



HALCYON STICTOLEMA.

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Spotted-throated Kingfisher.

Cyanalcyon stictolæma, Salvad. Ann. Mus. Civic. Genov. ix. p. 20 (1876).—Id. op. cit. x. p. 304 (1877).—

D'Albert. & Salvad. op. cit. xiv. p. 51 (1879).

Halcyon nigrocyanea, D'Albert. (nec Wallace), Ibis, 1876, p. 360.

Cyanalcyon nigrocyanea, D'Albert. (nec Wallace), Ann. Mus. Civic. Genov. x. pp. 10, 19 (1877).

VERY similar to the *Halcyon nigrocyanea* of North-western New Guinea, in my opinion the present species is nevertheless quite distinct. Nobody examining the two species could, I believe, hesitate to separate them, notwithstanding the fact that Signor D'Albertis, who discovered this new Kingfisher in South-eastern New Guinea, considered it to be precisely the same as *Halcyon nigrocyanea*, a bird he had killed himself in North-western New Guinea.

The present species is like *Halcyon nigrocyanea*, but differs at a glance by the want of the white band across the breast, and by having the throat almost entirely blue, mottled with white bases to the feathers. The female bird is nearly the same as the female of the allied species; but *H. stictolæma* has much less white on the throat and abdomen, while the pectoral band is much broader. The habitat of the species is, as far as is known at present, only the vicinity of the river Fly, where Signor D'Albertis obtained one specimen during his first expedition in 1875. On his second excursion, in 1877, he managed to procure six examples, which are fully described by himself and Count Salvadori in the fourteenth volume of the 'Annali' of the Civic Museum of Genoa. Three of these were most kindly lent to me by Signor D'Albertis for the purposes of the present work; and I have to acknowledge my obligations to this gentleman for his assistance on this and other occasions.

Mr. Sharpe, who has seen the specimens, has supplied me with the following descriptions:—

"*Adult male*. General colour above black, the head deep ultramarine, the sides of the crown more brilliant ultramarine inclining to cobalt, forming an eyebrow which borders the blue crown and encircles the nape; wing-coverts ultramarine, the lesser ones slightly more brilliant; quills blackish, externally washed with dull blue; scapulars black, washed with blue at the ends; lower back cobalt, deepening into ultramarine on the longer feathers of the rump; upper tail-coverts deep ultramarine; tail-feathers dark blue; lores, feathers round the eye, cheeks, ear-coverts, sides of neck, sides of breast, flanks, thighs, vent, and under tail-coverts black, the latter tipped with ultramarine; chin black; throat ultramarine mottled with white bases to the feathers; breast and abdomen rich ultramarine; under wing-coverts and axillaries black; edge of wing greenish blue; quills dusky blackish below, ashy along the inner web. Total length 9 inches, culmen 2·25, wing 3·25, tail 3, tarsus 5.

"*Adult female*. On the upper surface entirely like the male, but differs below in having the throat and abdomen white, separated by a broad pectoral band which is ultramarine in the middle, black at the sides; sides of body and flanks black; under wing-coverts black, with a band of white running down the middle, many of the median and greater under wing-coverts being tipped with white; under tail-coverts as in the male.

"*Young*. Resembles the old female, but is much more dusky black, the crown being also black, with an ultramarine eyebrow; wing-coverts black, tipped with blue; lower back bright ultramarine, but not so brilliant as in the adults; sides of face and sides of body, vent, and lower abdomen dusky black; throat dull white, the feathers obscured with dusky blackish tips; centre of abdomen pale ochraceous brown, separated from the throat by a broad blackish band, the central feathers washed with blue; under tail-coverts blackish, tipped with blue."

Count Salvadori describes some of the males as having a residue of rusty feathers on the abdomen, the remains of the young plumage. The adults, according to Signor D'Albertis, have the bill black the feet clear plumbeous, and the iris chestnut-brown; and in the younger birds the iris is black, and the feet are very dusky plumbeous. The food of the species consists of Crustacea.

The figures in the Plate represent an adult male, adult female, and a young female, drawn to about the natural size from three of the typical specimens, lent to me by Signor D'Albertis.



Gould, John and Sharpe, Richard Bowdler. 1880. "Halcyon stictolæma, Spotted-throated Kingfisher [Pl. 58]." *The birds of New Guinea and the adjacent Papuan islands : including many new species recently discovered in Australia* 4(XI), -. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.322843>.

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