

CICINNURUS REGIUS.

77.

King Bird of Paradise.

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King Paradise-bird, Lath. Gen. Syn. i. pt. 2, p. 475 (1772).
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CONSIDERING that the present beautiful species is one of the earliest known to European travellers, and that it was described in the very first published records of the Birds of Paradise, it is somewhat remarkable that we know so little of its habits.

It is apparently not a rare bird in the countries which it inhabits, and it has, moreover, the largest distribution of any species of the family, being found all over New Guinea, and inhabiting also the islands of Salawati, Mysol, Jobi, as well as the Aru group. It has even been said to occur in Batanta, but Count Salvadori thinks that there may have been some mistake as to this locality. There is a certain amount of variation in size between specimens from different localities, and the late Mr. Gould considered that there were at least two forms of King Bird of Paradise, recognizable not only by their different dimensions, but more especially by the size of the spiral racket at the end of the centre tail-feathers. Although some individuals are larger than others, I have not been able to assure myself that these variations are accompanied by any difference of habitat, nor has Count Salvadori recognized more than one species of *Cicinnurus*, though he duly draws attention to the differences to be seen in specimens from the island of Jobi, where both sexes vary somewhat from the ordinary type.

The best account of the finding of the present species in its native haunts is that given by Dr. A. R. Wallace in his 'Malay Archipelago,' from which book I make the following extract:—

"The first two or three days of our stay here were very wet, and I obtained but few insects or birds; but at length, when I was beginning to despair, my boy Baderoon returned one day with a specimen which repaid me for months of delay and expectation. It was a small bird, a little less than the Thrush. Merely in arrangement of colours and texture of plumage, this little bird was a gem of the first water; yet these comprised only half of its strange beauty. Springing from each side of the breast, and ordinarily lying concealed under the wings, were little tufts of greyish feathers about two inches long and each terminated by a broad band of intense emerald-green. These plumes can be raised at the will of the bird, and spread out into a pair of elegant fans when the wings are elevated. But this is not the only ornament.