

## STAPHIDA TORQUEOLA, *Swinh.*

### Grey-headed Staphida.

*Siva torqueola*, Swinh. in Ann. and Mag. Nat. Hist., 1870, vol. v. p. 174.

WHEN I published my Plate and account of Mr. Moore's *Ixulus castaneiceps* I felt convinced in my own mind that the bird had been placed in a genus to which it did not belong, if indeed, it could be assigned to any one that had then been proposed. Since that period Mr. Swinhoe has discovered another species of the same form, and, like Mr. Moore, placed it in a genus (*Siva*) to which it does not pertain; this error, however, he has now corrected, as will be seen from the note with which he has favoured me, and which is given below. In future, therefore, the *Ixulus castaneiceps* will stand as *Staphida castaneiceps*, and the present bird as *S. torqueola*. The former is supposed to be a native of Afghanistan, or the Khasia Hills, while the latter was obtained in China. So little is known respecting both these birds that we are unable to state if there is any difference in the colouring of the sexes, and are in an equal degree ignorant of their habits and economy. The present species has a grey crown, while that of *S. castaneiceps* (as the name implies) is of a chestnut-brown; they also differ in some other respects sufficiently to convince any one conversant with the study of birds that they are distinct species.

The following is the note by Mr. Swinhoe above referred to:—

“I was wrong in referring this species to Hodgson's genus *Siva*. It is most like an *Ixulus* with a deeply graduated tail; and on comparing it with *Ixulus castaneiceps*, which is of similar form, the two birds might with propriety be placed in a subgenus, for which I would recommend the name *Staphida*. I have nothing to record of the North-China bird, as the only two specimens I have procured were brought by a hunter, in December 1867, from the Tingchow Mountains, about one hundred miles north-west of the island of Amoy.

“Crown greyish brown, each feather edged with bluish grey and having a pale stem; from the base of the under mandible, under the eye, and round the nape runs a broad line of chestnut-brown, most of the feathers with a central white streak; back, scapularies, and rump olive-brown, with the shafts of most of the two former whitish; tail-coverts of a deeper hue; under surface white, tinged with bluish grey; tibials deep olive-brown, the same colour, but of a lighter shade, marking the central flanks and more slightly, in the form of obscure bars, the sides of the breast; vent-feathers blackish brown, with shafts and broad tips of white; axillaries white, with a brown- and white-barred carpal edge; under edges of the quills pale salmon-colour; wing-feathers hair-brown, margined with reddish olive, the three inner tertiaries having white shafts and margins; tail deep hair-brown, the four outer feathers tipped with white, increasing outwardly, and on the two outermost including the external web; bill light brown; legs, toes, and claws brownish flesh-colour.”

“Length about 5 inches; wing 2·7, tail 2·4; bill, to gape, ·55, breadth of base ·22; tarse ·66.

“The tarse is thick, and the hind toe and claw strong; the other claws are smaller, cultrated, well-curved, and sharp.

“*Wing*.—The third quill, which is slightly longer than the fourth, is the longest in the wing; the first is ·45 shorter, and the second ·1 shorter than the third.

“*Tail*.—Consists of twelve broad greatly graduated feathers; the fifth and sixth rectrices are nearly equal in length; the first is ·72 shorter, the second ·35, the third ·2, the fourth ·1.”

The figures are of the natural size.