ACTINODURA NIPALENSIS, Hodgs.

Nepaulese Actinodura.

Cinclosoma nipalensis, Hodgs. in Asiat. Res., vol. xix. p. 145.

Actinodura nipalensis, Gray, Cat. of Spec. and Draw. of Mamm. and Birds pres. to Brit. Mus. by B. H. Hodgson, Esq., p. 84.—Gray, Gen. of Birds, vol. i. p. 226, Actinodura, sp. 2.—Blyth, Cat. of Birds in Mus. Asiat. Soc. Calcutta, p. 98.—Horsf. and Moore Cat. of Birds in Mus. East. Ind. Comp. vol. i. p. 212.—Jerd. Birds of India, vol. ii. part i. p. 53.

Ixops nipalensis, Hodgs. in Gray's Zool. Misc., 1844, p. 84.

Ramnio-pho of the Lepchins. (Jerdon.)

The Actinodura Nipalensis, although very similar in colour to A. Egertoni, differs from that species in its shorter and more rounded tail, in the feathers of that organ being of a much darker hue, the two centre ones alone being brown, and that only on their basal half, their apical portions being black; another difference also occurs in the absence of white on the abdomen, and if a further comparison be necessary, the black stripe from the base of the under mandible to the lower part of the throat is a feature by which the present species may always be recognized. Mr. Jerdon, who is the only person who has written a word on its habits, states that it is strictly a mountain species, and that it lives at a much greater elevation in Nepaul than its near ally. Judging from its structure and the silky character of its plumage, I should have supposed this bird to be an inhabitant of scrubby underwood and dense herbage, but it is said to frequent high trees.

"The A. Nipalensis," says Mr. Jerdon, "replaces the A. Egertoni at higher elevations, being found from about 7000 to 10,000 feet and upwards. It has only been procured in the S.E. Himalayas, in Nepal, Sikhim, and Bootan. It may be said to be more arboreal than its ally, for it is frequently seen perched on the very tops of moderate-sized trees. It feeds chiefly on insects, and I found it, on Mount Tongloo, feeding on the various insects that infest the flowers of the rhododendrons. I did not obtain the nest of either species, but presume they build on high trees."

Like the Actinodura Egertoni, examples of the A. Nipalensis have been for many years in this country, whence from time to time some of them have been sent to the continental museums, which are dependent upon us for this and many other species peculiar to the hill districts of the Himalayas, and particularly to those of Nepaul and the neighbouring countries.

Crown of the head, crest, and nape dark brown, with a stripe of pale greyish brown down the centre of each feather; cheeks and ear-coverts dark grey; stripe from the lower mandible passing beneath the ear-coverts black; upper surface and wing-coverts dark rufous; spurious wing black; wings dark slaty brown, the three outer primaries unmarked, the remainder and the secondaries crossed on their outer webs with numerous broad bands of rufous, which extend on to the inner webs of those nearest the body; tail-feathers alternately banded on their basal two-thirds with rufous and black, the apical third black without bars, but the lateral ones tipped with white, which increases in extent as the feathers recede from the centre; chin dull white; breast and centre of the abdomen ashy; flanks, vent, thighs, and under tail-coverts dull rufous; irides brown; bill dark horn-colour; legs light fleshy brown.

The figures are of the natural size. The plant is the Codonopsis cordata.