

PARADISEA FINSCHI, *Meyer.*

Finsch's Bird of Paradise.

Paradisea finschi, Meyer, Zeitschr. f. ges. Orn. ii. p. 383 (1885), iii. p. 36 (1886).—Id. Ibis, 1886, p. 250.—D'Hamonv. Bull. Soc. Zool. France, xi. pp. 507, 509 (1886).—Salvad. Aggiunte Orn. Papuasie, ii. p. 158 (1890), iii. p. 241 (1891).—Meyer, Ibis, 1890, p. 420.—Id. Abhandl. k. Mus. Dresd. 1892-93, no. 3, p. 20 (1893).—Sharpe, Bull. Brit. Orn. Club, iv. p. xiii (1894).—Rothschild, op. cit. vi. p. xlvi (1897).

Paradisea minor (nec Shaw), Madarász, Aquila, 1894, p. 90.—Id. Termesz. Füzetek, xx. p. 27 (1897).—Reichen. J. f. O. 1897, p. 214.

THIS is a race of *Paradisea minor*, and represents the latter species in German New Guinea. It was first described by Dr. A. B. Meyer from a native skin procured by Dr. Otto Finsch, who remarks:—"I obtained only imperfect skins of this species from the natives of the north-east coast of Kaiser Wilhelm's Land, at 142° 30' E. long., about 60 miles west of D'Urville Island: on the Admiralty chart 'Passir Point' is marked here, but no such point exists in reality. Only at this one spot on the north coast did the natives bring Paradise-bird skins for sale along with ornamental plumes of *Dasyptilus*. All skins from this locality were small in dimensions."

In describing the type specimen of *P. finschi*, Dr. Meyer writes as follows:—"The single native skin which constitutes the type of this species has the brown of the upper surface not pure chestnut, as in *P. minor*, but paler brown, while the under surface is not chestnut-brown with a vinous tinge as in *P. minor*, but more of a reddish brown. These variations in colour are very noticeable. *P. finschi*, moreover, differs from *P. minor* in the size and the form of the bill, which is more slender and elongated in the latter; its length in *P. minor* reaches 32-35 millim. in specimens in the Dresden Museum. There seems to be also a difference in the colour of the upper mandible, which in *P. finschi* has a light-coloured culmen."

Since Finsch's Bird of Paradise was first described, several specimens have been received from Kaiser Wilhelm's Land. Near the coast the full-plumaged males have all been shot down (as Dr. Meyer, a true naturalist, regrets) by the gentlemen who represent the German New Guinea Company, and the skins have been sold for plumes for women's hats in Australia and in Europe.

Only the present form of yellow-plumed Bird of Paradise is found in Astrolabe Bay, and Dr. Meyer was informed by Miklucho-Maclay, the Russian traveller who lived there for eighteen months, that only *P. finschi* occurred in the district, and that *P. augustæ-victoriæ* was not found there. From an examination of the series in the Tring Museum, I am able to confirm the observation of the Hon. Walter Rothschild, that Dr. Meyer's characters for the separation of *P. finschi*, made from a native skin, are not the most salient ones for the separation of this race. The real differences have been pointed out by Mr. Rothschild, and they consist of the following, viz., the darker vinous-brown colour of the breast and the crisp texture of the feathers of the chest, somewhat approaching the shield of *P. augustæ-victoriæ*, while the yellow on the wing-coverts is less distinct.

Mr. Rothschild's collection contains a good series of specimens obtained in German New Guinea by Captains Webster and Cotton, and it is probable that *P. finschi* extends along the northern coast of New Guinea, but its range is not yet fully known.

It has not been considered necessary to give a separate figure of this race.