PITTA NIPALENSIS.

Nepaul Pitta.

Paludicola Nipalensis, Hodgs. Journ. Asiat. Soc. Beng., vol. vi. p. 103.
Pitta nuchalis, Blyth, Journ. Asiat. Soc. Beng., vol. xi. p. 188.
Heleornis (Paludicola) nipalensis, Hodgs., Gray, Zool. Misc., p. 83.
Hydrornis nipalensis, Blyth.
Pitta nipalensis, Cat. of Spec. and Draw. of Mamm. and Birds presented by B. H. Hodgson, Esq. to Brit. Mus., p. 78.
—Blyth, Cat. of Birds in Mus. Asiat. Soc., p. 156.

As its name implies, this species inhabits the rich forests of Nepaul; it is also a native of Sikim and Bhotan, from all of which countries I have seen specimens; it is, however, still a rare bird in the collections of this country, all the examples that have come under my notice being in the possession of the British Museum, the East India Company, Sir William Jardine, Bart., and myself. It is more nearly allied to the *P. cærulea* than to any other member of the genus, but possesses many well-marked characters which distinguish it from that species. All the information we possess respecting it has been made known to us by Mr. Hodgson, who in a paper published by him in the "Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal," "On three new Genera or Subgenera of Thrushes," says, "This bird never quits the forests, and usually frequents those parts of them only which abound with thick low brushwood; it seldom perches except at night, and then only on low bushes; it feeds principally in swamps and rills, upon the hard insects proper to such situations: of berries and seeds it seldom, if ever, partakes. It flies so badly and is so stupid, that I have seen it taken by a single man."

The sexes are very similar in colour, but the female differs from the male in having the back of the neck of a pale dull green instead of a rich deep greenish blue; in some specimens a gular band of small crescentic marks of dark brown is observable, but this does not appear to be constant.

Mr. Hodgson's description, in which he speaks of the wing-coverts having large buff drops at the end of each plume, doubtless applies to the immature bird, for nothing of the kind is to be found in the adult birds that I have seen.

Forehead, ear-coverts and all the under surface deep buff, fading into buffy white on the throat and under tail-coverts; hinder part of the head and the nape rich deep greenish blue; upper surface and wing-coverts dull green shaded with rufous brown; wings and tail brown, with paler edges; in some specimens a gular band of crescentic marks of brown, produced by the basal brown of the feathers not being quite hidden by the succeeding ones; culmen and tip of the bill dark brown; base of the mandibles and the scales on the front of the tarsi and upper surface of the toes reddish flesh-colour; hinder portion of the tarsi and remainder of the toes ordinary flesh-colour; nails whitish horn-colour; irides brown.

I am indebted to Sir William Jardine, Bart. for the loan of one of the specimens figured in the accompanying Plate, which represents the male and female of the natural size.