

# EUPHEMA AURANTIA, *Gould.*

## Orange-bellied Grass-Parrakeet.

*Euphema aurantia*, Gould, in Proc. of Zool. Soc., Nov. 10, 1840.

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ALTHOUGH the present bird is not so elegant in form, nor graced with so brilliant a frontal band as several others of the group, it has received an ample compensation in the rich orange mark that adorns the under surface, a character by which it may be distinguished from every other known species. Like the *Euphema chrysostoma*, it is a summer visitant to Van Diemen's Land, and they may sometimes be found associating together; still I have obtained specimens in localities where I believe the other is never seen. I observed it sparingly dispersed in the neighbourhood of Hobart Town and New Norfolk, but found it in far greater abundance on the Actæon Islands, at the entrance of D'Entrecasteaux Channel. These small islands are covered with grasses and scrub, intermingled with a quantity of a species of Barilla, nearly allied to *Atriplex halimus*; and almost the only land-bird that enlivens these solitary spots, is the present beautiful Parrakeet: I frequently flushed small flocks of them from among the grass, when they almost immediately alighted on the barilla bushes around me, their sparkling orange bellies forming a striking contrast with the green of the other parts of their plumage and the silvery foliage of the plant upon which they rested. I made many attempts to discover their breeding places, but always unsuccessfully; as however these islands are destitute of large trees, I am induced to believe that they lay their eggs in holes on the ground, or among the stones on the shore. When I thoroughly disturbed them they flew off to the neighbouring islands, or to the main land, uttering a singular snapping note, very unlike that of their associates, the *Euphema chrysostoma*. On visiting South Australia in winter, I there found it equally abundant on the flat, marshy grounds bordering the coast, especially between the Port of Adelaide and Holdfast Bay. Specimens collected in winter and summer, and in localities distant from each other, present no difference whatever in their plumage.

It may be a casual visitor to New South Wales and Swan River, but I have not yet seen it in any collections from those parts of Australia.

Frontal band blue, margined before and behind with a very faint line of greenish blue; crown of the head and all the upper surface deep grass-green; shoulders, many of the secondaries, and outer edges of the primaries deep indigo-blue; lores, checks and breast yellowish green, passing into greenish yellow on the abdomen and under tail-coverts, the centre of the abdomen being ornamented with a large spot of rich orange; two centre tail-feathers green; the next on each side blackish brown on the inner, and green on the outer webs; the remainder blackish brown on their inner and green on their outer webs, and largely tipped with bright yellow; irides very dark brown; bill dark brown, becoming lighter on the under side; legs and feet dull brown.

The female possesses the orange spot in common with the male, although, in her case, it is neither so extensive nor so brilliant.

The figures represent a male and a female, on a branch of the Barilla plant, of the natural size.