

PIPASTES AGILIS.

Indian Tree-Pipit.

- Anthus agilis*, Sykes in Proc. of Comm. of Sci. and Corr. of Zool. Soc., pt. ii. p. 91.—Horsf. and Moore, Cat. of Birds in Mus. East-Ind. Comp., vol. i. p. 354.—Adams in Proc. Zool. Soc., part xxvi. 1858, p. 485.
—Swinh. in 'Ibis,' vol. v. p. 310, and in Proc. Zool. Soc., 1863, pp. 273, 334.
—*maculatus*, Hodgs. in Gray's Zool. Misc., 1844, p. 83.—Bonap. Consp. Gen. Av., tom. i. p. 248, *Anthus*, sp. 17.
Dendronanthus maculatus, Blyth, Cat. of Birds in Mus. Asiat. Soc. Calcutta, p. 135.
Anthus brevirostris, Hodgs. in Gray's Zool. Misc., 1844, p. 83.
—*arboreus*, Jerd. Madras Journ. of Lit. and Sci., vol. xi. p. 11.—Gray, List. of Spec. and Draw. of Mamm. and Birds presented to Brit. Mus. by B. H. Hodgson, Esq., p. 76.
—*trivialis*, Blyth, Journ. Asiat. Soc. Beng., vol. xvi. p. 432.—(Horsfield & Moore.)
Pipastes agilis, Jerd. Birds of India, vol. ii. pt. i. p. 228.
Musarichi, Hindoos, Jerdon.
Khorasani churi of some falconers, Jerdon.
Liku-jitta, Telegus, (*i. e.* Blind bird) Jerdon.

THE present bird and the Tree-Pipit of England (the *Anthus arboreus* of authors) are so very similar that it requires the discriminating eye of the ornithologist to distinguish one from the other; some persons, and among them Mr. Swinhoe, consider that it can scarcely be regarded as more than a race of the European bird, while Mr. Jerdon and Mr. Blyth treat it as a separate species. The differences are certainly very trivial, but they are as constant as those which are found between many other European and Indian birds which were formerly believed to be identical, but which are now admitted to be distinct. The Indian bird is always rather larger than its European ally, and moreover differs from it in having the back of a greener hue, and less strongly striated with dark brown, while the throat is decidedly of a deeper fulvous, and the markings of the breast more conspicuous.

The *Pipastes agilis* enjoys a very extensive range in the eastern parts of the Old World, being very generally distributed over the peninsula of India, China, Formosa, and, according to Mr. Swinhoe, Japan. As is the case with our own Tree-Pipit, but little difference occurs in the colouring of the two sexes. Of the nidification scarcely anything appears to be known.

Mr. Blyth informs us that "this bird abounds in Bengal during the cold season, and, it would seem, in suitable localities throughout the country, frequenting groves and gardens, with a disposition to be social, if not gregarious, and, where an extent of thin tree-jungle harbours them, in considerable numbers. I have noticed that, towards evening, they commonly fly to and fro over their haunts in scattered parties, now perhaps two or three, then several, and then perchance a solitary bird, each frequently uttering a slight chirp, and often several descending to alight for a while near together on the same tree; this restlessness they will continue to evince till it is getting dark; and it would scarcely be guessed what bird it was, till one had been brought down. I never heard this species sing. Its flesh is used as a restorative to the Bhyree (*Falco peregrinus*), and is said to be very delicate."

"The Indian Tree-Pipit," says Mr. Jerdon, "is very similar to, but appears to differ slightly from, its European congener. It is found over all India in the cold season; for it is a winter visitant only, arriving early in October, and departing about the end of April. It frequents gardens, groves, and thin tree-jungle, and occasionally grain-fields, the beds of woody streams, the edges of tanks, and other moist places. It usually feeds on the ground, upon various insects and seeds, but upon being disturbed flies up at once to the nearest tree; it now and then, however, feeds on trees, hopping about the upper branches and occasionally snapping at an insect on the wing. It is said by the natives to kill many mosquitoes; hence some of its native names. It is taken in great numbers for the table at Calcutta and elsewhere in Bengal, and sold as Ortolan."

Dr. Leith Adams states that this species is common around Poonah, in the Deccan, and the Northern Punjab; that it is gregarious during winter in the latter country, and less abundant on the lower Himalayan range.

Speaking of the *P. agilis* as observed by him in China, Mr. Swinhoe says, "This Tree-Pipit stays the winter in the south of China, and summers in the north, Amoorland, and Japan." In his Notes on Formosan Ornithology, he remarks that it "is abundant in winter in all the groves and copses, feeding about under the shadow of the trees. It leaves for the north in spring, few, if any, remaining to breed. The younger birds are greener on the back, and distinctly spotted; in this plumage they might almost be mistaken for the European *A. arboreus*. In the adults the upper parts become more sombre, and the spots