

SUYA LEPIDA.

Little Suyu.

Prinia lepida, Blyth, Journ. Asiat. Soc. Beng., vol. xiii. p. 376.

Drymoica lepida, Blyth, Journ. Asiat. Soc. Beng., vol. xvi. p. 460.—Ib. Cat. of Birds in Mus. Asiat. Soc. of Calcutta, p. 123.—Gray and Mitch. Gen. of Birds, vol. i. p. 164, *Drymoica*, sp. 64.

Suya lepida, Bonap. Consp. Gen. Av., p. 281.—Horsf. Cat. of Birds in Mus. East Ind. Comp., vol. i. p. 327.

As the singular little bird here represented was the first contribution to Indian ornithology sent to this country by my son, it will always be regarded by me as an object of especial interest, and the more so, as prior to the present time the species was extremely rare in our collections; and my own was destitute of any example. The specimen in question was transmitted to me in a letter, dated “Kurrachee in Scinde, Oct. 5, 1854,” accompanied with the following remark:—

“Enclosed is a curious little bird which I shot on the sea-shore. What is its name? It frequents the low salt-marsh plants that grow at the edge of, and even in the water. It is extremely difficult to shoot, and when shot, equally as difficult to find; it runs among the roots, and occasionally perches on a twig, gives forth a wheezy feeble song, and instantly drops into the thicket. The eyes are dark.”

The only other note respecting this species on record is from the pen of Mr. Blyth, in the thirteenth volume of the “Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal,” where he states that “this bird inhabits low scrub, intermixed with tufts of coarse sedgy grass, growing in sandy places by the river side, and it frequently flies out to feed among the thin herbage growing along the margins of the sand-dunes.”

Since the receipt of the specimen above-mentioned, additional examples from the same source have reached me, and have been forwarded, with some other species of birds, to the Museum of the East India Company in Leadenhall Street, where all my son’s future collections, or such portions of them as may be required for the Collection, will be deposited.

There is no perceptible difference in the colouring of the sexes, but I find that in one of the specimens last received, which I consider to be a youthful bird, a wash of yellow pervades the greyish-white of the under surface.

General colour of the upper surface light olive-grey, with a dusky streak down the centre of each feather, broadest on the head and back; wings light brown, margined with olive-grey; upper surface of the tail faintly banded with narrow transverse dusky lines; under surface pale, with whitish tips, behind which is a dusky band; lores, a slight superciliary stripe, and the under surface greyish-white; irides brown; bill brown, fleshy below; feet fleshy-yellow.

The figures are the size of life.