

## EPIMACHUS ELLIOTI, *Ward.*

### Elliot's Bird of Paradise.

*Epimachus ellioti*, Ward, P. Z. S. 1873, p. 742.—Elliot, Monogr. Parad. pl. xx. (1873).—Beccari, Cosmos, iii. p. 89 (1875).—Id. Ann. Mus. Civic. Genov. vii. p. 710 (1875).—Salvad. Ann. Mus. Civic. Genov. ix. p. 190 (1876).—Sharpe, Cat. B. Brit. Mus. iii. p. 163 (1877).—Gould, B. New Guinea, i. pl. 8 (1880).—Eudes-Deslongch. Ann. Mus. d'Hist. Nat. Caen, i. p. 8 (1880).—Salvad. Orn. Papuasia, etc. ii. p. 548 (1881).—Cory, Beautiful and Curious Birds, pt. v. (1883).—Musschenbr. Dagboek, pp. 202, 234 (1883).—Rosenb. Mitth. orn. Ver. Wien, ix. p. 53 (1885).—D'Hamonv. Bull. Soc. Zool. France, xi. p. 509 (1886).—Salvad. Agg. Orn. Papuasia, etc. ii. p. 154 (1890).—Sharpe, Bull. Brit. Orn. Club, iv. p. xii (1894).

THE exact habitat of *Epimachus ellioti* still remains unknown. The typical specimen, described by Mr. Edwin Ward, a well-known taxidermist in his day, was received by him along with a number of trade-skins, supposed to have come from New Guinea. The original specimen was purchased by Mr. Gould, and passed with his collection into that of the British Museum.

The principal characters which distinguish *E. ellioti* from *E. speciosus* are the smaller size, the brilliant violet-purple colour of the tail, the dark-green, instead of olive-green, colour of the underparts, and the maroon colour of the throat and upper breast, with a narrow band of reddish purple across the lower breast. In the typical specimen the wings are wanting, as it is a 'native' skin, and in some of the illustrations which have appeared of the present bird the lateral flank-shields have done duty for the true wings. I have seen a perfect skin of *Epimachus ellioti*, which was offered by a dealer to the British Museum; but the price demanded was so exorbitant that I was not able to recommend the purchase of the specimen, and I do not know what has become of it.

The habitat of this species will probably be found to be the island of Waigiou, and not New Guinea, as has been supposed to be the case, from the fact that the type specimen, *more Papuano*, was without wings and feet. The celebrated Italian traveller Dr. Beccari was informed that an *Epimachus* existed in Waigiou, and that it was also to be found near Sorong, which Count Salvadori regards as improbable, and, from the evidence before us, I quite agree with him.

*Adult.* Top of head rich amethyst; occiput and sides of neck also amethyst-colour, changing in certain lights to a rich greenish gloss; back, wings, upper tail-coverts, and tail brilliant violet-purple; the wings and the tail also marbled with a dark amethyst hue, like watered silk, changing according to the light; throat and upper portion of breast deep maroon-colour, with purple reflections, a narrow reddish-purple band crossing the lower part of the breast; sides of the breast, flanks, and rest of underparts dark green, the flank-feathers much elongated and stretching beyond the wings; beneath the shoulder of the wing spring two rows of plumes, which are greenish at the base, graduating into deep purple, and terminating in a brilliant metallic blue, very much narrower on the upper row than the lower one. The plumage of the entire bird is very velvety in texture, and, with the exception of the metallic parts, appears black in ordinary lights: bill black, rich orange-yellow at gape. Total length 21·7 inches, culmen 2·1, tail 15·2.