## UROCISSA CÆRULEA, Gould.

## Formosan Blue Pie.

Urocissa cærulea, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., 1862, p. 282.—Swinh. in Ibis, 1863, p. 384.

Ir will be seen by the number of species of Blue Pies figured in the present work, that this genus of birds forms a very conspicuous feature in Asian ornithology. The Urocissa erythrorhyncha of Nepaul and the U. sinensis of China are the oldest-known members of this lovely form, to which modern research has added the U. magnirostris from Siam, the U. flavirostris from Sikim, the U. cucullatus from Kulu, and the U. cærulea from the Island of Formosa. The last-mentioned new and beautiful species is nearly equal in size to the U. magnirostris, but differs from that and all the other members of its genus in its remarkably intense blue colouring. The following is Mr. Swinhoe's account of the U. cærulea, as given by him in the volume of the 'Ibis' for

1863, above referred to:—

"Soon after my arrival at Tamsuy, some hunters I had sent into the interior returned with the two long tail-feathers of a bird which they said they had shot, but were obliged to eat, as, owing to the heat of the weather, it was getting tainted. They called it the Tung-bay swannium, or Long-tailed Mountain Nymph. I saw, from the peculiar form of the feathers, that the bird from which they had been taken must have been a Urocissa, and, from their bright-blue tint and large white tips, I felt sure they belonged to a fine new species. I was much excited, and offered large sums for specimens, and consequently soon received an ample supply, an examination of which satisfied me that I had obtained a new and beautiful addition to this lovely group of birds.

"The Mountain Nymph is by no means uncommon in the large camphor-forests of the mountain-range. It is there to be met with in small parties of six or more, flying from tree to tree, brandishing about their handsome tail-appendages, and displaying their brightly contrasted black, azure, and white plumage, and their red bill and legs, among the deep-tinted foliage of the woods. They are shy birds, soon taking alarm at the approach of a stranger, giving warning to each other in loud notes, and then gliding away one after another, with a straight flight, into an adjoining tree, the flight being executed with short, quick flaps of the wings, while the body and tail are held nearly horizontal. They feed on wild figs, mountain berries, and insects, chiefly Melolonthine Coleoptera. I had no opportunities of observing the nesting of this bird, nor the plumage of the young, which in the *U. sinensis* differs considerably from that of the adult.

"In the large size and bulkiness of its bill, this species is more nearly allied to the U. magnirostris of Tennasserim than to the *U. sinensis* of China; but its tail is shorter than that of either of those birds, and its plumage is entirely different to the similarly distributed tints of the other described species.

"The male has a larger bill, and somewhat longer wings and tail, than the female; but both sexes vary a good deal in proportion inter se. In the older specimens, the tomiæ of the upper mandible are often worn into a serrated appearance.

"The head, hinder part of the neck, throat, and breast black; body, both above and below, dusky-purplish azure; wings brownish black; the outer webs of the primaries and secondaries, and the greater part of the tertiaries, of the same colour as the back, with a large white spot at the tip of each quill, becoming smaller and obscure on the last primaries; under surface of the wings marked with rufous; upper tail-coverts broadly margined with black, preceded by a whitish shade, and in some cases tipped with white; two central tail-feathers somewhat spatulate at the tip, with turned-up sides, the spatulæ white, the remainder purplish azure, with black shafts; the second tail-feather with a much smaller white tip, preceded by a broad black band, the black increasing in extent, and the white of the tips slightly decreasing on the other lateral feathers; bill bright red-lead, paler at the tip; legs and feet also bright red-lead, the sole-pads light and dingy; claws light reddish brown; inside of the mouth flesh-colour; iris clear light king's yellow, somewhat pearly in appearance; eyelid blackish brown, with a narrow outer rim of orange-red colour."

The Plate represents this bird, nearly of the size of life.