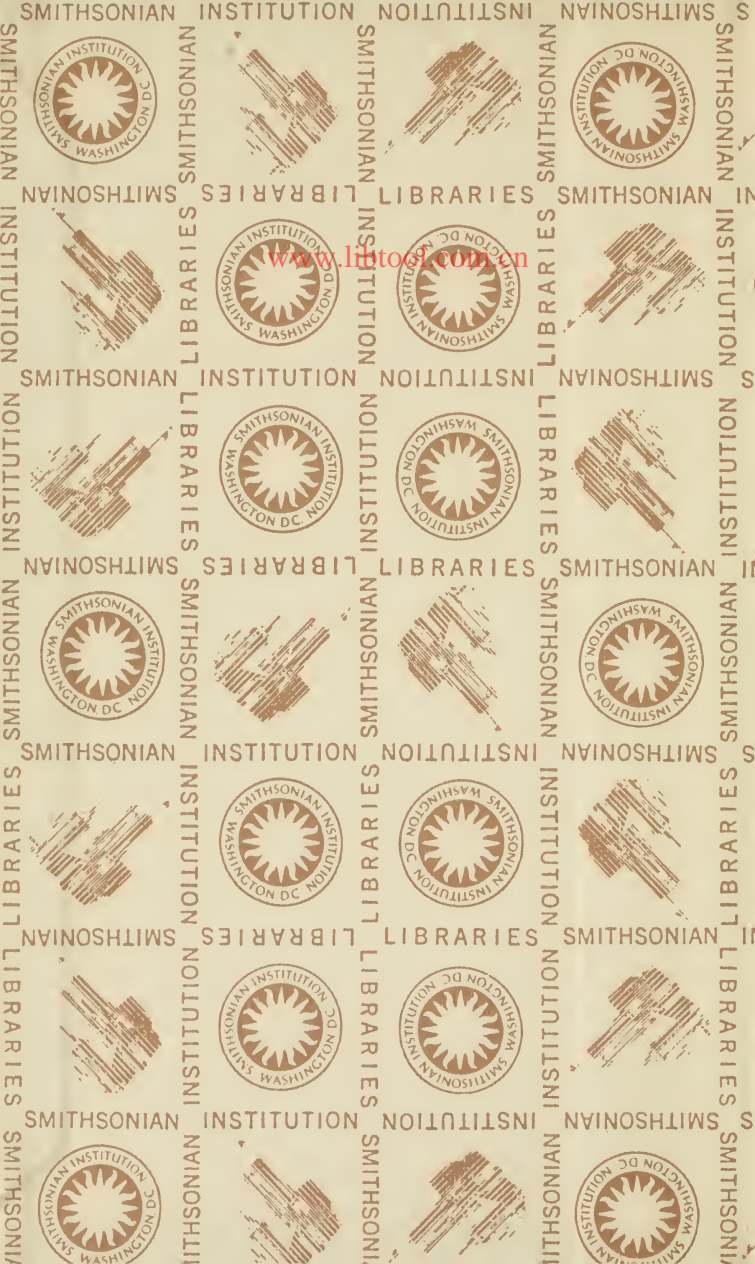


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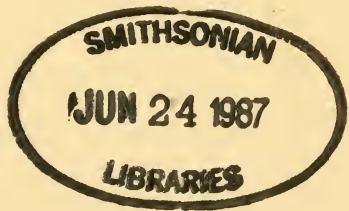
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BIRDS OF SAMOA



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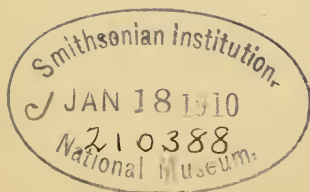
A MANUAL OF
ORNITHOLOGY
OF BIRDS
INHABITING
THESE ISLANDS

BY
MASON MITCHELL

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PREFACE

In this little work the object has been to give a general description of the birds of the Samoan Islands, with the Native, English and Scientific names.

I desire to acknowledge with thanks the valuable assistance rendered in a number of species by Julius Henniger; also to Lydkker's Royal Natural History, which work has been largely followed in the classification etc.

