

# GLYCIPHILA OCULARIS, *Gould.*

## Brown Honey-eater.

*Glyciphila ? ocularis*, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., Part V. p. 154 ; and in Syn. Birds of Australia, Part IV.

———— ? *subocularis*, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., Part V. p. 154 ; and in Syn. Birds of Australia, Part IV., female or young male.

*Jiñ-jo-gour*, Aborigines of the mountain districts of Western Australia.

*Brown Honey-sucker* of the Colonists.

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No one of the numerous species of Honey-eaters inhabiting Australia appears to enjoy a more universal range than the *Glyciphila ocularis* ; I have received specimens from every portion of the country yet visited ; and if it does not also inhabit New Guinea and Timor, its place is there supplied by species so very nearly allied to it, that they are not readily distinguishable from each other.

It inhabits every variety of situation : I met with it in abundance on Baker's Island at the mouth of the Hunter, and on the banks of the Namoi in the interior of New South Wales ; and Mr. Gilbert records that he found it to be equally numerous at Swan River and at Port Essington : in each and all of these various localities it was observed feeding alike on the topmost branches of the tallest gums, as well as in the low trees.

In its actions and manners it displays the usual activity of the Honey-eaters generally, creeping and clinging among the branches with the greatest ease, and particularly affecting those most laden with blossoms, into which it inserts its brush-like tongue to procure the sweet pollen : like the other species of the group, it also feeds with avidity upon all kinds of small insects.

Its powers of song are very great, the most frequently repeated note being remarkably shrill, rich, clear and distinct in tone, and the others forming an agreeable melody. While the female is sitting upon her eggs, the male sings all day long with scarcely any intermission.

Its flight merely consists of short flits from tree to tree.

The situations chosen for the site of the nest are various, but in nearly every instance contiguous to water and frequently overhanging it ; the most favourite position appears to be the side of a tea-tree, the bark of which is hanging down in tatters ; it is also often seen suspended in the most conspicuous manner from the drooping branches of the stink-wood ; and in one instance Mr. Gilbert found it attached to two slender fibrous roots, hanging from beneath a bank over a pool of water. The nest is generally formed of soft strips of paper bark or dried grasses, matted together with small spiders' cocoons or vegetable fibres, and so closely resembles the branch upon which it is placed, as to render it very difficult of detection ; it is usually lined with fine grasses, zamia wool, the soft part of the cones of the *Banksiæ*, delicate white buds of flowers, or sheep's wool collected from the bushes of the sheep-runs.

September, October and November constitute the breeding-season. The eggs, which are two in number, vary considerably in their colouring, some being pure white without a trace of spots or markings, others having a zone round the larger end formed of freckled markings of light reddish brown ; others again are thinly sprinkled with this colour over the whole of their surface, and one or two procured at Swan River were bespeckled with numerous fine freckles of bluish grey ; the average length of a number of eggs was eight lines by six lines in breadth.

Crown of the head, all the upper surface, wings and tail dark olive-brown, passing into yellowish brown on the rump and bases of the tail-feathers ; primaries and secondaries margined with wax-yellow ; immediately behind the eye a very small patch of glossy brownish yellow feathers, the anterior portion of which is silvery ; throat and chest greyish brown ; abdomen and under tail-coverts olive-grey ; irides light red ; bill dark brown ; legs and feet bluish grey ; tarsi tinged with green.

The Plate represents a male and a female of the natural size.