

XXIII.—*Descriptions of some new species of Birds found in the neighbourhood of Calcutta.* By EDWARD BLYTH, Esq., Curator to the Museum of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.

To Richard Taylor, Esq.

DEAR SIR,

November 14th, 1843.

THE Hindoostan steamer direct from Calcutta to Suez departs tomorrow, by which opportunity I shall forward the present communication. I have obtained several rare species of birds since penning the first part of this paper*, but only one novelty, which I proceed to describe. It is a gigantic species of true heron.

Ardea nobilis, nobis. Length of a male in first plumage 50 inches by $7\frac{1}{2}$ feet in alar expanse; wing from bend $22\frac{1}{2}$ in.; bill to frontal plumes $7\frac{5}{8}$ in., and to gape $9\frac{3}{8}$ in.; bare part of tibia $6\frac{1}{4}$ in.; tarsi 10 in.; middle toe and claw $6\frac{1}{2}$ in.; hind toe and claw 4 in. General form robust, but otherwise as in *A. cinerea*, which latter is a mere pygmy beside the new species, and the dimensions given of this would probably be considerably exceeded in a mature specimen. Colour of the upper parts pure ashy, somewhat darker than in *A. cinerea*; all the wing-coverts tipped with brown, denoting, with other indications, the immature dress: crown, ear-coverts, nape, and hind-neck to near its base a fine cinnamon rufous, deepest on the coronal feathers, which are elongated, but contain no slender attenuated crest-plumes, as would probably be the case in the adult; nevertheless, a full massy crest is formed by them, the longest feathers of which measure $4\frac{1}{2}$ in.: the frontal feathers immediately over the bill are dark ashy: throat white; front of the neck the same, variegated in the usual manner of this genus with dark ashy, passing into nigrescent about the angular bend of the neck: shoulder-tuft varied with brown, having a white mesial streak on each feather: under parts dull white, laterally margined with mingled brown and ashy. Irides pale yellow. Beak blackish, the lower mandible dull white except towards the tip and along the edge: cere dusky, the orbits and a band in front of the eye yellowish: legs blackish: labial feathers deeply stained with cinnamon-brown. This superb heron was shot on the salt-water lake above Calcutta. It is probably the largest of the genus, exceeding considerably, I think, an immense and robustly formed African heron which I saw in the collection of Dr. Andrew Smith. Possibly it may be the *A. sumatrana* of Raffles, 'Lin. Trans.' xiii. 325, vaguely described as "a large sub-crested heron, with long slender neck and bill (that of *A. nobilis* is by no means long and slender), of a bluish gray, variegated

* See our last Number, page 113.

with ferruginous ; white on the chin." The most conspicuous feature of the bird before me is its cinnamon-coloured crown and hind-neck, next to its gigantic size and generally robust proportions.

I lately described another fine heron from Arracan, which, in course of time, I shall probably also obtain here, by the name

A. fusca, nobis. Size of the larger specimens of *A. cinerea*, but more robustly formed, with a much longer bill, the lower mandible of which inclines conspicuously upward towards its extremity. Length of closed wing 17 in. ; of bill to frontal feathers $6\frac{5}{8}$ in., and to gape $8\frac{1}{4}$ in. ; bare part of tibia $2\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; tarsus $6\frac{3}{8}$ in. ; middle toe and claw $4\frac{1}{2}$ in., and hind toe and claw $2\frac{1}{2}$ in. General colour blackish or dusky tinged with ashy, with the acuminate portion of the dorsal and lower nuchal feathers whitish gray, contrasting with the rest ; crest of very slender elongate plumes, the longest measuring $7\frac{1}{2}$ in., of a whitish colour to near their base ; throat white, tinged with rufous inferiorly ; under parts dusky gray ; bill and feet black, the lower mandible whitish along its ridge.

The following are the Indian herons known to me :—

Subgenus ARDEA.

1. *A. nobilis*, nobis.
- 1 a. *A. fusca*, nobis. Arracan.
2. *A. cinerea*.
3. *A. purpurea*.

Subgenus HERODIAS, Boié.

4 and 4 a. *A. flavirostris*, Wagler, and *A. modesta* (?), Gray. Vide preceding remarks.

5. *A. putea*, B. Hamilton.

6. *A. garzetta* ; *A. orientalis*, Gray, in Hardwicke's drawings.

7. *A. asha*, Sykes. A true egret, although not white. Southern India.

