

ANORTHURA FORMOSA.

Spotted Wren.

Troglodytes punctatus, Blyth (nec Boie), Journ. As. Soc. Beng. xiv. p. 589 (1845).—Id. Cat. Birds Mus. As. Soc. p. 158 (1849).—Bp. Consp. Gen. Av. i. p. 222 (1850).—Jerd. Birds of India, i. p. 492 (1862).—Gray, Hand-l. Birds, i. p. 188, no. 2565 (1869).—Hume, Stray Feathers, 1874, p. 525, 1877, p. 238, 1879, p. 93.

Troglodytes formosus, Walden, Ibis, 1874, p. 91.—Ramsay, Orn. Mem. Tweed. p. 253 (1881).

Anorthura formosa, Sharpe, Brit. Mus. Cat. of Birds, vi. p. 279 (1881).

THIS would appear to be an extremely rare species; for Dr. Jerdon in his 'Birds of India' states that he had only procured one specimen at Darjiling, so that up to the year 1862 this appears to have been the only one obtained since Mr. Blyth's typical example. Mr. Hume's collection doubtless contains examples; but as far as this country is concerned, I believe that only a single individual is known; and that one is in the collection of the late Marquis of Tweeddale.

Some little controversy has arisen as to the name which this species should bear. It would seem that before Mr. Blyth described the species the name *punctatus* had already been bestowed by Boie; but this title has always been considered a synonym of *Anorthura troglodytes*; the Common Wren of Europe. Under these circumstances the late Lord Tweeddale proposed the name of *Troglodytes formosus* for the Darjiling species; and to this Mr. Hume has taken exception. He writes:—"In this I am quite unable to concur; and as it involves, to my notion, a fundamental error in principle, I feel bound to protest against it. Had Brehm's name stood for the species to which it was applied, the proposed change would be correct; but, as a fact, the name does not stand, it has become a mere synonym, is dead for our purposes, and therefore the adjective *punctatus* is again available to characterize some other species of the genus. Blyth did thus utilize it, and his name *punctatus* should, in my opinion, most assuredly stand." I am sorry I cannot follow Mr. Hume in his conclusions, backed up as they are by his argument in 'Stray Feathers' for 1877, p. 238; for I think that if a name has been given to any species before, it is better not to employ it again under any circumstances; and I have therefore adopted Lord Walden's correction.

The present species stands quite alone in its coloration, and is much more like a true Timeline bird than a Wren. The following description is copied from Mr. Sharpe's 'Catalogue of Birds':—

Adult. General colour above smoky brown, inclining to dull rufous-brown on the lower back and rump, and verging to more decided rufous on the upper tail-coverts; on all the upper parts there are tiny rounded subterminal spots of whitish or pale fulvous, margined with dusky blackish, these spots being absent only on the crown of the head; wing-coverts dusky brown, with rather larger spots of buffy whitish; the greater coverts rufous, mottled on the outer web and having a buffy-white spot at the tip; quills blackish, externally rufous, with five broad bands of black, the inner secondaries more narrowly barred and having a few terminal spots of white; tail rufous, barred with blackish, about nine narrow bars being perceptible on the centre feathers; lores and sides of face smoky brown, mottled with fulvous spots, indistinct on the lores but plainer on the cheeks; the ear-coverts streaked narrowly with fulvous; throat light sandy buff, deepening in colour on the breast and abdomen; the whole under surface mottled with triangular whitish spots, which are brought into relief by dusky central spots, all the feathers bordered by a thin dusky line and freckled with minute dots of dusky blackish; the flanks rather browner than the abdomen; under wing-coverts and axillaries reddish brown, slightly mottled with dusky bars; quills dusky brown below, ashy along the margin of the inner web, and showing some fulvous bars towards the ends; "bill horny brown; legs pale brown; iris brown" (*Jerdon*). Total length 4·6 inches, culmen 0·6, wing 1·75, tail 1·25, tarsus 0·7.

I am indebted to Captain Wardlaw Ramsay for the loan of the specimen in the Tweeddale collection, from which Mr. Sharpe's description was also taken. The figures in the Plate are drawn from this specimen, and represent the species of the natural size.

[R. B. S.]