M. M.

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BIRDS OF SAMOA

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PE'A.

Polynesian Fruit Bat or Flying Fox.

(Pteropus kerandrenii)

In incorporating this species with birds the object has been to illustrate one of the most common and interesting forms of animal life. The bats are true mammals, bringing forth their young alive, but at present day are regarded by zoologists as neither more or less than Insectivores, specially modified and adapted for an aerial life. The number of species of bats known to science will amount to over 450, arranged in 80 genera and six families.

The Fruit-bats are largest of all and differ from other members of

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the order by their purely frugivorous habits. The name of flying fox is derived from their long fox-like faces. The species is found in India, Ceylon, Burma, the Malay Archipelago, Madagascar, the Pacific Islands, with the exception of the Sandwich Group.

Since fruit bats differ so essentially from all others, both in habits and structure, they are classified as a separate family the Pteropodidae. A senseless prejudice exists among most white people against their eating, deeming them unclean. In reality their food consists only of fruit such as young cocoanuts, mangoes, ripe breadfruit and the bud as well as the ripe banana. The flying fox when cooked is equal to squirrel or rabbit and not unlike in its flavour. When feeding, it hangs by one

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foot only, and takes the fruit it is about to eat with the other, seizing it by driving in its claws like a fork, and not by a grasping action.

PE'A PE'A VAI.

New Zealand Bat.

(Mystaceps tuberculantus)

A small species less than 3 inches in length. Upper parts black and underneath a lighter shade. It feeds on flies and insects.

LUPE.

Lavender Neck Fruit Pigeon.

(Carpophaga Pacifica)

Subgenus Globicera.

The genus may be divided into 7 subgenera, founded on the general

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colour of the plumage which is mostly metallic green on the upper parts, the tail uniform in colour, and the flight feathers normal in shape. Upper mandible black, slightly curved with flesh nob at base. Head, neck and breast lavender. Back, wings and tail greenish blue. Under coverts of tail cinnamon brown. Feet coral red. Tail feathers 14. The Samoans call the old bird Matuaisu. It has the flesh nob at the base of the beak.

FIAUI.

Big Black Fruit Pigeon.

(Family Carphaginae).

Subgenus Globicera.

It has the swollen fleshy nob at the base of the upper mandible. It is a giant in size measuring 17 inches in

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extreme length. The beak is $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches, red with the fleshy nob at the base. The feathering on the lower mandible is white, extending back as far as the eye. The crest cinnamon. General plumage blueish-black, and 14 tail feathers.

MANUTAGI

(The young bird, Manufili.)

Purple Crested Painted Pigeon.

(Ptilopus fasciatus).

This family of the Painted Pigeons is divided into 5 genera, the largest group of which is the *Ptilopus* containing over 70 varieties.

They are a small, brilliantly-coloured species, with their plumage generally variegated with patches of yellow, mauve, green and blue,

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many of them being birds of great beauty. The adult Manutagi has a mauve patch on the head, body, wings and tail greenish-yellow, with the breast a yellowish-white.

The Manufili has a green crest with white patch extending back from the lower mandible. General plumage green margined with yellow, under tail coverts yellow, beak and feet black.

MANUMA.

(The young bird, Manulua.)

Purple Belted Painted Pigeon.

(*Ptilopus perousei*).

Belongs to the same genera as the Manutagi but lighter in general

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plumage. The beak olive with a purple patch on the head, and spotted with same on the breast. Neck and upper parts yellowish white. Wing coverts yellow, 1-2-3 and 4 primaries green. Upper tail coverts yellow, under tail coverts purple, tail light grey with yellow edge. Legs and feet slate grey and eyes chrome yellow.

TUTAUTIFA

(Male)

TUAIMEO

(Female).

Brown Ground Pigeon.

(*Phlegoenas stairi*).

Family Peristeridae.

In contradistinction to the above pigeons which may collectively be

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called the tree-pigeons, this family live much on the ground. There are more than 20 species in the family.

The Brown Ground Pigeon's general plumage is brown. Head and breast light cinnamon. Eyes dark brown, and upper parts dark brown, legs and feet purple red.

