

NOTE UPON THE NIDIFICATION OF *TURNIX*
MELANOTUS, Gould.

Small Black-spotted Turnix.

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OF the three small species of *Turnix* found in Australia, two of them, *T. velox* and *T. pyrrhothorax*, give decided preference to the open grassy plains of the inland districts, while *Turnix melanotus* is essentially an inhabitant of the low marshy ground and damp scrubs contiguous to the eastern coast of Australia. Near Sydney the latter species is not uncommon in the neighbourhood of Randwick, Botany, and La Perouse, localities also frequented by the Least Swamp Quail, *Excalfatoria australis*, and both species, shot at Botany on the same day, have been recently presented to the Museum.

The nidification of *Turnix melanotus*, similar to that of other members of the genus, is a scantily grass-lined hollow in the ground, sheltered by a convenient tuft of grass or low bush. The eggs are four in number for a sitting; specimens obtained on Mr. Boyd's plantation on the Herbert River, Queensland, on the 13th of December, 1890, are oval in form, tapering somewhat sharply to the smaller end, the ground colour is of a greyish-white, and is almost obscured with minute freckles of pale umber-brown, while sparingly distributed over the surface of the shell are conspicuous spots and blotches of dark slaty-grey, which in some places approach an inky-black hue. Length (A) 0.97 x 0.73 inch, (B) 0.98 x 0.73 inch. These eggs can easily be distinguished from those of *T. velox*, by being much darker and the surface of the shell bright and glossy. During the same month, eggs of *Excalfatoria australis* were procured in the same locality. The latter species, Mr. J. A. Boyd informs me, is very common on the Herbert River.