

## PRATINCOLA LEUCURA, *Blyth*.

### White-tailed Bush-Chat.

*Pratincola leucura*, Blyth, Journ. Asiat. Soc. Beng., vol. xvi. p. 474.—Id. Cat. of Birds in Mus. Asiat. Soc. Calcutta, p. 170.—Jerd. Birds of India, vol. ii. part i. p. 162.

*Khar-pidda*, Hindoos at Monghyr.

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THIS is one of the most conspicuously marked Bush-Chats inhabiting India, where there are at least six species, one or two of which are very similar to our own members of the genus *Pratincola*—a form strictly confined to the old world, being found in Europe, Asia, and Africa, but not in America. These little birds affect sterile and scrubby districts rather than woods and forests, and do not resort to the ground so much as the true *Saxicolæ* or Wheatears, to which they are very nearly allied, but whose province is open wastes, the crowns of hills, and rocky districts; they are also more stationary in their habits, seldom quitting the countries they respectively frequent.

Of the habits and disposition of the White-tailed Bush-Chat little appears to be known; but it may be inferred that they are very similar to those of the other members of the genus. Its most intimate allies in India are *Pratincola indica* and *P. insignis*. As is the case with most of the species, the female differs considerably from the male; for, although she presents a similar style of plumage, her tints are much less gay and decided.

The following note is extracted from Mr. Jerdon's valuable 'Birds of India.'

"The White-tailed Bush-Chat till lately had only been procured in Sindh, whence it was sent by Sir A. Burnes to the Museum of the Asiatic Society in Calcutta. I found it far from rare in Thyet-myo in Upper Burmah, frequenting grassy chirrs on the the Irrawaddy, but never the low jungles that lined the banks. Somewhat to my surprise, I observed it to be most abundant in the Gangetic valley from Rajmehal to Monghyr, frequenting fields and low grasses. It is a permanent resident and breeds here; for I found the young birds just flown in April, but did not succeed in procuring the nest."

The male has the head, neck, throat, back, and wing-coverts deep black; bases of the secondaries and a few of the innermost larger coverts white, forming a conspicuous patch on the wing, in the centre of the breast a patch of bright rufous; sides of the neck and breast, abdomen, and under tail-coverts white; primaries and secondaries very dark brown, edged with pale brown; two centre tail-feathers black; the remainder white with the exception of the apical portion of the outer and the tips of both webs, which are dark brown, becoming pale brown on the extreme edge; bill and feet black.

The whole of the upper surface, wings, and tail of the female are brown, with a light edging to each feather; her white wing-spot is less conspicuous; and the under surface is creamy white, tinged with rufous on the breast; bill and feet black: thus it will be seen that the female is very similar to the female of *P. indica*, and exhibits no trace of the white marking of the tail so conspicuous in the opposite sex.

The Plate represents the two sexes of the natural size. The plant is the *Berberis concinna*, Hook. fil., in flower.