MANUMEA,

(The young bird, Umauma.)

The Tooth-Billed Pigeon.

(*Didunculus strigirostris*).

This rare species is only found on the Samoan Islands. It possesses a remarkably heavy powerful bill

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which is orange in colour and overlapping at the point similar to a parrot. The head, mantle, and chest are metallic blackish green, while the rest of the upper-parts are chestnut, and the under-parts brownish black, and the legs and feet reddish ochre.

Mr. Whitmee, formerly of these islands has written the following statements of this bird :

“I believe the *Didunculi* now almost invariably roosts upon the high branches of trees instead of upon low stumps or the ground as formerly. Hence I infer the bird is now increasing in numbers whereas it formerly was very rare and well nigh extinct.”

To this theory I have the honor to disagree and take exception. From all I can learn from old Sa-

In a letter dated Mch. 23, 1911, he says:
"Since publishing the book Birds of Samoa in 1909, and
convinced after shooting 12 manna-eaters, my statement taken
from the Samoans was erroneous + + + Universally, I have
found them on the ground or if ^{the} in trees never more than
30 feet from the ground and on bare twigs. If flushed
from the ground they fly but a short distance and alight
on low branches. They are stupid not wary and
easily shot when found." etc.

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moans, conversant with the habits of the *Didunculus*, they agree that within their knowledge the bird never roosted on the ground or stumps of trees, but only in the highest tops of trees where it is found at present.

It is hardly probable that if this species ever roosted and nested on the ground, it should for some unknown reason change its habitation to tree tops.

My belief in the matter is the former scarcity was due to the unrestricted use of fire arms enjoyed by the natives at that time, as, owing to the roughness of the country, they are about the only ones who shoot wild pigeons. Whereas, since the Samoan Islands of Savaii and

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Upolu became German possessions, the natives have had their guns taken away, and powder and shot can seldom be sold to them. In consequence this class of game birds has increased. The *Didunculus* is often spoken of as the Dodo or Dodo Pigeon. The Dodo and Solitaire, both now extinct, were flightless and their colour and structural formation different. The Dodo was of massive build many times the size of the *Didunculus* and differing widely in its habits and food.

Leguat, who visited the island of Rodriguez in 1691 found the Solitaires abundant and has given a good account, while of late years numerous bones have been discovered showing they were akin to the Dodo in many respects but larger.

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**TULI-ATAGALOA. TULI-ALO-
MALALA. TULI-OLOVALU.**

These names are applied by the Samoans to both the plover and snipe families.

There are two sub-species of the Goodwit plover, one with a brown mottled back not unlike the English or Wilson snipe (*Limosa rufa*); the other a smooth slatish back with white breast, this latter variety feeds on fish to an extent which greatly mars its flavour.

The snipe belongs to the Turnstone family (*Streptilas interpres*) so named from its habit of turning over small stones with its bill in quest of food. This variety is sweeter meated than either of the plover. The Turnstones have long been associated with the plovers,

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but in defining them as a sub-family
of the snipe, enables classifying
them with greater ease and
exactness.

WIMBREL

(sub family of curlew)

(Numenius minutus)

Is the smallest of the Wimbrel or Curlew families. As they are not indigenous to Samoa their appearance is very rare, probably being driven to the islands by a heavy storm in their migratory flights from Eastern Siberia, where they breed, to their winter habitation in Malayana and Australia.

The plumage is pale brown in the upper, shading into white on the

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wing coverts, each feather having a dark-brown centre. The under parts white, tinged on the neck and breast with pale brown. The rump and tail coverts white. Beak dark brown, 4 inches long and curved and the legs and feet a slaty grey.

A specimen was shot in Samoa in 1902. Being so rare the Samoans have no native name for them.

TOLOA.

The Blue Wing Teal Duck. Green Wing Teal Duck.

(Querquedula discolor).

(Querquedula carolinesis).

Of the teal family there are several varieties comprising Blue Wing, Green Wing, Summer teal, and Cinnamon teal.

