

PARADISEA JOBIENSIS, *Rothsch.*

65.

Jobi Lesser Bird of Paradise.

Paradisea minor (pt.), Salvad. Orn. Papuasie e delle Molucche, ii. p. 577 (1881).—Guillem. P. Z. S. 1885, p. 651.—Salvad. Agg. Orn. Papuasie, ii. p. 158 (1890).
Paradisea minor jobiensis, Rothschild, Bull. Brit. Orn. Club, vi. p. xlv (1897).

THE Jobi Island form of *Paradisea minor* is easily distinguishable in a series of skins by its larger size and longer flank-plumes. It is a very recognizable race when compared with specimens of the ordinary *P. minor* of New Guinea. In every other respect the Jobi birds resemble typical *P. minor*, but their larger size has been more than once remarked by Salvadori, Guillemard, and other naturalists. The last-named traveller states that in Jobi the abundance of the present species was wonderful. "In the neighbourhood of Ansus, at an altitude of about 1000 feet or less, we obtained no less than fifty-one examples in five days. The known segregation of the older males at certain (or all ?) periods of the year partly explains the great preponderance of that sex in the present series. Immature males are also very common, but it is difficult to get females, and there is no doubt a considerable actual preponderance in numbers in favour of the male sex."

Dr. Guillemard gives an interesting account of the changes of plumage in this Bird of Paradise from the large series obtained by him during the voyage of the 'Marchesa.' The iris was "lemon-yellow, with a tinge of green. The green shade is sufficiently well marked during life, but fades immediately after death, when the iris appears yellow. Feet and tarsus bluish slate; bill almost lavender."

Dr. Guillemard remarks further that the sixty specimens of the Lesser Bird of Paradise recorded by him in his paper on the birds collected during the voyage of the yacht 'Marchesa' form "only a part of the whole series collected during the voyage," but they "demonstrate well the gradual change from immature to adult plumage." These changes are described by Dr. Guillemard as follows:—"The young birds in first plumage exactly resemble the females, but in a short time the purity of the white on the under surface and a marked increase in size render apparent the difference in sex. The yellow of the scapulars becomes more marked, and the green of the throat and the yellow of the head begin to appear simultaneously. This green is assumed by the gradual tipping of each feather with that colour (in the adult the apex only of each feather is green), while on the head the brown feathers gradually become yellow from beneath. The plumage of the head and throat having become complete, the two median rectrices begin to elongate, and the lower part of the throat becomes tinged with chestnut. At a further stage the mantle has become more yellow, the chestnut on the throat and breast has extended, and the median rectrices, which are still slightly webbed at the tip, protrude some six inches beyond the other feathers. At a still further advanced stage the yellow mantle is complete, the entire breast is chestnut, and the abdomen is becoming so, the wire-like tail-feathers have reached their extreme length, and nothing is therefore wanting to complete the full plumage except the chestnut abdomen and the long sub-alar plumes, of which latter there is as yet no trace.

"I am rather inclined to the belief that the bird remains for some time in this half-perfect plumage. We were fortunate enough in our expedition to New Guinea to obtain no less than four living examples of this species, three of which are at the present moment (June, 1885) in the Gardens of the Zoological Society. When first obtained, in the month of December, they were in the dress I have just described, and they remained thus for some two or three months. The yellow feathers of the head then fell off in two of the four, the birds becoming quite bald in patches, leaving nothing but the black skin showing. At the same time the sub-alar tufts began to appear. New feathers rapidly appeared on the head; they were almost white at first, but soon assumed the yellow shade. The sub-alar tufts grew quickly, and were tolerably long within three weeks of their first appearance.

"The food given to the birds while on board consisted of boiled rice, banana, papaw fruit, cockroaches, and chopped egg."

The changes of plumage described above may be considered to occur in the true *Paradisea minor*, and for these reasons I have quoted Dr. Guillemard's account in full.

The close resemblance of *P. jobiensis* to *P. minor* has rendered a separate figure unnecessary.