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ARTICLE VIII

NOTES ON SOME NEW SPECIES OF BIRDS FOUND
ON THE ISLAND OF FORMOSA

By R. SWINHOE ESQ.

(Supplementary to Article I. page 145.)

ORDER II.—PASSERES. TRIBE III.—DENTIROSTRES' FAMILY I.—LUSCINIDÆ.
SUBFAMILY I.—MALURINÆ.

Two species of birds in this subfamily, not coming under any genus described by G. R. Gray, in his Genera of Birds, for which I propose a new genus under the term *Calamanthella*, may be thus defined:—Bill shorter than the head, broad at the base, but compressed towards the tip; culmen gradually arched towards the tip; goaws long and ascending; nostrils placed longitudinally in a basal membranous groove; gape furnished with short weak bristles. Wings moderate; the first quill abruptly short, the second shorter than the third, which with the fourth and fifth are longest in the wing. Tail moderate, or short, and graduated. Tarsi much longer than the middle toe, and covered with in-distinct scales; toes long with the outer toe shorter than the inner, and united at the base to the middle one; the hind toe long and armed with a long curved claw.

These birds differ from the genera *Prinia* (Horsf.) and *Calamanthus* (Gould), to which they are nearly allied, by their active habits, being constantly on the wing, flying high in the air uttering; their singular notes. The two distinct species which I procured in Formosa, I have named *Tinnabulans* and *Volitans* respectively. The former of these is very common in the plains and on the hills of the N.W. side of Formosa, and I have since found it very numerous among the rush-covered tumuli in Shanghai. The latter was abundant in the E. and N. E. of Formosa. I will now venture to give a few words on the general description of the two species, as also on their habits as observed by myself.

Calamanthella tinnabulans. Bill along culmen $\frac{1}{3}$ inch; bill to gape 7 twelfths; tarsus $\frac{2}{3}$; onyx $\frac{1}{2}$; middle toe 7 twelfths; wing 1 & 11 twelfths; tail 1 & 7 twelfths. Total length 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

Bill yellowish, wood-brown towards the tip and along the culmen. Legs ochreous yellow. Irides orange yellow. Upper parts yellowish brown varied with sienna red; the feathers on the head, back, wing-coverts, secondaries, and tail-coverts, dark-brown with yellowish brown margins. The wing-feathers hair-brown broadly margined with pale yellowish brown. Tail consisting of 12 feathers almost equally graduated; the uropygials brown-margined paler; the other 10 feathers marked with dark brown and reddish sienna, each feather being deeply tipped with white. Eye-streak, throat and under parts white tinged with sienna or straw yellow, deeper on the sides, and approaching red on the flanks.

Habits. These little sprightly birds abound in Hongsan and the N.W. coast of Formosa, among the long grass and rushes, hopping with upright tails from one blade to another, so light, so airy in their build, that one often mistakes them for locusts, with which insects their haunts abound. Suddenly springing into the air, they rise to a little height uttering the notes *te-te-te*, then drop with a *ting-ting-ting*; and when many are singing over a plain, the effect may well be compared to the “drowsy tinkling” that “lulls the distant fold.”

In Shanghai I noted,—“The Formosan Tinkler is also here, and continues to sing as he flies along in the air his singular notes; now flying downwards with a curve as if he would settle, then sweeping up again and hovering, all the while uttering his notes. At last he makes up his mind to descend, and down he comes and perches on some stalk of maize or other plant, and carefully preens, and rests himself; a few minutes more and he is again on the wing.”

The Chinese settlers in Formosa call this bird the *Manytang*; the same name that in Amoy is applied to the Tailor-bird (*Orthotomos* sp.) and most small birds of that family.

Calamanthella volitans. Bill along culmen, over $\frac{1}{3}$ inch; bill to gape $\frac{1}{2}$; tarsus $\frac{2}{3}$; onyx 5 twelfths; middle toe $\frac{1}{3}$; wing $1\frac{2}{3}$; tail 11 twelfths. Total length $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches.

Bill pale wood-brown. Legs straw color. Irides orange yellow. Head, nape and all the under parts pale sienna yellow, more or less ochreous. Back and wings hair brown, the feathers margined with light yellowish brown. Rump light sienna brown. Tail dark hair-brown; the feathers graduated, but broad at their tips giving the tail the appearance of an isosceles triangle.