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In size they are small, the Blue Wing being larger than the other varieties. They are excellent eating and compare favorably with any of the duck family. Their plumage is a dark mottled brown with either a green or blue patch on the wing coverts.

MANUALI'I.

The Lobed Toe Coot.

(Porphyrio samoensis)

Family Porphyrio.

In habits it resembles both the duck and waders, being able not only to swim and dive well, but to thread its way through grass and reeds with swiftness.

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The colour is brilliant. The beak a coral-red, the upper parts, throat, chest and under parts a purpleish blue with a white patch under the tail coverts. Wing coverts purple, legs and feet a light red and the toes lobed not webbed as are the other species of this family.

TUI MANUA.

Night Heron.

(Nycticorax griseue)

The species has only been found on the island of Manua of the Samoan group. The crown of the head, nape, and upper back are blackish green, the under parts pale yellow. The head plumes in the adult pure white. The eye purple

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red, the beak black with a yellow base, and the legs and feet yellow.

They sleep in daytime and feed during the evenings and nights. Their food consists of aquatic insects, worms and small fish. The genus has world wide distribution ranging from Europe to the South Seas.

MATU'U.

The Heron.

(Ardea sacra)

There are some 70 species of this family, met with in all parts of the globe and at almost all habitable elevations.

In the same order of Herodiones are the Bitterns, Storks, Cranes and Ibises.

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PUNA'E.

Rail.

(Pareudiastes pacificus).

This species belongs to the common rails and is only found on the island of Tutuila. It is nearly extinct as no specimens have been found for many years.

ATAFA.

Frigate or Man of War Bird.

(Fregatus Minor).

There are two varieties of this family, the Great Frigate Bird (*Fregatus aquila*) which inhabits the warmer regions of the Atlantic, Indian, and Pacific Oceans, and the lesser Frigate Bird (*Fregatus minor*) which is confined to the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

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The bird is characterised by its slender body, short and thick neck, long and powerful hooked beak, elongated and sharply-pointed wings, and a long forking tail.

The plumage of the adult male is brownish black, with metallic green and purple on the head, neck, back, breast and sides, and shaded with grey on the wings. The beak is light blue at the base, white in the middle, and dark horn colour at the tip, the throat orange-red in the breeding season, and the foot carmine-red above and orange beneath.

The Frigate Bird is called "The Son-of-the-Sun." It is one of the most swift of the pelagic birds, and spends much of its time far out at sea. It has been seen hiding in the lee of the cocoanut trees and sud-

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denly flying out and seizing a tern or gannet in mid-air by its tail and violently shaking it until the captor disgorged the fish it had just captured, and darting down seizing it before the fish had reached the water.

In nesting they are fearless of man; in Nassau Island they have been seized by the neck and lifted off their nests.

TAVA'E.

The Tropic Bird or Boatswain.

(Family Phaethontidae).

Are represented by 3 species, and in size are somewhat inferior to the gulls.

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The best known and most widely distributed is the red-beaked tropic bird (*Phaethon aethereus*).

In the adult the plumage is white, and the two long tail feathers are white. The beak is coral-red, the eye brown, the leg yellow, and the web and toes black.

The yellow-beaked tropic bird (*Phaethon flavirostris*) differs from the former species by its yellow beak and the middle long tail feathers being red while the remainder of the body is white.

The two species frequent in great numbers around the islands of the South Pacific and nest in holes in the rocks.

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MANUSINA. GOGOULI.

FUA'O.

Terns and Noddies.

The Gogouli, Dark Tern (*Sterna longipernis*). The crown of the head is black and the body greyish black with the tail feathers pointed.

The Manusinas, White Tern (*Gygis alba*) is in structural formation and size similar but white.

The Fua'ō, Common Noddy (*Anous stolidus*). This bird belongs to a sub-family of the terns, and is characterised by the short middle toe, the strong decurved beak, and by the fourth pair of the tail feathers, counting from the right hand side, exceeding all others in length.

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There are 11 genera recognised in the tern family and are distributed in all the oceans. In Samoa it nests in the tree-tops on the mountains.

TI'OTALA.

Wood Kinghunters.

(*Halcyon recurvirostris*).

(*Halcyon sacra*).

