HYDROPHASIANUS SINENSIS.

Chinese Jacana.

Parra Sinensis, Lath. Ind. Orn., vol. ii. p. 764.—Gmel. Edit. Linn. Syst. Nat., tom. i. part ii. p. 709.—Gould, Century of Birds, pl. 77.—Gray, Ill. Ind. Zool., vol. ii. pl. 55.—Hodgs. in Gray's Zool. Misc. p. 86.— Sykes in Proc. of Comm. of Sci. and Corr. of Zool. Soc., part ii. p. 164.—Steph. Cont. of Shaw's Gen. Zool., vol. xii. part i. p. 269.—Vieill. 2nd Edit. du Nouv. Dict. d'Hist. Nat. tom. xvi. p. 451.— Ib. Ency. Méth. Orn., part iii. p. 1056.—Jerd. in Madras Journ. of Lit. and Sci., vol. xii. p. 204.

Chinese Jacana, Lath. Gen. Syn., vol. v. p. 246.—Ib. Supp., vol. ii. p. 324.—Lath. Gen. Hist., vol. ix. p. 391.— Ib. Gen. Syn. Supp., p. 256. pl. 117.

Parra Luzoniensis, Lath. Ind. Orn., vol. ii. p. 764.—Gmel. Edit. Linn. Syst. Nat., tom. i. part ii. p. 709.—Vieill. 2nd Edit. du Nouv. Dict. d'Hist. Nat., tom. xvii. p. 447.—Ib. Ency. Méth. Orn., part iii. p. 1057. Le Chirurgien de l'Isle de Luçon, Sonn. Voy. à la Nouv. Guinée, p. 82. pl. 45.

Luzonian Jacana, Lath. Gen. Syn., vol. v. p. 245.—Ib. Supp., p. 256.—Ib. Gen. Hist., vol. ix. p. 390. Le Jacana à longue queue, Cuv. Règn. Anim., tom. i. p. 498.

Parra phænicura, Hodgs. in Gray's Zool. Misc., p. 86 (Gray).

Hydrophasianus Sinensis, Wagl. in Oken's Isis, 1832, p. 279.—Gray and Mitch. Gen. of Birds, vol. iii. p. 589.— Gray, List of Birds in Coll. Brit. Mus., part iii. p. 114.—Ib. Cat. of Spec. and Draw. of Mamm. and Birds presented to Brit. Mus. by B. H. Hodgson, Esq., p. 142.—Blyth, in Jard. Cont. to Orn. 1852, p. 53.

Tringa chirurgus, Scopoli. Hydrophasianus Chirurgus, Blyth, Cat. of Birds in Mus. Asiat. Soc. Calcutta, p. 273. Dál-Kukra, Hindoos, Blyth. Bhépi or Bhenpi, Bengalese, Blyth. Vuppi-pi, Sohna, Surdul and Sookdel, Lath. Pee wa, at Cawnpore, Lath. Pekwar, or Joll mor, Lath. Water Peacock of the English, Lath.

This species may certainly be considered one of the most elegant Jacanas yet discovered, and India may well be proud of so graceful an ornament to her marshes, for a residence among which its entire structure is most admirably adapted, its body being light and buoyant in the extreme, and the great expanse of its feet and nails enabling it to traverse the floating herbage, leaves of the Nymphæa, &c. with the greatest facility. On the other hand, the filamentous or lancet-shaped terminations of the primaries would seem to militate against any great powers of flight, and accordingly while those who have had opportunities of observing it in a state of nature duly record the facility with which it swims and dives, they are silent as to its flight. That it is widely diffused over India, is evidenced by the circumstance that specimens occur in most of the collections sent from that country; it is also said to inhabit China and the Philippines.

It has been stated that the Chinese Jacana undergoes a seasonal change, but I think that this has not been clearly ascertained. To this point then I would direct the attention of those gentlemen who have opportunities of observing the bird in a state of nature. It is just possible that the females have the under surface always white; that the young males closely resemble them; and that fully adult males are distinguished by the style of plumage represented in the principal figure of the opposite Plate.

. In Sir William Jardine's "Contributions to Ornithology" for 1852, Mr. Blyth informs us that "A good notice of the habits of the Hydrophasianus occurs in the 'Calcutta Sporting Review,' vol. v. p. 7. 'These birds,' remarks the writer, 'breed during the rains, in flooded spots where the lotus is plentiful, the pair forming a rude flat nest of grass and weeds, interwoven beneath with the long shoots of some growing aquatic plant, which retain it buoyant on the surface; herein are laid six or seven olive-brown, pear-shaped eggs, of an inch and a quarter in length. Their slender bodies and widely extending toes enable the Jacanas to run with facility, apparently on the water, but in reality wherever any floating leaves or green herbage meets their light tread. The food consists of the green tender paddy, or other vegetable growth dependent on inundation for its production, and the numerous species of insects that abound in such spots. The cry is like that of a kitten in distress, whence their native name of meewah. In flight the legs are trailed behind like those of the Herons. The flesh is excellent. It is remarkable, with respect to these birds, that