Habits. This species, which is even smaller than the foregoing, is found in numbers among the grassy hills on the N.E. side of Formosa. It soars much higher than its congener, and flies long distances uttering notes similar to “chee-chee-cheup-cheup;” and often when the bird itself is not visible, lost in the expanse above, you are made aware that it is somewhere overhead, by the fall of its notes on your ear.

GENUS,--PRINIA. (Horsf.)

Prinia striata. (n. sp.) Bill along culmen 4 tenths inch: bill to gape 6 tenths; tarsus 9 tenths; wing $2 \frac{1}{3}$; tail $4 \frac{7}{10}$. Total length 8 inches.

Bill black. Legs ochreous yellow. Irides orange brown. Upper parts a rich brown, each feather having darker centres, and whitish aide-margins, giving a striped appearance. Wings yellowish hair-brown; the feathers broadly margined with yellowish brown. Tail light brown; the shafts dark, and the tips yellowish. Under-parts of a dingy yellowish tinge spotted on the cheeks and head, and striped on the sides of the neck Thighs reddish brown.

This bird was procured on the N.W. side at Hongsan, some little distance inland. It is much larger than any Prinia I have yet met with in China. In its accustomed haunts, it may be seen mounted on the top of some tall rush-stalk, singing a monotonous ditty of a few notes, somewhat resembling those of the Bunting Lark, often repeated.

FAMILY,--TURDIDE. SUBFAMILY,--FORMICARINÆ. GENUS.—HYDROBATA (Vieill) OR DIPPER.

There appear to be several Dippers, more or less similar, from totally different parts of the world. Such are the *H. unicolor* (Pr. Buon.) from America, the *H. Pallisir* (Termm.) from Europe, and the *H. Asiatica* (Swains). To the last species I should be inclined to assign the present bird, but there being some little doubt about it, I propose describing it under the term *Hydrobata marila*:—Length in total $8 \frac{1}{2}$ inches; wing from flexure $3 \frac{3}{4}$.

Bill and legs indigo blue; the latter thick and rough-soled, with strong claws. Irides deep brown. The whole of the body umber-brown, blacker on the under parts, and tinged with raw sienna on the upper. A line of white nearly encircles the eye, and a few indistinct whitish spots occur on the wing-coverts.

The specimen from which the above description is taken was a female, shot over one of the waterfalls on our inland expedition to the sulphur mines. She was seen to take one plunge, and was sitting with tail erect on a rock in the gliding stream.

SUBFAMILY III.--TIMALINÆ, OR BABBLERS. GENUS,--GARRULAX (Leal).

Garrulax Thereanus. (n. sp.) The Song-thrush or Hwa-mei (*G. Sinensis*), remarkable for a white eye-streak, so common on the hills in the vicinity of Foochow, is replaced on the Formosan hills by a dingier species, which is destitute of the eyebrowed distinction; and may be thus described:—Male: length $9 \frac{3}{4}$ inches; wing $3 \frac{3}{4}$; tail $4 \frac{1}{4}$. Female: length 9 inches; wing $3 \frac{7}{12}$; tail $3 \frac{3}{4}$. Bill of both along culmen 8 tenths; bill to gape 9 tenths; tarsus $1 \frac{9}{10}$.

Bill horn-yellow. Legs ochreous. Irides grey. Top of the head and under parts buff ochre; the feathers of the head, and some few on the sides of the neck and breast, being streaked with black. Belly smoke grey. Upper parts dingy olive brown, brighter on the wings, and transversely barred on the tail with indistinct bars.

The song of this species is very fine, but, like all this genus of babbling birds, it is very rarely that it will mug a set song of many minutes duration. While rambling over the hills, I have been startled by a burst of delicious melody from some neighboring bush, and on approaching nearer, have spied this bird flit noiselessly into an adjoining cover, where with several of his comrades he would keep up a constant chatter until I removed some distance off. The male and female are very much similar in dress.

GENUS,--POMATORRHINUS (Horsf).

This has been noted as a genus of unmusical Thrushes, whereas the species abounding in Formosa is remarkable for its sweet song, and very different from the small Wren-like species procured on the Pihling hills near Foochow.

Pomatorrhinus musicus n. sp. Male: length $7 \frac{4}{10}$ inches. Female: length $7 \frac{8}{10}$ inches. Wing $3 \frac{1}{3}$ inches; tail $3 \frac{1}{2}$; bill along culmen 8 tenths; bill to gape 1; tarsus $1 \frac{1}{3}$; middle toe $1 \frac{1}{10}$.