This family have been called the King Hunters, to distinguish them from the Kingfishers, inasmuch as many of the species do not fish at all. The genus contains upwards of 60 species.

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The *Halcyon recurvirostris* eats but little fish, its principal food consists of small lizards, catapillars, insects and flies. Its length over all 8 inches with beak $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches. The crest greenish blue with a border of black and patches of white in front of the eye. The upper neck extending to under wing coverts and sides of breast yellowish white. Under neck and breast white, while top of wings, back and tail are blue. According to the Samoan belief when this bird cries during the day rain will fall that night.

The *Halcyon sacra* of the island of Tutuila is similar to the Upolu specimen in markings but larger, it is also found in Tahiti, Tonga and Fiji. It is a saying of the Samoans of Upolu when a person is noisy

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that they are chattering like a Tutu-
ila Tiotala.

VE'A.

The Bustard-Quail or Hemipodes.

(*Turnicidae taigur*).

The little bustard-quails (*Turnicidae*), usually included among the game birds, while in some respects they approach the pigeons, their affinities with the Rails are undoubted.

There are 21 members of the typical genus distributed over Africa, Asia, Arabia, Madagascar,

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Malay Archipelago and South Sea Islands.

The species found in Samoa in general tone are greyish brown, the upper parts are barred and marked with black, many of the feathers being margined on the sides with whitish buff, while the breast is buff barred with black, and the underparts rusty buff.

It may be met with in high grass or in the bush. It comes into inhabited places during the morning and evening but returns into the thick bush during the middle of the day.

Among the Samoans the belief is current, that when this bird cries near a house, death will come to some of its people.

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SEGA'ULA.

Red Headed Green Parrot.

(Lorius solitarius)

Indigenous to the Fiji and Tongan Islands, but captive birds are brought to Samoa, where the red feathers of the head, neck, and breast are used extensively in decorating mats.

The Parrot tribe which includes the Macaws, Cockatoos, Love-Birds, Lories and Parraquets number over 500 species and among which are some of the most highly coloured specimens of bird life.

SEGA SAMOA.

Samoan Loriquet.

(Coriphilus australis—Family Loriidae.)

The Loriquets are smaller than

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the Lories, with tail-feathers elongated and gradually tapering to a more or less point.

The prevailing colour of the plumage is green, with purple crest and red throat, and more or less same colour on the breast.

The upper part of the tail feathers green, while the under parts are yellow. The coverts of the wings green and the feathers black with a green outer edge.

The family of Loriidae comprises several genera, and are a sub-division of the parrots. While they are honey suckers they also partake of soft fruits and berries and small insects.

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IAO.

Honey—Eater.

(*Ptilotis carunculata*)

(Family *Meliphagidae*.)

Distinguished from other families by their long extensile tongue, adapted for extracting the honey from flowers upon which they partially exist.

The beak is long and slender, with upper mandible curved. The group is confined to Australasia and the islands of the South Pacific. The head is brown with a yellow patch below the eye. The under-parts a dull yellow, blending into a darker shade on the back. The wings and tail dark brown edged with yellow. The Iao feeds upon ripe berries, flies and other insects, and the honey of certain wild blossoms.

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SEGASEGAMAU'U.

Honey Creeper.

(*Myzomela nigriventris*)

(*Family Meliphagidae.*)

The above specimen is little larger in size than the humming bird. The beak is long, slightly curved and black; the head and neck crimson with patches of same on the back extending to the tail coverts. The upper parts of the wings and tail a glossy black, and the legs and feet black.

MOSOMOSO.

Honey Eater.

(*Myzomela jugularis*)

Crest red, upper plumage black, wings black with white patch on the

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coverts, with yellow border on wing feathers. Base of under mandible red, throat yellow and breast white. Tail black and tipped with white. Beak, legs and feet black.

MA'OMA'O.

Honey Eater.

(Leptornis samoensis)

Head and neck black with yellowish streak on both sides running back from the mouth; beak black and slightly curved; tongue forked and long; back, wings and tail dark olive; breast black shading into an olive hue at the legs; feet black; metatarsus yellow; tail rounded with 10 feathers.

