

LIMONIDROMUS INDICUS.

Variegated Wagtail.

- Motacilla indica*, Gmel. Edit. Linn. Syst. Nat., tom. i. p. 962.—Lath. Gen. Hist., vol. vi. p. 334.—Gray and Mitch. Gen. of Birds, vol. i. p. 203.—Layard in Ann. and Mag. of Nat. Hist., 2nd ser. vol. xii. p. 268.
- Nemoricola indica*, Blyth, Journ. Asiat. Soc. Beng., vol. xvi. p. 429.—Id. Cat. of Birds in Mus. Asiat. Soc. Calcutta, p. 136.—Id. Fam. *Motacillide*, p. 4.—Jerd. in Madras Journ. of Lit. and Sci., vol. xiii. p. 132.—Bonap. Consp. Gen. Av., tom. i. p. 251.—Horsf. and Moore, Cat. of Birds in Mus. East Ind. Comp., vol. i. p. 353.
- Motacilla variegata*, Vieill. Ency. Méth., Orn., p. 408.—Jerd. in Madras Journ. of Lit. and Sci., vol. xi. p. 10.
- Nget Rahat* of the Arracanese (Blyth).
- Gomarita* ("Dungspreader"), Ceylon, Layard.
- Rode-Rode*, Malay (Blyth).

It has always appeared to me that a close affinity exists between the Yellow Wagtails, forming the genus *Budytes*, and the Titlarks, genus *Anthus*; and this impression is strengthened by the existence of the bird forming the subject of the present memoir, the affinity of which, it must however be admitted, leans to the side of *Budytes* rather than to that of *Anthus*. I have been constrained to propose a new generic name for this singular little bird, that of *Nemoricola* (assigned to it by Mr. Blyth) having been previously employed by Mr. Hodgson for a very different group of birds.

Of this form only one species has yet been discovered. That it ranges rather widely over India and the islands, is evident from the following notes by Mr. Blyth and Mr. Layard. Mr. Blyth states that the sexes are alike in colouring, in which respect it offers an alliance to the Pipits, and differs from the Yellow Wagtails.

"This species," says Mr. Blyth, "appears to be common along the whole eastern coast of the Bay of Bengal, from Arakan to the Malayan Peninsula and also Sumatra, where it was observed by the late Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles. In Lower Bengal it is not rare; but it would seem to be scarce in the Peninsula of India, where Mr. Jerdon had never personally met with it at the time he wrote his excellent and useful Catalogue of the birds of that part of the country. In the vicinity of Calcutta I have procured it at all seasons: it inhabits groves and gardens, mango-topes, and the neighbourhood of bambo-clumps, feeding on the ground, and perching much like the Tree Pipits. I do not remember to have seen it from the Himalayas, nor from any part of the Upper Provinces of Hindustan; and I am not aware that it has any proper song."

"In Ceylon," says Mr. Layard, "this elegant little bird is met with in shady places where cattle have been. It scratches among the ordure, in search of the larvæ of insects; hence its native name. It is migratory in its habits."

The following is Mr. Blyth's description of this species:—

"Above, greenish olive-brown; below, white or yellowish white, tinged with brown on the flanks; a whitish supercilium, and a black gorget across the upper part of the breast, giving out a mesial black line below; a second and imperfect black gorget on the lower part of the breast, united laterally upwards with the first, and in front not continued to the middle so as to meet the mesial line given off by the first; wings blackish, marked with two broad whitish bands formed by the tips of the coverts, a third at the base of the primaries, and a fourth near the tips of the secondaries and continued along the edge of the longest tertiary; medial tail-feathers brown, the next dusky, the outermost white, with generally a brown outer margin and black base extending nearly half the length of the inner web, and the penultimate with white only on its terminal half; bill dusky above, the lower mandible whitish; legs whitish, tinged with purplish brown; the toes darker.

"Sexes alike, and no seasonal difference of colouring."

The figures are of the natural size.