

HESPERIPHONA AFFINIS, *Blyth.*

Allied Grosbeak.

Hesperiphona affinis, Blyth, Journ. Asiat. Soc. Beng., vol. xxiv. p. 179.—Jerd. Birds of Ind., vol. ii. part 1, p. 385.

THIS species is closely allied to, but yet very distinct from, the *Hesperiphona icterioïdes*. The male may at all times be distinguished by its yellow thighs, and the female by its grey head and throat, which offer a striking contrast to the dull wax-yellow of the body. Captain Pinwill has remarked that I have associated this sex with the male of *H. icterioïdes*; and I believe he is right as regards the front figure, but not the hinder one, which represents the true female of *H. icterioïdes*. It is somewhat strange, although extremely interesting, that so marked a difference should be found in the females of these nearly allied birds; but so it really is. The female of *H. affinis*, as before stated, has a distinct broad and wax-yellow body; while the same sex in *H. icterioïdes* has the abdomen, tail-coverts, and rump buff, whereas the other parts of the body, including the thighs, are grey. Captain Pinwill states, in a letter to me, that the present bird seems common enough near the Chumba district of the Himalayas, frequenting the forests of evergreen oaks, and the softer-fruited pines, the cones of which latter it destroys in great numbers, like its congener *H. icterioïdes*.

Mr. Jerdon informs us that "this is a somewhat smaller species than the *H. icterioïdes*, with a slightly smaller bill; the males of the two resemble each other very closely; but the females are more distinct, that of the present having the upper parts olive-green, tinged with yellowish on the rump, and more brightly so on the lower plumage; the wings and tail are black; the coverts, secondaries, and tertiaries broadly margined externally with yellowish green; the crown and ear-coverts ashy, passing into pale grey on the chin and throat; bill bluish in winter, yellow in summer.

"Hitherto this bird has been sent from the extreme west, viz. the Alpine Punjab."

In closing this somewhat meagre account of a very fine species of Grosbeak, I may state that my specimens have the yellow on the nape and rump very strongly suffused with chestnut, and that in other respects, particularly in their rather smaller size, they accord with Mr. Jerdon's remarks. That it is the western representative of the more eastern *H. icterioïdes*, there can be no doubt. Time will show if there be yet a third species to the eastward of our Indian possessions, as is the case with so many other birds inhabiting the great range of mountains known as the Himalayas.

Male.—Bill delicate greenish yellow; head, throat, sides of the mantle, wings, and tail rich black; all the rest of the plumage, including the thighs, yellow, the yellow being strongly tinged with chestnut in some specimens.

Female.—Bill bluish horn-colour; head and throat grey; wings and tail black; the rest of the plumage brimstone-yellow, which is brightest on the nape and under surface.

The Plate represents a male and a female, of the size of life.