

# EUPHEMA ELEGANS, *Gould.*

## Elegant Grass-Parrakeet.

*Nanodes elegans*, Gould, in Proc. of Zool. Soc., Part V. 1837, p. 25.—Ib. Syn. Birds of Australia, Part II.

*Gool-ye-der-ung*, Aborigines of the lowlands of Western Australia.

*Ground Parrakeet*, of the Colonists.

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ALTHOUGH closely resembling in size and form the Blue-banded Grass-Parrakeet, this species differs in several minor particulars. The green colouring of its plumage is of a more golden hue; the blue frontal band extends behind the eye, while in the former it reaches no farther than the front: the difference in the colouring of the wings of the two species is also strongly marked, that part in the one being wholly blue, while in the other all the shoulders and portions near the scapularies are green.

As far as I could learn, the present species is never seen in Van Diemen's Land, while the Blue-banded is a constant summer visitant to that island; neither is it a common bird in New South Wales, its visits to that country being quite accidental. I found it abundant in South Australia, even in the depth of winter, and I have since received its eggs from the same country, as well as from King George's Sound and Swan River; we may therefore reasonably suppose it ranges over all the intermediate country, and that it is there a permanent resident.

It appears to prefer the barren and sandy belts bordering the coast, but occasionally resorts to the more distant interior. Flocks were constantly rising before me while traversing the salt-marshes, which stretch along the coast from Holdfast Bay to the Port of Adelaide; they were feeding upon the seeds of grasses and various other plants, which were there abundant: in the middle of the day, or when disturbed, they retreat to the thick *Banksias* that grow on the sandy ridges in the immediate neighbourhood, and in such numbers, that I have seen those trees literally covered with them, intermingled with the orange-breasted species (*E. aurantia*), which, however, was far less numerous. When they rise, they spread out and display their beautiful yellow tail-feathers to the greatest advantage.

The following account of this species, as observed in Western Australia, has been sent me by Mr. John Gilbert:

“It inhabits every variety of situation, but particularly where there is an abundance of grass, the seeds of which are its favourite food: it may be generally observed in small families until the hottest part of the year, when the courses being dried up, water only remains in small pools; these birds then congregate in almost incredible numbers morning and evening. At Kojenuh, where there are several pools, and no other water for many miles round, I saw these birds in myriads; but although I shot a great many, they were nearly all young birds. Its flight is rapid and even, and frequently at considerable altitudes. The breeding season is in September and October; the eggs being from four to seven in number,” of a pure white, eleven lines long, by eight and a half lines broad.

A bar of deep indigo-blue across the forehead, bordered above by a narrow edging of light metallic blue, which is continued over the eye; lores rich yellow; head, cheeks, scapularies, back and upper shoulders greenish blue; secondaries deep blue, edged with lighter; primaries black, the first three or four edged externally with greenish blue; tail-coverts golden olive-green; throat and chest greenish yellow, passing into bright yellow on the abdomen and under tail-coverts; the centre of the abdomen tinged with orange; two middle tail-feathers greenish blue, the remainder blue at the base, and largely tipped with yellow; irides very dark brown; bill dark brown, lighter on the under side; legs and feet dull brown.

The Plate represents a male and a female of the natural size, on a branch of the *Pittosporum*.