IYNGIPICUS NANUS.

Vigors's Pygmy Woodpecker.

Picus nanus, Vigors, P. Z. S. 1831, p. 172.—Gray, Gen. B. ii. p. 435 (1845). Yungipicus nanus, Bp. Consp. Volucr. Zygod. p. 6 (1854). Bæopipo nana, Cab. & Heine, Mus. Hein. Th. iv. p. 57 (1863, note). Iyngipicus nanus, Hargitt, Ibis, 1882, p. 38.

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I follow Mr. Hargitt in the identification of Vigors's *Picus nanus*; and the history of this species is amongst the most puzzling of all this difficult genus. It seems that in Vigors's original description he mentions certain characters which ought to fix the species, such as, for instance, the underparts "whitish, broadly streaked with dusky brown, and the crown brown with the *occiput black*."

The type specimen was in the museum of the Zoological Society; but what became of it after the dispersion of that collection, is not known. The British Museum (which was supposed to have all the types belonging to the Society's old museum) does not appear to have secured the original of Vigors's *Picus nanus*; and we are therefore left in doubt as to its real identity. Malherbe states that he saw it during his visit to London; and he forthwith describes and figures in his 'Monograph' the Madras form of *I. gymnophthalmus* as *I. nanus* of Vigors; but this can scarcely be a correct identification, as the character of the streaked breast seems to show.

The late Mr. G. R. Gray appears to have followed Malherbe in his determination of the species, and to have acquiesced in the Madras bird being the true *P. nanus* of Vigors. Later on Mr. Hume repudiated this idea, and has determined the bird called *P. hardwickii* by Jerdon to be the real *P. nanus*. A comparison of a specimen of *P. hardwickii* with the original description given by Vigors will show that this cannot be the case; and I believe that Mr. Hargitt is quite right in determining the specimens collected by Capt. Stackhouse Pinwill, and now in the British Museum, as the species really intended by Vigors, especially as the birds described by the latter author came from the Himalayas.

As a matter of fact, these three birds from Capt. Pinwill's collection are little more than a light race of the Burmese *I. canicapillus*, and can scarcely be separated from the Malayan form of the latter, known as *I. auritus* (Eyton); but not only are two of them marked as from N.W. Himalayas, but one of them is actually labelled as from Dhurmsala. I suppose, therefore, that there can be no doubt as to their locality, especially as all Capt. Pinwill's Malacca birds were most carefully labelled by him. At the same time it is a little extraordinary that Mr. Hume, with his splendid collection of Indian birds, does not appear to know the North-west Himalayan *Iyngipicus*.

Mr. Hargitt justly observes that *I. nanus*, as now identified, is extremely close to the Malayan *I. auritus*, and, indeed, only differs in the broad and indistinct streaking of the underparts, which is more clearly indicated in the Malaccan form. We wait therefore with considerable interest for Mr. Hume's further researches into this question, as one need hardly point out that, if the identification of the true *P. nanus*, as propounded by Mr. Hargitt, be correct, the occurrence of a race of *I. canicapillus* in the far north-west, unconnected with the Burmese bird throughout the remainder of the Himalayan chain, is a fact of the highest importance to students of the geographical distribution of animals.

It is with the special object of aiding in the further study of the question that I have figured these birds of Capt. Pinwill's, and have given a portrait of two of his specimens, of the natural size, drawn from the skins in the British Museum.

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[R. B. S.]