

SPHENOCICHLA HUMII.

Hume's Wedge-billed Wren.

Heterorhynchus humii, Mandelli, Str. F. 1873, p. 415.

Stachyrrhynchus humii, Hume, Str. F. 1879, p. 95.

Sphenocichla humii, Sharpe, Brit. Mus. Cat. vi. p. 283 (1881: ♂).

THIS extraordinary bird was described by Mr. Mandelli from specimens procured in Native Sikkim, and was named by him *Heterorhynchus*. This title, however, had already been employed by Lafresnaye, and Mr. Hume's name of *Stachyrrhynchus* would have had to be used; but before the latter was published, Colonel Godwin-Austen and Lord Tweeddale had described a second species from Manipur, which they had called *Sphenocichla*; and there can be no doubt that this is the correct generic name to be employed.

Mr. Hume's proposed title is a very good one for expressing the affinities of the genus; for the wedge-shaped bill is very similar to that of *Stachyris*; and at the same time the absence of bristles to the gape proves that it is a true Wren, and its place in the family is probably close to *Pnoepyga*.

As the birds were lent me by Colonel Godwin-Austen as two distinct species, I have figured *S. roberti* as different from *S. humii*; but I must express great doubts as to their being really two species, and Mr. Sharpe considers them undoubtedly identical.

The following is a description of *S. humii*, taken from the British Museum 'Catalogue of Birds,' where Mr. Sharpe has described it as the male of the species.

"*Adult male*. General colour above scaly, the feathers being brown in the centre, edged with black, the feathers on the head and mantle with buffy-white shaft-lines, less distinct on the lower back and rump, the dorsal feathers indistinctly waved with narrow blackish cross-bars; upper tail-coverts reddish brown, narrowly barred with indistinct blackish cross lines; wing-coverts like the back, edged and obscurely barred in the same manner; some of the greater coverts more ochraceous brown towards the tips; quills blackish brown, obscurely barred with lighter brown and black externally, the bars a little more distinct towards the end of the secondaries; upper tail-coverts and tail rather more reddish brown, numerously barred with blackish brown, the bars about twenty-one in number; forehead blacker than the head, with very distinct white shaft-streaks, the lores and sides of the crown similarly coloured; an eyebrow of light-ashy feathers tipped with white, drawn from above the eye to the sides of the neck, which is also mottled with the same ashy-spotted feathers; ear-coverts and cheeks blackish, narrowly streaked with white shaft-lines, as also the fore part of the cheeks; under surface of body blackish brown, the feathers of the throat and breast obsoletely margined with dull ashy, producing a scaly appearance; chin with distinct white shaft-lines; centre of breast ashy, the lateral feathers blackish, tipped with ashy; flank-feathers and vent blackish, tipped with fulvous brown; under tail-coverts entirely fulvous brown; under wing-coverts light fulvous brown, edged with blackish, the outer ones more ashy; quills brown below, ashy fulvous along the edge of the inner web. Total length 6·3 inches, culmen 1·0, wing 2·7, tail 2·6, tarsus 1·05."

The Plate represent a male bird in two positions; and the figures are drawn from a fine specimen obtained in Native Sikkim by Mr. Mandelli and lent to me by Colonel Godwin-Austen, in whose collection it now is. The figures are of about the natural size.

[R. B. S.]