

Supplement to the Monograph of the Indian and Malayan species of Cuculidæ, or Birds of the Cuckoo family, published in Vol. XI, pp. 898, 1095, et seq. By EDWARD BLYTH, Curator of the Asiatic Society.

Having received some annotations on my paper on *Cuculidæ* from Mr. Jerdon, and been favoured by Dr. McClelland with the loan of the *Zoologie du Voyage de M. Bélanger*, which has set me right with regard to the names of certain species, besides furnishing some other information concerning them, and having likewise learned one or two other facts worthy of publication, I shall not longer postpone the preparation of an Appendix to that paper, but proceed at once to its revision.

ACCIPITRINE CUCKOO; *Cuculus sparveroides*, Vigors and Gould. In Southern India, writes Mr. Jerdon, this species is "only found in the dense woods of the summit of the Neilgherries. It is seldom seen except when the woods are beaten for Woodcocks, and quits the shelter of the wood with reluctance. I never heard its note. Flight rapid. Stomach filled with caterpillars."

WHISTLING CUCKOO; *C. fugax*, Horsfield. The same observer continues — "Besides the Hindustani name given in my catalogue, its name in Teloogoo is *Kuttee pitta*, i. e. 'Sword-bird,' given, it is said, from its peculiar and rapid flight. It is stated by the Shikarees to deposit its eggs in the nest of the Shikra! (*Astur Dussumieri*), which it so much resembles in colour. In the Deccan it is sometimes named *Zuk-kat* or 'Custom-house bird'." In Bengal, the young of this bird are far more numerous in open jungles than the Hawk mentioned, but I have not yet observed any particular species feeding them.*

C. Sonneratii. "Only found in dense forest-jungle." Jerdon.

C. niger. "Dispersed over all the peninsula wherever there is much shelter. At Hydrabad I saw one of this kind in the grey plumage sitting on a trellis work in a garden expanding its wings continually, and close to the spot where it sat and within view was a nest of *Prinia socialis* containing two eggs, which I recognised to be those of that bird. It struck me at the time that the little Cuckoo had made the discovery of the nest, and was meditating the substitution of her own

* A young specimen of apparently this bird from Macao is very much deeper-coloured than usual, and may possibly be of a different species.

egg. I suspect, therefore, that the rufous specimens are young, and that the female does not differ so materially from her mate. Besides the usual plaintive note, this species has also a cry almost exactly like that of the *C. fugax*, though of course much subdued and repeated faster. It is certainly the *C. flavus* apud Lesson (*Traité*), said to be from Bengal."—*Ibid.*

C. flavus. In the *Zoologie du Voyage de M. Bélanger*, M. Lesson confounds, I am much inclined to suspect, at least three species under this name; viz. the Indian *niger*, the Malayan *flavus*, and the Australian *cineraceus* (figured by Messrs. Jardine and Selby, *Ill. Orn.*, pl. LXVII), stating that it appears to inhabit all the isles of Sunda, Bengal, the Phillipines, Port Jackson, and Van-Diemen's Land. "A veritable Proteus," he remarks, "this little Cuckoo seems indifferently to assume several phases of plumage, according to what island of the Indian Ocean it inhabits; at least unless a plurality of species be confounded under the same name, which differ from each other only by very indistinct and uncharacteristic shades of diversity. Buffon, or rather Daubenton, has figured by the name of *le Petit Coucou de l'Isle de Panay*, *Enluminure* 814, one type corresponding to the bird which M. Bélanger has brought from Java, where it had previously been met with by MM. Labillardière and Leschenault. *Sir Raffles* mentions it in his catalogue as occurring in Pulo Penang, and Dr. Horsfield informs us that it is the *Gedasse* of the Javanese." This Malayan bird (which alone I apprehend to be the true *flavus*) is described as follows:—

"*Le Coucou à tête grise*, de Java, here described, is seven inches and a half (French) long. Its bill is blackish; the tarsi yellow. The head, cheeks, throat, and sides of the neck, are frosty-grey (*gris glacé*); a lustrous and silky bronze-brown, with tolerably bright (*doux*) reflections, prevails on the back and wings, a dark ashy tint on the croup, and russet on the quills. All the lower-parts of the body are russet (or ferruginous, *roux*), or tolerably vivid blonde. The middle tail-feathers are uniformly bronzed brown above; the lateral ones are brown marked (*frangées*) with white: underneath all of them are brown rayed with white, purer and more distinctly on the margins. A similar individual exists in the Paris museum, brought, according to Leseur, from the Straits of Entrecasteaux."

