculatus rufotinctus*."

As *rufotinctus* is not figured it is difficult to visualise the shape of the casque from the description, but I note that the Taronga bird has an orange or brownish occipital patch. This patch, however, changes considerably, and last time I saw the bird it was greatly suffused with greyish-blue, which suggests to me that it will disappear, or that it is recurrent. When Le Souef was describing his sub-species I was not able to supply him with a figure of *mitratus*, as the volume containing it was not in the library at the time, otherwise he probably would have avoided describing the specimen as new.



— indicates outline as figured by N. W. Cayley,
R.A.O.U.

. . . . indicates outline of casque as appears from
photographs.

Casuarius unappendiculatus multicolor Le Souef =
Casuarius mitratus Rothschild.

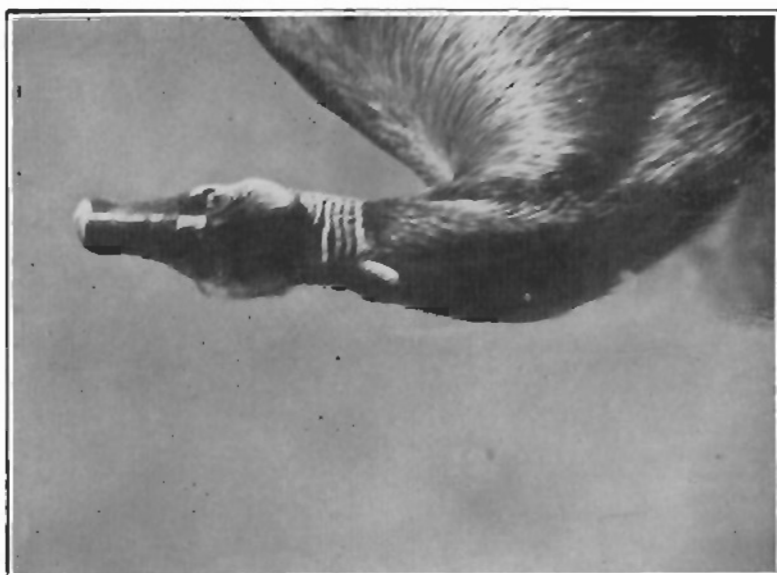
A comparison of the coloured drawing made by Mr. Cayley (*The Emu*, XXIX., pl. 39) and the sketch and photographs accompanying this paper are interesting, and it will be seen that the photographs support my contention. In the photographs the casque is about as high as long, and not longer than high, and it forms an angle with the culmen of about 90 degrees only. The damaged portion of

the apex is nodular, and the posterior angle is wide and high, not narrow and low, although, as this joins a fleshy part, it may vary from time to time. The colour of the bird changes with time, and when Miss King made her sketch early in March, it had assumed colours which were identical, with the exception of the occipital patch, with those of *mitratus* as figured by Keulemans.

Green Catbird Nesting.—Whilst walking down a particularly dense gully at Lilyvale, South Coast, N.S.W., early in November, 1929, I discovered the nest and two creamy eggs of the Green Catbird (*Ailuraedus crassirostris*). The nest was built in a bushy *eugenia* sapling, about seven feet from the ground, and, when viewed from below, bore a striking resemblance to the nest of the ringtail 'possum. The sitting bird did not attempt to leave the nest until the sapling was vigorously shaken, when she fluttered into the thick undergrowth nearby. The nest is a deep, cup-shaped structure, constructed of twigs, palm fibre and broad dry leaves. It is about five inches deep and eight inches in diameter.

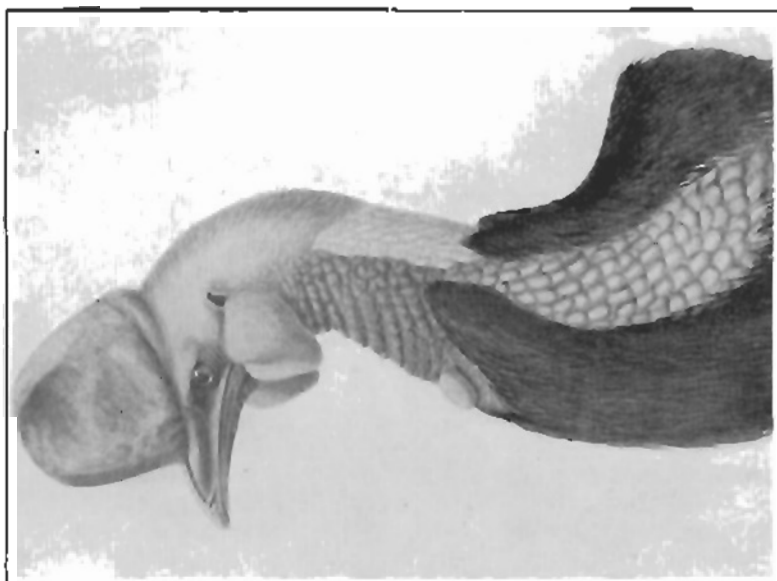
The Catbird is fairly plentiful in this locality, where it is confused with the Satin Bower-bird (*Ptilonorhynchus violaceus*). Both species are locally known as "Satin-birds," the confusion being due to the fact that the female and immature male *violaceus* are somewhat similar to the Catbird, even though the latter is much more beautiful than its bower-building relation.—A. J. MARSHALL, R.A.O.U., Penshurst, N.S.W.

Bookseller's Prices.—In a recently published catalogue of ornithological works received from a London bookseller, some extraordinarily high prices are asked for well-known works relating to Australian ornithology. A copy of Campbell's *Nests and Eggs* in 2 vols. is offered at £14/14/-. The 1st edition of Buller's *Birds of New Zealand* is listed at £18/18/-, while the 2nd edition of that work, together with the Supplement, is quoted at £50. Originally Littler's *Handbook of the Birds of Tasmania* was published at 4/-, but in this catalogue it is priced at 25/-. An incomplete copy of Perry's *Arcana*, a very scarce work in which several Australian birds and mammals are figured, is offered for £7. The amazing price of £7/7/- is asked for Newton and Gadow's *Dictionary of Birds*. Gould's *Birds of Australia* ranges from £250 to £285, according to the state of binding. These last prices are a little below those usually sought by Australian booksellers for that work, but so far as the other books mentioned are concerned the prices asked are almost double those current in this country.—D. DICKISON, R.A.O.U., Melbourne.



Specimen of *Casuarus miratus* in Taronga Park,
Sydney.

Photo. by K. C. McKeown.



Casuarus miratus, Rothschild.
Figure by Keulemans (Novit. Zool. XIV., 1907).

Photo. by G. C. Clutton.