



THE LONG-LOST EYREAN GRASS-WREN

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The history of this real *rara avis*—the Eyrean Grass-Wren (*Amytornis goyderi*)—is as unique as it is brief. There are no examples extant, other than two in the British Museum. These were collected by F. W. Andrews, one of the members of the Lake Eyre Exploring Expedition, and were forwarded to Gould in 1875 by F. Waterhouse, then director of The South Australian Museum.

The Eyrean Grass-Wren was supposed, like others of its peculiar genus, to frequent the so-called "spinifex," or porcupine grass (*Triodia irritans*) country of the great interior. As in the case of the Night-Parrot (*Geopsittacus*), it is difficult to conjecture the exact cause of disappearance of the Grass-Wren. Possibly the domestic cat gone wild has been largely responsible. However, if the rare bird still exists in parts, the Council of the R.A.O.U. hopes the accompanying reproduction of Gould-Sharpe's fine plate (*Birds of New Guinea*, Vol. III., p. 8), may assist explorers, or other observers, to identify the species and report it, should it be met with.

Stejneger (Stand. Nat. His. (Kingsley), Vol. IV., pp. 499 and 462), in 1885, altered two Australian bird's names—*Amytis* to *Amytornis* and *Atrichia* to *Atrichornis*. Almost all workers, including Sharpe, accepted the change on nomenclatural grounds. Some nomenclators, however, would force still another name for *Amytornis*, because a "nude name." That excuse can hardly apply, seeing that Stejneger wrote:—"Wren-like birds of brown plumage, with curious white longitudinal streaks"—an apt description of the genus. Even Mathews states: "Anyone can tell a Grass-Wren because of its streaked appearance" (*Birds of Australia*, Vol. X., p. 166).

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