TURDINUS BREVICAUDATUS, Blyth.

Short-tailed Turdinus.

Turdinus brevicaudatus, Blyth, Journ. Asiat. Soc. Beng., vol. xxiv. p. 272.—God.-Aust. Journ. Asiat. Soc. Beng., vol. xxxix. p 269.

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There is no group of birds with which we are less acquainted than that of which the present one is a member; almost all we know respecting them is that several of the species are constantly found in the collections of birds sent to this country from Singapore.

The species here represented appears to range from the Tenasserim provinces to the Khasia Hills; a fine example from which latter locality was kindly lent to me by Mr. Jerdon.

All the information on record respecting the *Turdinus brevicaudatus* is comprised in the following notes by Mr. Blyth, extracted from the twenty-fourth volume of the 'Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.' It belongs to a form that is very well known, and quite worthy of the attention of ornithologists; and, as no one could furnish a better monograph of these little brown birds, and no one has a richer store of materials for the purpose than Lord Walden, I trust he will take up the subject, and by so doing confer a great boon upon his brother naturalists. As a proof that this species at least has not escaped his attention, I may mention that, unaware of its having been previously characterized, his Lordship has given a description of it in the 'Annals and Magazine of Natural History' for 1871, under the name of *Turdinus striatus*, from the markings of the throat, which name must of course sink into a synonym.

Mr. Blyth, when characterizing this bird, says:—"A third and more aberrant species, remarkable for its short tail, in which respect the Malayan T. macrodactylus is intermediate to this and the preceding species (T. crispifrons).

"These birds belong to a group which is preeminently difficult of classification, viz. the great *Timalia* series, which obtains its maximum development in the Malayan peninsula. As a genus or subgenus it is barely separable from *Trichostoma*, nobis, and this again from *Malacopteron*, *Alcippe*, nobis (exemplified by *Brachypteryx sepiaria*, Horsfield, and numerous other species affined to it). *Turdinus* is distinguished by its robust form, and especially by its peculiarly mottled plumage, the feathers being mostly pale-shafted and black-edged.

"Colour of the upper parts much as in *T. crispifrons*, but somewhat more rufescent, and the feathers still softer and less elongated; of a rich olive-brown, black bordered and paler towards the shaft; at the forehead inclining to ashy, and scarcely stiffened; plumage over the rump decomposed and excessively dense and copious; throat mingled dusky and whitish, the dark part occupying the tip of each feather, and forming a series of striæ; remainder of the under surface ferruginous, deepest on the middle of belly and under tail-coverts; a series of whitish terminal specks on the great range of wing-coverts, and others tipping the secondaries and tertiaries; bill dusky above, pale beneath; legs pale, with whitish claws.

"Size comparatively small. Length about $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches; of which the tail is $1\frac{5}{8}$ in., its outermost feather in. shorter than the medial; closed wing $2\frac{1}{4}$ in., more rounded than in the two other species, having the sixth to the tenth primaries subequal and the longest; bill to gape $\frac{1}{16}$ in.; tarsi $\frac{7}{8}$ in."

The following is Lord Walden's description of the bird under the name of T. striatus:—
"Feathers of the head, nape, and back cinereous brown, narrowly edged with a rich ruddy brown, changing to dark brown on the margins. Wings and tail pale brown, tinged with rufous. The long and lax upper tail-coverts brown, tipped with ferruginous; under tail-coverts bright rust-colour. Chin, throat, and upper breast-feathers white at the base and on the edges, with brown centres. Abdominal region and flanks upper breast-feathers white at the base and on the edges, with brown. Upper mandible horn-colour; pale brown, tinged with rufous. Lores, cheeks, and ear-coverts pale brown. Upper mandible horn-colour; pale brown, inclining to yellow. Legs yellowish brown. Bill from forehead $\frac{6}{8}$ of an inch, wing $2\frac{3}{8}$, tail 2 inches, tarsus $\frac{7}{8}$."

The figures are of the natural size.