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VASAVASA.

Shrike.

(*Pachycephala albifrons*)

Family Laniidae.

Head black with small yellow patch at base of the upper mandible. Back, wings and tail black. Breast and under tail coverts bright yellow; legs and feet black. Tail square with 12 feathers.

MITI-SINA.

Shrike.

(*Lalage pacifica*)

The male has the crown and ear coverts black, the forehead white, the wing and upper-parts ashy brown, the cheeks and throat black

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tipped with white, the sides of the
breast black, and the remainder of
the lower-parts white.

LATULATU.

Shrike.

(Pachycephala flavifrons)

Similar to the Vasavasa, with
the exceptions of being yellow on
the breast and not on the neck which
is a greyish yellow, also the beak
and wings are longer. Above the
eyes are two yellow spots.

TUTUMALILI.

The Black Thrush.

(Merula samoensis)

The birds of this genus are true

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thrushes in all structural characters, and differ from other orders of the family by their plumage. The above specimen is entirely black, with yellow beak, legs and feet. Its song lacks the compass and variety of the Song Thrush, but nevertheless is powerful and well sustained. No fewer than 16 of this genus are found in North and South America, while 12 inhabit Australia and the South Sea Islands, and 14 are found in the Oriental region, while 9 species inhabit Northern Asia and Europe.

FUIA.

Glossy Starling.

(Sturnoides atrifusca.)

(Family Lamprocolius)

The beak is equal to the length of

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the head and somewhat crow-like in shape. The general plumage is black with a mottled appearance.

MITI-VAO.

Starling.

(Aplonis brevirostris)

Head black, upper mandible slightly curved. Back mottled black. Throat, breast and under wing coverts mottled greyish white. Legs and feet black, tail feathers 12.

SE'U.

Clouded Flycatcher.

(Rhipidura nebulosa.)

General plumage greyish-black with double row of brown stripes on

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wings extending across the end of back. Tail feathers ten. Legs and feet black.

TOLAIFATU.

Flycatcher.

(Myiagra albiventris.)

Upper plumage slate-black, bill glossy slate, throat and breast cinnamon, lower parts white, feet ochre.

TIO.

Flycatcher.

(Myiagra castanieiventris.)

Head and upper plumage black,

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upper breast cinnamon brown blending into a lighter shade on lower parts. Under tail coverts white, tail black above and grey underneath. Beak, legs and feet slate colour.

TAGI-TAGI.

Flycatcher.

(*Petroica pusilla.*)

Head black with white patch at base of upper mandible. Wings black with white on the coverts. Upper breast red shading into white at lower tail coverts. Tail feathers 10, black and streaked with white, square at end, and legs and feet black.

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SEGA-VAO.

Finch.

(*Amblyura cyanovirens.*)

Crest deep red, upper mandible black, lower mandible yellow, general plumage greenish blue and tail deep red, legs and feet slate-black.

ALEVA.

Koel. (Sub species of the cuckoo)

(*Eudynamis taitensis.*)

(*Family Cuculidae.*)

The koels are found only in the Indian and Australian regions, two species being peculiar to the former and four to the latter. They are distinguished from the true cuckoos

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by having a much rounder and stouter bill.

Head and back light brown, wings and tail dark brown. The latter has ten feathers and is wedge shape. Breast light with brown markings. Full length of adults fourteen inches. They are similar in habits to the cuckoo, utilizing the nests of other birds instead of building their own, and are the bitter enemy of the Iao.

PE'APE'A.

Swift.

(*Collocalia spodiopygia*.)

(Family *Micropodidae*.)

This family is often confounded with the swallows, which they resemble in general appearance, but in

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the former there are ten tail feathers in number while the swallows have twelve.

The beak is short and wide, the general plumage black, the under-neck and breast sooty grey. The wings long and the tail square.

LULU.

Owl.

(Strix flammca)

Of the two families of owls, the Strigidae and Bubonidae, containing many varieties, the Samoan specimen belongs to the former and is classed as the Barn Owl. The genus is world wide in its habitation.