Others from the various localities before cited "offer, upon examination, altogether the same characters, though we are compelled to recognise varieties of race, both according to size and the disposition of the colours of the plumage."

The Australian race (*C. cineraceus*, Vigors and Horsfield, *Lin. Trans.* XV, 298; *Barred-tailed Cuckoo* of Latham, *Gen. Hist.* III, 310;), if the figure of it in Messrs. Jardine and Selby's *Illustrations of Ornithology* (pl. LXVII) be correctly coloured, would seem to have the under-parts much deeper rufous than I have ever seen in Indian specimens, and the tail-feathers more broadly and conspicuously margined laterally with white. The following description is attached: — "The length of most specimens seems to be from nine to eleven inches. The upper-part of the plumage is a dull bluish-grey, on the wings tinged with brown, upon the tail nearly black; the throat is pale blue-grey, the rest of the under-parts reddish ochre-yellow, palest on the belly and vent; the inner webs of the quills are marked with white, which forms a diagonal bar across the under surface; the tail, with the exception of the centre-feathers, is deeply dentated with narrow white markings, which gives it nearly a barred appearance when expanded. The feet and legs appear to have been yellow. The females are generally duller in their colourings, and have the under-parts transversely barred with dull bluish-black. The young of the first year are dull umbre brown, with transverse darker markings."

The Indian bird appears to be typically dark grey without any rufous, at least the old male, and according to Mr. Jerdon's observation cited, some perhaps of the old females; but the ordinary dress of the adult female is, I suspect, as I have described it, namely, a garb corresponding to that so generally assumed by *C. poliocephalus* (*Himalayanus* of Vigors and Gould), and constituting the *hepaticus* variety of *C. canorus*: upon the first moult, the males appear generally to have the lower parts from the breast rufous, but rarely the upper part of the breast and fore-neck (as in the figure cited of the Australian *C. cineraceus*), indeed I have only seen one specimen thus characterized, and in this the colours of the entire under-parts are unusually dull and have some faint cross-striæ, indicative probably of a weakly individual. These states of plumage, together with the first or nestling dress, I have before minutely described.

It should be remarked, that I have seen no Indian specimen corresponding to the original description of *C. flavus* by Sonnerat and Daubenton, which would seem to have been unusually pale, having the "upper part of the head and throat light grey; the nape, back, and wings, pale umbre-brown; and the belly, thighs, and lower tail-coverts, pale yellow tinged with russet." The *C. rufivittatus*, Drapiez, may be presumed to refer to *C. flavus* in one or rather two of its phases; and his *C. pyrogaster* to one of these three species, if they be different. The latter point can only be decided by actual comparison of a number of specimens of each of them, and which way the probability lies cannot be suggested, as the Malayan *C. lugubris* is certainly distinct from the Indian *C. dicruroides*, though most closely allied to it, while *C. (Eudynamys) orientalis* spreads from India and China* through the countries of the Indian Ocean into Australia,—*C. (Chrysococcyx) lucidus* is common to the two latter regions,—various other species to India and the Malay countries, and others again to India and Africa. *C. canorus* extends over Europe, Asia, and Africa, spreading southward (according to Dr. Horsfield) into Java, where however it would appear to be rare, and it is not quite clear that *C. micropterus* has not there been mistaken for it: certainly, however, I believe, (so far as has been yet observed,) its distribution does not reach into Australia.

The present group of small Cuckoos with naked tarsi, and further characterized by a particular type of colouring in all its varieties, appears to me to be fully as much entitled to subgeneric distinction, if not more so, than those of the Metalline Cuckoo (*Chrysococcyx*) and the Drongo Cuckoos (*Pseudornis*, Hodgson); and I suspect that *C. honoratus* should be referred to it. M. Lesson assigns the *C. flavus* to his *Surniculus*, which he founds upon *C. lugubris*†; thus mingling two very distinct subgenera, which must be acknowledged separately if either be systematically distinguished from the

* The Society has just received specimens of both sexes from Macao.

