PITTA STEERII.

Steere's Pitta.

Brachyurus steerii, Sharpe, Nature, August 3, 1876.

Of all the fine birds brought to light by Dr. Steere's Expedition to the Philippine Islands, this is decidedly one of the most striking (his grandest novelty being, of course, the *Sarcophanops steerii*). Not only is this new Pitta one of the largest of the family, falling not far short of the well-known *Pitta maxima* in size, but it is also perfectly distinct as regards its coloration; for there is no species which is blue underneath as the present bird is. From its black head, it ought to be associated with the group called by Bonaparte *Melanopitta*; but from all these it is easily distinguished by its unique coloration.

Dr. Steere discovered this Pitta in the Province of Zamboanga in the large island of Mindanao. He stayed for some time hunting in the neighbourhood of Zamboanga and Dumalon; and he procured several new species of birds during his residence in that island. It was in the forests adjoining the above-mentioned places that he met with this beautiful Pitta.

The following is a description of the typical specimens:—

Above dull green, with a shade of brighter grass-green under certain lights; wing-coverts silvery cobalt, forming a large shoulder-patch; bastard wing, primary-coverts, and greater coverts black, the latter blue at the ends, the innermost more or less green on the inner webs; primaries black, greenish towards the ends of the outer webs of the shorter ones, the secondaries more and more green on the outer webs as they approach the innermost, which are entirely green, the third to the seventh primaries having a large white spot forming an alar speculum; upper tail-coverts silvery cobalt, forming a band across the lower rump, some of the upper tail-coverts black; tail black; crown of head, nape, and sides of face black; cheeks and throat white, rest of under surface of body light blue, the centre of the abdomen black; under wing-coverts black.

Another specimen, apparently a somewhat younger bird, was also procured by Dr. Steere, and had the lower part of the belly pale vermilion.

I am under the greatest obligation to Dr. Steere for his kindness in lending me so many of his rare birds. The figures in the Plate represent the only two specimens of this Pitta procured by him, and are of the size of life.