8. *A. caboga*. A very aberrant egret, feeding chiefly on grasshoppers, in quest of which it is often observed following cattle.

A. nigrirostris, Gray, is unknown to me.

Subgenus ARDEOLA, Boié, not of Bonaparte, following Brisson.

9. *A. leucoptera* (Bodd.), G. R. Gray ; *A. malaccensis*, Gm. ; *A. speciosa*, Horsfield ; *A. Grayi*, Sykes.

Subgenus ————— ?

10. *A. flavicollis*, Wagler ; *A. nigra*, Vieillot. This beautiful species was figured in different states of plumage by the late Dr. Buchanan Hamilton, probably from Bengal specimens ; I have re-

ceived it from Mr. Jerdon in Southern India, and also a fine specimen from Chusan.

11. *A. javanica*.

Subgenus ————— ?

12. *A. lepida*, Horsfield.

Subgenus ————— ? ARDEOLA (*Brisson*), *Bonap.*

13. *A. cinnamomea*.

Subgenus BOTAURUS (*Brisson*), *Stephens*.

14. *A. stellaris*, Lin.

Subgenus NYCTICORAX (*Brisson*), *Stephens*.

15. *A. Gardeni* (Gm.), *Jardine*. *N. manillensis* may perhaps also occur as a straggler.

Among other species lately obtained, may be mentioned a second example of *Aquila pennata*, both specimens being females, but in very different plumage; the last contained the remains of a house pigeon in its stomach, confirmatory of Mr. Jerdon's observations on the usual prey of this pigmy eagle;—Osprey, two specimens; *Calliope Lathamii* appears to be very numerous this season; *Chaitaris rubeculoides*, two; *Ædicnemus crepitans*, another; *Pluvianus cinereus*, several; *Terekia javanica*, several.

I am about to describe another new *Manis* from Arracan, additional to *M. brachyura*, *javanica*, and *leptura* (nobis); also a new Badger (true *Meles*) from Assam; and I have various other undetermined species of mammalia, several of which are probably new, besides abundance of novelties in other classes.

But the most interesting fact which I have lately determined is decidedly the existence of three distinct species of true Crocodile in the estuary of the Ganges; one however of which I as yet know by the skull alone, of which I have three specimens; of these I shall pack up one in a collection I am now about to despatch to the India-house, and with it a stuffed specimen of the young of the other which is additional to the common *C. biporcatus*; and I will also send with them the sternal apparatus of my new huge heron, with that of *A. cinerea* to show the comparative size. At the close of the present cool season I purpose to resume my notices of the ornithology of this neighbourhood, which will afford time for the return hither of this paper in a printed form; but I do not anticipate more than a few accessions to the list of birds which I have now supplied you with, the more especially as I expect to have no leisure for personal quest of specimens.

Nov. 16th.—My shikaree has just come in, with six specimens of the genus *Phylloscopus*, all of different species, and two of them new, viz.

Ph. nitidus, nobis. Resembles *Ph. sibilatrix*, but is smaller in all its proportions, and has the entire under parts, with the lower tail-coverts, tinged with yellow. Bill carneous dusky, the lower mandible pale; and feet light brownish, tinged with yellow on the toes. Length $4\frac{3}{4}$ in. by $7\frac{1}{2}$ in. in alar expanse; closed wing $2\frac{5}{8}$ in., and tail 2 in.: bill to gape $\frac{5}{8}$ in.; tarsi $\frac{3}{4}$ in. A male.

Ph. tristis, nobis. Closely allied to *Ph. rufus*, but devoid of any greenish or yellowish tinge on the plumage, except on the fore part of the wing underneath, and very faintly margining the quills and tail externally: general colour grayish brown, beneath paler and albescent, with a faint rufous tinge on the breast, and no trace of yellowish on the lower tail-coverts nor elsewhere than as stated: the legs and claws dull black, much darker than in *Ph. rufus*, except the under surface of the toes which is yellow; bill also blackish, tinged with yellow at base of lower mandible, the gape yellow. Length $4\frac{1}{2}$ in. by $6\frac{1}{2}$ in. across; wing $2\frac{1}{8}$ in.; tail $1\frac{3}{4}$ in.: bill to gape $\frac{1}{2}$ in., and tarsi $1\frac{3}{4}$ in. A female.

