

DESCRIPTION OF THE EGGS OF THE KAGU, *RHINOCHETUS
JUBATUS*, VERREAUX ET DES MURS.

By ALFRED J. NORTH, C.M.Z.S., Ornithologist.

(Plate I.)

RECENTLY Mr. H. E. Finckh presented to the Trustees two eggs of the Kagu that were laid in confinement at Mosman, Sydney. Two of these birds, which he received from New Caledonia over three years ago, started at the beginning of April, 1902, to form a nest of dried twigs and leaves at the bottom of a box in their aviary, and on the 6th April an egg was laid. This was sat on for three weeks, one bird occasionally relieving the other, from which Mr. Finckh concluded they were a pair, but as there was no sign of a chick in the egg it was removed. Another egg was deposited in a small wooden shelter-house in their aviary on the 1st of May, twigs and leaves afterwards being collected and placed around it; the birds sat closer on this egg, but without any success. A third egg was laid on the 25th May, and sat upon for three weeks, but with a similar result. One egg, presented, unblown, showed no trace of fertilisation; neither has Mr. Finckh noticed any actions of the birds, which are alike in plumage, that would furnish undoubted proof that they were male and female.

Of their habits, Mr. Finckh writes:—"From personal observations of the two birds I have had in confinement for over three years, the Kagu is fond of seclusion, but withal the one I regard as the male shows fight at the slightest provocation. Holding itself quite erect, with spread wings, pouting breast, raised crest, and tail brought almost between its legs, the aspect of the bird appears very stately when prepared to give battle. A peculiarity shewn when fighting is that it only attacks its opponent low down, so that when one holds a hand to the height of its body, it misses aim, but if held near the ground it administers a severe nip. When quarreling over a delicacy, the two birds peck at each other's legs."

One egg is oval, the other a blunt ended ellipse in form, the shell being close-grained, smooth, and slightly lustrous. Before they were emptied of their contents, their ground colour was of a warm buffy-brown, but now the shells are dry they are of a uniform pale brown, over which is distributed small dots, blotches, and broad, irregular-shaped longitudinal, and oblique streaks of