† In Mr. G. R. Gray's List of the Genera of Birds, 1st edit. p. 57, *Surniculus* of Lesson is put as a synonym of *Eudynamys*; but erroneously, according to M. Lesson in the work here cited, where he remarks—"Le Coucoul ugubre est pour nous le type d'un petit sous-genre qui semble confiné dans les îles de l'Est," &c.—*Zoologie du Voyage de M. Bélanger*, p. 236.

other subgenera of restricted *Cuculus* : and if he had not so expressly selected *C. lugubris* as the type of his *Surniculus*, it would have been convenient to have reserved this name for the present form, retaining Mr. Hodgson's *Pseudornis* for the Drongo Cuckoos; but such an arrangement would not be sanctioned by Zoologists, and it remains, therefore, to propose a distinctive appellation for the subgenus under consideration, which accordingly may be termed *Polyphasia*, allusive to the numerous variations of plumage assumed by the species.

Subgenus *Surniculus*, Lesson, 1834; *Pseudornis*, Hodgson: the DRONGO CUCKOOS. According to Mr. Hodgson, the sexes of *C. dicruroides* are similar; and such I believe also to be the case with those of *C. lugubris*, and that the Javanese specimen described by M. Lesson as the female of the latter must therefore be the young. "Length nine inches (French), of which the tail occupies five inches: bill black, and tarsi brown. The feathers around the beak tinged with rufous; those of the upper-parts are brown, with a steel-blue reflection deeper on the wings and tail; a number of small and round white specks, encircled with black, are sprinkled over the head, shoulders, and wings; all the under-parts of the body are brown, tinged with rufous on the fore-part of the neck, and sprinkled with small whitish round spots; the posterior tibial feathers incline to be whitish; wings brown, varied with white internally about the shoulder, and elsewhere on their under-surface they are brown, having a white ray; tail brown underneath, barred with whitish on its small feathers only."

Since the publication of my Monograph of Eastern *Cuculidæ*, I have received a second Singapore specimen of *C. lugubris*, which resembles that which I formerly described in its dimensions, and is merely somewhat brighter black, with no white specks whatever on its upper surface, and very few (and those but faint and confined to the abdomen) below; the exterior short pair of tail feathers are rather longer. It is not improbably a male, while the other may be presumed to be a female; and it may be added, that the conspicuous white occipital spot of the other specimen does not occur. The same difference is observable in two very fine specimens of *C. dicruroides* with which I have also been kindly favoured; and it is remarkable that these have the tail no more furcate than in *C. lugubris*, while their dimensions correspond with those of Mr. Hodgson's Nepålese examples. The

length of the wing affords a ready distinction between these two closely allied species, being in both specimens of *lugubris* but four inches and three-quarters, while in six specimens of *dicruroides* before me it averages five inches and a half (a mere trifle more or less).

Subgenus *Chrysococcyx*. There is a *Iampromorpha amethystna* described by Vigor sin *P. Z. S.* 1831, p. 98, from Manilla; but it does not appear in what it differs from *Chr. xanclorhynchus*.

Eudynamys orientalis: the COËL. I am indebted to Mr. Frith for an egg of this species, found in the nest of *Corvus macrorhynchus*, together with one egg of that species. As the egg of *Cuculus canorus* bears a general resemblance in colour to those of the small ground-building birds in the nests of which it is most frequently deposited, so does the Coël's egg bear a marvellous resemblance to that of the Crow, being, however, much smaller. The specimen measures an inch and a half in length, and its colour is slightly bluish olive-green, rather pale than otherwise, with numerous reddish-brown spots (much as in some Blackbirds' eggs), and an indistinct zone of these near the large end. Mr. Frith has never found more than one Coël's egg in a nest, and has only met with it in those of the two Indian Crows. He has repeatedly seen the common Crow (*Corvus splendens*) attack and drive off the female Coël from its neighbourhood, and in one instance observed the latter, while trying to escape the pursuit, dash itself against a pane of glass in an out-house with so much force as to fall dead from the injury it received, the bill and fore-part of the head being quite smashed. I may add that the young nestling Coël, more especially the male, bears no small resemblance to a young Crow, *i. e.* a black one.

Oxylophus Coromandus: RED-WINGED CRESTED CUCKOO. Mr. Jerdon has seen specimens of this bird from the forests of Malabar.

