

DRYMOCHARES STELLATUS, *Gould.*

Stellated Shortwing.

Brachypteryx (Drymochares) stellatus, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., 1868, p. 218.

MR. BLYTH, who has so assiduously investigated the avifauna of India, and whose writings on the subject are familiar to every ornithologist, first called my attention to this interesting species, assuring me that it was new, and consequently a desirable bird to be at once figured in my 'Birds of Asia'; nor am I less indebted to Lieut. C. V. Eccles, of the Rifle Brigade, by whom two specimens were brought to England, for the loan of them for the purpose of describing and figuring—but still more for his liberality in presenting me with one, the other (with equal liberality) being added to the National Collection at the British Museum. In the 'Proceedings of the Zoological Society' above referred to, I placed this bird in the genus *Brachypteryx*, but, in case ornithologists should deem the situation an erroneous one, I at the same time proposed for it the sub-generic title of *Drymochares*, and remarked, "In its structure and in its dense and silky plumage this bird is so closely allied to the smaller members of the genus *Brachypteryx* as scarcely to be removeable from them; and I should not have ventured to suggest a separate generic title, were there not so great a difference in its colour and markings. The beautiful stellations of the breast render it specifically different from every other bird with which I am acquainted, while the black crescentic wavy lines of the chest and the chestnut colouring of the back distinguish it from all the species of the genus *Brachypteryx*, to which, in the lengthened form of its thighs, tarsi, and toes, it bears a striking resemblance. Some may be inclined to regard the bird as a member of the old genus, while others may consider its colour, markings, and *tout ensemble* sufficiently different to justify the divisional name" I have suggested.

In size the *Drymochares stellatus* is about twice that of the European Wren (*Troglodytes Europæus*). Its lengthened tarsi and general structure indicate that stony scrubby places are its natural abode; while its dense and silky plumage proves, to my mind at least, that they must also be damp or humid. It is not often that we receive an Indian bird that has escaped the searching eye of Mr. Hodgson; but the present one certainly has eluded his observation—a circumstance which is doubtless due to the secluded habits of the species. The two specimens above mentioned were brought, with many other birds, direct from the rich country of Nepaul. Lieut. Eccles, unfortunately, could not give me any precise information as to where his specimens were procured, further than that he believes they were shot on the dense scrubby side of the mountains, at an elevation of about 10,000 feet.

Forehead, ear-coverts, breast, chest, and abdomen grey, crossed by numerous narrow wavy lines of black; at the tip of each of the feathers of the abdomen, flanks, under (and some few of the upper) tail-coverts an irregular arrowhead-shaped mark of white; lores black; all the upper surface, wings, and tail chestnut-red; bill black; feet brown.

Total length $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches, bill $\frac{5}{8}$, wing $2\frac{3}{4}$, tail 2, tarsi $1\frac{1}{4}$.

The figures are of the size of life.