

## MOTACILLA PERSONATA, *Gould.*

### Masked Wagtail.

*Motacilla Dukhunensis*, Blyth, on the Family *Motacillidæ*, p. 3.

---

THE drawing on the accompanying Plate represents a very distinct species of Wagtail, whose native country I believe to be Bengal and the central and northern parts of Hindostan ; its range may also extend to Ceylon, but of this I have no positive evidence. I have never seen it from the Deccan or the western parts of the Indian peninsula, its place there being apparently supplied by the *Motacilla Maderaspatana* and *M. Dukhunensis*.

In its full summer dress the *Motacilla personata* has the throat, chest, ear-coverts, sides and back of the neck jet-black, while the back is clear ash-grey, and both the greater and lesser wing-coverts are so broadly margined with white as to give that part of the wing the appearance of being wholly of that hue ; as winter approaches the black of the throat becomes speckled with white, and when the change has been completed, a crescentic mark of black across the chest almost alone remains.

In its summer dress it is at once distinguished from its congeners by the black colouring of the sides of the neck, and by the forehead and space surrounding the eye being alone white, whence the specific name of *personata*, or masked.

I have but little doubt of this being the bird which Mr. Blyth, in his paper on the *Motacillidæ*, has considered to be identical with the *M. Dukhunensis* of Sykes, inasmuch as he describes it to have "the neck black all round ;" and it may be the bird which Mr. Jerdon states "is very common over most of the table-land [of the Indian peninsula] during the cold weather only, migrating to the north at the commencement of the hot season. It frequents rivers, open fields, gardens, villages, stable-yards, &c., and occasionally even enters houses, feeding on a great variety of insects."

In summer the forehead and a space surrounding each eye is pure white ; the chin, throat, breast, sides of the neck, occiput and back of the neck black ; all the upper surface and scapularies grey, deepening into black on the apical portion of the upper tail-coverts ; wings dark brown, the coverts and secondaries broadly margined with white, and the primaries very narrowly edged with white ; two outer tail-feathers on each side white, margined on the basal portion of their inner webs with black ; the remainder black, with the exception of the margins of the external webs of two centre ones, which in fresh-moulted feathers are white ; under surface white, washed with grey on the flanks ; irides brown ; bill and feet blackish brown.

As winter approaches the black of the throat becomes mottled with white, and when the change is perfected, a crescentic mark of black across the chest probably alone remains.

The accompanying Plate gives a correct representation of both these states ; the upper figure that of the full summer dress, the lower the bird undergoing the change.

The figures are of the size of life.