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Its food is chiefly of small mammals, rats and mice, also birds, reptiles, fishes and insects.

PIPI.

Turkey.

(Meleagris americana.)

Three distinct species constitute the group of this family. The specimens in Samoa, probably imported from the British Colonies or America, belong to the above classification, while the *Meleagris gallopavo* recognised by the broad white tips to the upper tail coverts, is only found in Northern Mexico.

The *Meleagris ocellato*, of Guatemala, Yucatan, and British Hondu-

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ras, is the handsomest member of the group. Each of the tail feathers being ornamented with a greenish blue eye-spot, while the body feathers are golden or bronze-green.

Turkeys are indigenous to America and were first brought to Europe in 1585 by Sir Walter Raleigh.

MOA-AI-VAO.

Bush Fowl.

Gallinaceous or domestic fowls that have run wild in the bush. They afford good sport as they rise quickly and are strong flyers.

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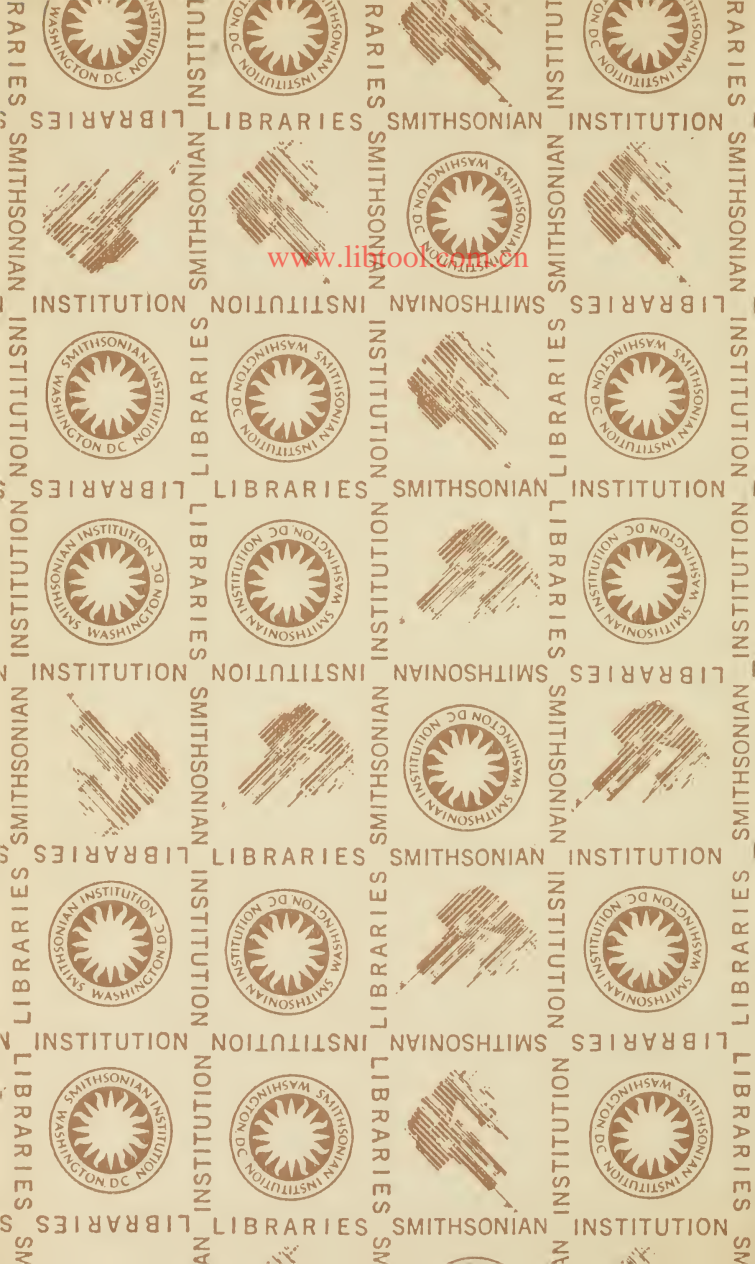
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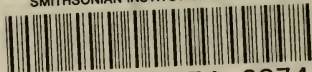


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