AMYDRUS TRISTRAMI, *Sclater.*

Tristram's Amydrus.

Amydrus tristramii, Sclater in Ann. and Mag. of Nat. Hist., 3rd ser. vol. ii. p. 465.—Tristram, Birds of Southern Palestine, in "Ibis," vol. i. p. 32.

The discovery by the Rev. Mr. Tristram of this truly African form in Asia Minor is a point of considerable interest to ornithologists; so much so, in fact, that I hasten to give a figure of the *Amydrus Tristrami* in the "Birds of Asia," taken from specimens collected by that gentleman, which he has kindly placed in my hands for the purpose. The following notes from his pen greatly enhance the interest of the subject.

"This handsome bird," says the Rev. H. B. Tristram, "which Mr. Sclater has done me the honour to name after me, I discovered in the Gorge of the Kedron, not far from the Dead Sea. Several pairs were breeding in the rocks among the cells hewn out by the old monks of Mar Saba. In habits and manners they reminded me somewhat of the Grakles of North America, but seem a strictly desert bird. The species ought to be found at Petra, if anywhere. The male has but two notes, but those are of wonderful power and of the richest volume. The roll of his music is something like that of the Organ-bird of Australia, and makes the rocks resound. The nest is placed in inaccessible crevices of the cliffs, and the birds are bold and fearless, allowing a stranger to approach very near while continuing their song, then suddenly breaking off for an instant and renewing it the moment one stands still. The plumage of the female is much inferior in brilliancy to that of the male; but she has the same rich chestnut wings."

Some doubt having arisen in my mind as to the specific value of this bird, the Palestine specimens were submitted to the inspection of Dr. Hartlaub of Bremen, who has paid so much attention to the birds of Africa, and his reply, addressed to myself, was as follows:—

"There cannot be the slightest doubt as to *Amydrus Tristrami* being a good species. It is nearly allied to the *A. fulvipennis*, Swains. (the *Nabourop* of Levaillant), of South and South-western Africa. The size of both species is the same. The differences are the following:—

"1. The beak of *A. Tristrami* is much longer and more robust than that of *A. fulvipennis*; it is also more arcuate. The colour of the beak is *corneous* in the *A. Tristrami*, and decidedly *paler* than that of *A. fulvipennis*, which in my specimen is nearly black.

"2. The tarsi are considerably longer in *fulvipennis* than in *Tristrami*. The only essential difference in the colouring of the two species occurs on the wing-feathers.

"*A. Tristrami.*	"*A. fulvipennis.*
Remiges majores sex primæ pogonio *externo et interno* concolores, pallide fulvæ, SCAPIS in hac parte NIGRIS.	Remiges majores sex primæ pogonio externo *rufæ*, interno *fulvæ*, SCAPIS *in hac parte nitide* ALBIDIS.

"The *apical part* of these remiges is *in both species blackish*, and the extension of this blackish colour is in both equally or subequally extended. If you want to know anything more about the genus *Amydrus* and its species, I must refer you to my 'Monograph of the *Lamprotornithinæ*' in the last part of Cabanis's 'Journal für Ornithologie,' lately published.

"I cannot say if there be any difference in the colouring of the females of the two species, there being only males of *A. fulvipennis* in our Collection."

The male has the head, upper and under surface glossy purple, duller on the vent; wings and tail dull black, margined with glossy green; primaries cinnamon, largely tipped with blackish brown; bill and feet black.

The female has the head, neck, and throat dark ashy grey striated with black; the remainder of the plumage as in the male, but much paler.

The Plate represents both sexes of the natural size.