

27.

DREPANORNIS CERVINICAUDA, *Sclater*.

Bennett's Bird of Paradise.

Drepanornis d'albertisii (nec Sclater), Ramsay, Proc. Linn. Soc. N. S. W. ix. p. 469 (1879), viii. pp. 16, 28.

Drepanornis bruijni (nec Oust. 1883, pt.), Salvad. Orn. Papuasias, ii. p. 553 (1881).

Drepanornis albertisii (nec Sclater), Sharpe, Journ. Linn. Soc. xvi. p. 445 (1882).—Salvad. Orn. Papuasias, iii. App. p. 552 (1882).

Drepanornis albertisii cervinicauda, Sclater, P. Z. S. 1883, p. 578.

Drepanornis cervinicauda, Sharpe, in Gould's B. New Guin. i. pl. 10 (1884).—Meyer & Finsch, Zeitschr. ges. Orn. ii. p. 381, Taf. xix. (1885).—Id. Ibis, 1886, p. 248.—D'Hamonv. Bull. Soc. Zool. France, 1886, pp. 505, 509.—Salvad. Agg. Orn. Papuasias, ii. p. 155 (1890).—Goodwin, Ibis, 1890, p. 152.—Salvad. Ann. Mus. Genov. (2) ix. p. 585 (1890).—Id. Agg. Orn. Papuasias, iii. p. 240 (1891).

THIS species represents, in the south-eastern end of New Guinea, the *Drepanornis albertisii* of the Arfak Mountains. It is a light-tailed form of that species, and the characters which distinguish it are slight, but appear to be perfectly constant.

Mr. Goldie was the first to forward specimens of a *Drepanornis* from South-eastern New Guinea, and his specimens from the Goldie River were seen by Dr. Ramsay to differ from typical specimens of *D. albertisii* from the Arfak Mountains, and I noticed the same differences in the specimens forwarded from the Taburi district of the Astrolabe Range by Mr. Goldie, on a later occasion. As, however, only female individuals were sent, both Dr. Ramsay and myself forebore, at the time, to bestow a specific name upon them, until such time as male birds were examined.

In December, 1883, Dr. Sclater received, from the late Dr. George Bennett, of Sydney, adult birds of both sexes from the Astrolabe Mountains, and it at once became evident that the *Drepanornis* of South-eastern New Guinea was a distinct species from that of the mountains of the north-western portion of the island. So far, *D. cervinicauda*, as Dr. Sclater named the Astrolabe bird, has not been found in any other range than that of the Owen Stanley Mountains, and it has not yet been discovered in the Finisterre Mountains, or in any portion of German New Guinea.

Dr. Ramsay has received many specimens at the Sydney Museum, and has likewise described the nest and egg of the species, as follows:—

"The nest is a thin, rather flat structure, built between a horizontal bough in a fork of a thin branch; it has a slight depression about one inch deep, a network of wire rootlets is stretched across the fork, and the nest proper built on them; it is composed of wiry grasses of a light reddish-brown colour, the platform being of black wiry roots.

"The egg is in length 1·37, by 1 inch in breadth; it is of a light dull cream-colour, with a reddish tinge, spotted all over with oblong dashes of reddish brown and light purplish grey, closer on the thick end."

Mr. Goodwin has given me the following note:—" *Drepanornis cervinicauda* inhabits the same zone on the Owen Stanley Mountains as *Parotia lawesi*, but is very seldom seen, and during Sir Wm. Macgregor's expeditions we were unable to sight a single specimen, though we heard its call several times during our stay on the mountains. It keeps to the topmost branches of the highest trees, and there it pours out its song, which resembles that of the Nightingale!" As Mr. Goodwin admits that no specimen of the songster was obtained by the expedition, we may be allowed to question the singing powers of the species, a feat as yet denied to any Bird of Paradise. Doubtless some other bird was the possessor of this powerful song, which reminded Mr. Goodwin of the Nightingale.

The male may be described as very similar to that of *D. albertisii*, but distinguished by its paler rump and more fawn-coloured tail. The crown appears to want the lilac gloss of the species above mentioned, and is consequently browner. The loreal tuft of metallic feathers is steel-blue instead of purple or lilac. Total length 12 inches, wing 6, tail 4·95, tarsus 1·4.

The female is a lighter-coloured bird than that of *D. albertisii*, and the dusky markings on the under surface are rather paler and more sparsely distributed. Total length 12 inches, wing 5·6.

The figures in the Plate represent a male and female of the natural size.