Bill, black on the upper mandible, yellowish on the lower. Legs deep indigo blue. Top of the head and cheeks blackish green.

Space between the bill and eyes deep black. A streak over the eyes, throat and breast white, the latter blotched with black. Nape, back of the neck, and upper part of the belly, fine chesnut red. The rest of the plumage olive green; in the males deeply tinged with chesnut, especially on the wings.

These Thrushes enliven the copse-covered hills with their song. They may be seen about the branches of some tree that lifts itself higher than the surrounding brushwood, hopping from twig to twig with rounded backs. On alarm they drop with amazing velocity into the scrub beneath, and there chatter and gabble in an under-tone, as if telling one another what they had seen and what a narrow escape they had just had. From these retreats the male loves to pour its melody into the delighted ear of the passerby, and the nearer the approach the louder sound the notes, until the bird thinking the propinquity of the stranger too great an intrusion, quietly slips out at the back of the bush, and betakes himself to some other spot, and while you are waiting anxiously to get a look at him, you hear him exerting his musical powers some distance off.

ORDER III.—SCANSORRS. FAMILY IV.—CUCULIDÆ. SUBFAMILY III.—
COCCYZINÆ. (Ground Cuckoos.) GENUS,—CENTROPUS (Illig.)

Centropus dimidiatus, (Blyth?) Length 12 3/4 inches; wing 5 & 9 tenths; tail 7; bill along culmen 1; bill to gape 1 & 1 tenth; tarsus 1 & 4 tenths.

The feathers of the head, neck, and wing-coverts have stiff acuminate shafts. Bill and legs black. Irides blood red. Head, neck, under parts, and tail, greenish black. Back and wings light chesnut-brown; the shafts of most of the feathers, especially on the wing-coverts, being yellowish white. The quills browner towards their tips. Feathers of the rump very soft, and transversely barred with brown and dingy yellow.

On first meeting with this bird on the N.E. coast of Formosa among the hills of Saw-o and Kelung, I took it to be the same species that is so abundant in the valley of Foochow, (*Centropus Philippensis* Cuv. or Crow Pheasant of the foreign residents), remarkable for its notes “hoo-hoo-hoo,” which have been compared to the noise produced by the stops of an organ suddenly drawn out. But on procuring a male bird, from which the above description is

taken, I found it to be scarcely more than one half the size of the other species and differing from it also in color. Besides the notes are different, the “hoo-hoo-hoo” being followed by the dissyllable “ka-took” thrice repeated, the sounds produced somewhat resembling the distant blows of a woodman’s axe, as it falls on the trunk of some devoted patriarch of the forest. On looking up the face of a hill you might often see this small *Larkheel* sitting conspicuous on the top of some bush and bending forward its head and neck as it gave utterance to its strange notes.

To the above I may also add another bird, which, though not a new species, I have not as yet found on the coast of China. Such is the Philippine Noddy.

ORDER VIII.—ANSERES. FAMILY V.—LARIDÆ. SUBFAMILY III.
—STERNIDÆ (Terns). GENUS,—ANÖUS (Leach).

Anöus pileatus. (Scop.) Philippine Noddy. Male: length 14 1/2 inches; wing 10 & 8 tenths; tail 6 1/5. Female: length 14 1/2 inches; wing 10 & 8 tenths; tail 6 & 3 tenths; bill along the culmen 1 1/2; bill to gape 2 1/5; tibia bare about 1/2 inch above the knee; tarsus 9 tenths; middle toe 1 & 6 tenths; onyx 4 tenths.

Bill and legs black.. Iris dark brown. Forehead and top of the head white, gradually changing as it passes to the occiput into smoke grey, which again darkens into brown. Space between the bill and eyes, and chin, dark black. A circle of white round the eyes. The rest of the plumage brownish-black, of a deeper color on the quills.

A male of this species flew so close past the ship’s gig in Saw-o harbor that a seaman knocked it down with his hand, and at Kelung a female was brought alive to us by some fishermen for sale. Far away from land I have often watched these *Black Terns* following at some distance in the wake of the ship, darting backwards and forwards in numbers across the broad trail left in the water by the steamer speeding onward on her course, and I suppose preying upon the numerous small fish that, startled at the agitated waters, commit themselves for awhile to the treacherous air, distrusting the state of their natural element.