The other species brought are *Ph. fuscatus*, nobis, being only the second example of it which I have yet obtained; *Ph. lugubris* and *Ph. affinis*, nobis, both of which are very abundant; and *Ph. modestus* (*Regulus modestus*, Gould), which is also common, and appears generally to have the central coronal streak inconspicuous. Two other species have been procured by me in this vicinity—*Ph. reguloides*, nobis, which is not rare, and *Ph. magnirostris*, nobis (“*Ph. trochilus*?” of xii. 230 ante), of which I have yet obtained but one specimen. Mr. Hodgson has several additional Nepalese species of this well-marked group.

Of other species worthy of mention, I may notice the occurrence of a second specimen of *Ædicnemus crepitans*, a second of *Larus ridibundus*, and several of *Sterna Anglica*, to which species Nos. 400 and 403 of Mr. Jerdon’s list must be referred, his 404 being *Viralva indica* of Stephens, and both appertaining to *Gelochelidon* of Brehm. I learned also a day or two ago, that a subordinate of mine, recently deceased, secreted and disposed of at least one fine specimen of the rare *Eurhinorhynchus griseus*, apud Pearson, doubtless procured in the bazar, about three years ago, which was previous to my arrival. I detected this party setting aside other rare birds in the course of last cold season, upon which occasion I first obtained the *Turdus Whitei*, which it was not intended that I should have seen; but I do not think that since that time any business of the kind has been going on. I greatly doubt whether this curious bird (a Spoon-billed Tringa), described by Dr. Pearson in ‘As. Res.’ xix. 69, be identical with the *Platalea pygmæa*, Auct., or *Eurhinorhynchus griseus* of Nilsson. The latter is described by Shaw as “scarcely equalling a sparrow in size,” and to inhabit Surinam and Guiana; whereas the di-

mensions of the Bengal bird, according to Dr. Pearson, are, length 6 in. by 11 in. in alar expanse, and the wing measures $3\frac{3}{4}$ in., the stuffed specimen showing it to be scarcely smaller than *Tringa platyrhyncha*. I would therefore provisionally style it *Eu. orientalis*.

Nov. 17th.—*Terekia javanica* continues to be brought to the bazar, one or two every morning; also *Tringa platyrhyncha*, or *Limicola pygmea* of Nilsson; and I obtained a third specimen of the Kentish plover this morning, together with a lot of *Glaucala orientalis*.

I herein inclose skins of *Culicipeta Burkii*, *Phylloscopus reguloides*, *Ph. modestus*, two, *Ph. affinis* and *Ph. lugubris*, which kindly show to Mr. Gould and Mr. G. R. Gray, and ask their opinion of them. I request Mr. Gray's acceptance of them for the British Museum, but will send him better and mounted specimens by and by. I cannot delay this note for the departure of the express, as the specimens make it too bulky to be then received; but if anything should turn up in the meanwhile worthy of being recorded I will let you know.

Believe me ever, very truly yours,

E. BLYTH.

XXIV.—*Descriptions of some newly discovered species of Araneidea.*

By JOHN BLACKWALL, Esq., F.L.S.

Tribe OCTONOCULINA.

Family AGELENIDÆ.

Genus TEGENARIA, Walck.

1. *Tegenaria sæva*. Cephalo-thorace pallide flavescenti-brunneo; linea tenui mediana antice, fascia lata, irregulari longitudinali, ad utrumque latus marginibusque lateralibus obscure brunneis; mandibulis saturate fusco-brunneis; maxillis labroque rufescenti-brunneis; sterno fascia mediana rufescenti-brunnea, postice gradatim tenuiore, et ad latera fascia lata semilunari saturate brunnea puncta varia rotunda rufescenti-brunnea pedum versus insertionem includenti; pedibus longis, pilosis rufescenti-brunneis nisi ad femora 2^{di} 3^{ti} 4^{ti}que ubi color obscure viridescenti-brunneus; coxis subtus maculis plurimis nigris, pedum pari 4^{to} longissimo, dein 1^{mo}, 3^{tio} brevissimo; lineis medianis ad partem abdominis superiorem angulatis flavescenti-brunneis, ad filatoria brevioribus et obscurioribus, quarum vertex prorsum spectantes prope seriei anteriorem partem fascia longitudinali fusco-lutea intercepti; extremitates autem valde dilatatae maculis nigris irregularibus alternantes; lateribus fusco-luteis dense nigro-maculatis; abdomine subtus medio flavescenti-brunneo, inter strigas duas obscuras, e maculis plurimis nigris compositas, ad filatoria junctas.



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