O. edolius: PIED CRESTED CUCKOO. Of this species, the same naturalist has "obtained one young bird in the nest of *Malacocercus griseus*, in a thick hedge in Coimbatour. It has a loud peculiar call, which it only appears to utter when on the wing. In Telegoo it is called *Gollee kokeelah*, or 'Milkman Cuckoo,' it being said to call 'Gollee Gollee,' and when pronounced gutturally, these words have not at all a distant resemblance to its cry." Dr. Buchanan Hamilton also obtained the egg of this species in the nest of a *Malacocercus*, and figures it of a spotless blue colour, as is also the egg of its dupe; and

he states that this bird only visits Bengal during the rainy season, in which he appears to be correct.

Genus *Rhinortha*, Vigors; *Anadænus*, Swainson; also *Bubutus*, Lesson. In the Zoology of M. Bélanger's *Voyage*, M. Lesson has figured the *Rh. rufescens* of my monograph as *B. Isidori*, whilst his description of the latter refers to *Rh. chlorophæa* (*Cuculus chlorophæus*, Raffles, &c.); and by the name *B. Duvaucelii*, citing his *Ornithologie*, p. 143, (or *Cuculus Sumatrensis* of the Paris Museum, not *C. Sumatranus*, Raffles,) he has given a description which probably refers to my *rufescens*, though I cannot understand what is meant by the italicised portion of the following quotation, which alone does not apply — “Cet Oiseau, de la taille du Coucou Edolio, a le bec jaune, la tête d'un cendré blanchâtre, *le plumage gris cendré*, les ailles rousses, l'abdomen et la region anale d'un rouge ochreux,” &c. If it be intended that *the back* is coloured ash-grey, then probably M. Lesson's species is distinct. But it must be remembered that his description and plate of *B. Isidori* refer to different species, as before mentioned.

The *Phœnicophæus longicaudatus* of my monograph is M. Lesson's *Melias tristis*, and may rank therefore as *Ph. tristis*, unless it be considered worth while to separate the small-billed species from the others: and my *Ph. tristis* appears to be M. Lesson's *M. Diardi*, of which he states that it resembles the former species in its form and colouring, but is only half the size, and presents some other differences; this bird is the *Cuculus Sumatranus* of Raffles, and must rank, I therefore presume, as *Ph. Sumatranus*. I am assured by Mr. Frith that this latter species occurs in the Soonderbuns of Bengal, and that the other is common on the hill ranges of Assam.

Ph. Jerdoni is “termed in Hindustani *Kuppra Popya*, and in Teloogoo *Wamaneh okee*.”—Jerdon.

Zanclostomus Sirkee is “called *Jungle Parrot*, both in Hindustani and Teloogoo, from its red bill.”—*Ibid.*

Centropus Phillipensis “builds a very large nest in some thick bush or hedge, and lays two or three greenish-blue eggs. This I have on the authority of an excellent *Shikaree*. It occasionally pilfers eggs from the nests of other birds.”—*Ibid.* When running up the bough of a tree, which it does with remarkable celerity, it often throws the tail up over the back.

C. Sinensis : *Polophilus Sinensis*, Shaw's *Zoology*, IX, 51. In my Monograph I referred this, with a note of doubt, to *C. Phillipensis*, but have since received the species from Chinghai, and it is closely allied to *C. lepidus*, but as large as *C. Phillipensis*, being very obviously distinct from both. Length about nineteen inches, of which the tail measures eleven inches, its outermost feathers four inches and a half less; wing seven inches and a half; and beak, which is much curved and robust, an inch and five-eighths to gape. Colouring much as in *C. lepidus*, but the head, neck, interscapularies, and under-parts, are considerably darker: the nape and interscapularies are dusky with whitish shafts, terminating in yellowish-white rigid and almost prickly tips; head browner, with shining dark shafts to the frontal plumes: the under-parts dingy-whitish, with dusky cross-bars on each feather, and also rigid yellowish-white tips, more particularly to the feathers of the throat and breast: scapularies dingy rufous; the wings brighter rufous, with nearly obsolete dark bars on their smaller coverts; the greater coverts, with the primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries, being in course of renewal, and those newly put forth are spotless rufous, whilst the unshed are barred with dusky: rump blackish; the tail and its upper coverts the same, barred with numerous whitish cross-rays: beak dusky-black, whitish along the edges of the mandibles and towards the tip of the under one; feet also blackish; and irides stated to be light horn, or coloured like the wings, though in the fully mature birds I presume they would be crimson.

"*C. Bengalensis* of my Supplement may be *C. lepidus*."—Jerdon.



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