

ENICURUS SCOULERI, Vigors.

Scouler's Forktail.

- Enicurus Scouleri*, Vig. in Proc. of Comm. of Sci. and Corr. of Zool. Soc., part i. 1830-1831, p. 174.—Gould, Cent. of Birds, pl. 28.—Gray, Gen. of Birds, vol. i. p. 204, *Enicurus*, sp. 8.—Gray, Cat. of Spec. and Draw. of Mamm. and Birds pres. to Brit. Mus. by B. H. Hodgson, Esq., p. 76.—Jameson in Calcutta Journ. Nat. Hist., vol. vii. p. 363.—Blyth, Journ. of Asiat. Soc. Beng., vol. xvi. p. 157.—Id. Cat. of Birds in Mus. Asiat. Soc. Calcutta, p. 159.—Bonap. Consp. Gen. Av., tom. i. p. 251, *Enicurus*, sp. 8.—Horsf. and Moore, Cat. of Birds in Mus. East. Ind. Comp., vol. i. p. 347.—Adams, in Proc. Zool. Soc., part xxvi. 1858, p. 489, and part xxvii. 1859, p. 179.—Jerd. Birds of India, vol. ii. pt. i. p. 214.
- *Scouleri* v. *heterurus*, Hodgs. in Gray's Zool. Misc. 1844, p. 83.
- *nigrifrons*, Hodgs., G. R. Gray, in Proc. of Zool. Soc. part xxvii. 1859, p. 102, young?—Jerd. Birds of India, vol. ii. part i. p. 215, young?
- Oong-sumbrek-pho* of the Lepchins.

THE southern side of the great Himalayan range is believed to be exclusively the habitat of the *Enicurus Scouleri*, the smallest species of a genus all the members of which are lovers of the beds of streams, turbulent waters, and cataracts, over which their delicately-formed feet enable them to trip with the utmost facility, and where, in the midst of a chaotic mass of stones, drift, and gravel, apparently unfitted for any bird's existence, they obtain their food.

"This little *Enicurus*," says Mr. Jerdon, "appears to be found throughout the whole extent of the Himalayas, but to be more numerous in their eastern portion; for Jameson says that it is rare in the north-west, and Adams, who observed it in Cashmere, states that it is not nearly so common as *E. maculatus*. About Darjeeling it is far from rare, but it does not ascend the streams so high as the spotted Forktail, being most abundant between 2000 and 5000 feet of elevation. It does not affect the smaller brooks, but chiefly good-sized rapid streams, and it may often be seen seated on a rock in the midst of a boiling torrent which is now and then partially submerged by a wave; and it feeds almost exclusively on rocks that are so washed over, following the retreating wave or climbing up a slippery rock with great ease. It often contends with the plumbeous water Redstart (*Ruticilla fuliginosa*) for a choice piece of rock, but is generally vanquished by its more spirited antagonist. It feeds on various water-insects, chiefly on the larvæ of *Neuroptera*, that frequent the wet rocks and the edges of rapids.

"A nest brought to me as of this species was found on a ledge of rock near a stream; it contained three eggs very similar to, but smaller than, those of *E. maculatus*."

The late Captain Boys, who met with the bird at Hawalbaugh in December, notes that it "frequents the sides of mountain-streams, and seems to delight in being washed by the spray of the torrent; it may be seen almost immersed in water, or at least so covered that I have lost sight of it for seconds together. Food, insects."

In his notes on 'The Birds of Cashmere and Ladakh,' Dr. Leith Adams states that the *E. Scouleri* is "often seen on the Chenab river near Kishtewar."

I suspect that the bird characterized in the 'Proceedings of the Zoological Society' for 1859 by Mr. G. R. Gray as *Enicurus nigrifrons*, Hodgs., is merely an immature example of the present species—an opinion to which Mr. Jerdon appears to incline; for, although he has described it separately, he remarks that the brown mottling of the breast "is rather a mark of nonage."

Band across the forehead pure white; head, neck, throat, and upper part of the back deep black; a few of the black feathers on the lower part of the breast tipped with white; wings black, the greater coverts largely tipped with white, forming a conspicuous band across the wing; shafts of all but the first two primaries white at the base; outer margins of the secondaries very narrowly edged with white; lower part of the back and upper-tail coverts white, the former crossed by an indistinct band of black; centre of the abdomen and under tail-coverts white; flanks mottled with slaty black; outer tail-feather white, two central tail-feathers black with white bases, the intermediate feathers white, tipped with black, the extent of the black increasing as the feathers approach the central ones; irides brown; bill black; legs and feet delicate fleshy white.

The immature bird has the forehead black and the throat white, mottled with brownish black; in other respects it is similar to the adult.

The Plate represents the two sexes and the supposed young (*E. nigrifrons*, Hodgs.) of the natural size.