TROCHALOPTERON ELLIOTII, J. Verr.

Elliot's Trochalopteron.

Trochalopteron Elliotii, J. Verr. Nouv. Archiv. du Mus., tom. vi., Bull. p. 36 & tom. vii., Bull. p. 44.—David, ibid., tom. vii., Bull. p. 6.

The Trochalopteron Ellioti, being a showy and interesting species, is well worthy of bearing the name of the gentleman to whom it has been dedicated. Its native country is Northern China and the adjacent provinces of Thibet, whence examples were brought to France, with other novelties from the same localities, by the Abbé Armand David, from whose brief but interesting notes the reader will learn that it is a very familiar bird, and commonly known to the inhabitants of its native regions. As neither myself nor any other naturalist except M. David knows any thing respecting its habits and economy, I am sure I shall be excused for transcribing what he has published on the subject, through the medium of my friend M. Jules Verreaux, in the Bulletin of the seventh volume of the 'Nouvelles Archives du Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle de Paris.'

Every author being naturally anxious to make known new discoveries in his own branch of science as early as possible, I hasten to give a figure of this beautiful species in the 'Birds of Asia,' feeling assured that the accompanying illustration will be looked upon with pleasure by every one. It will there be seen that its fine but harmonious colouring must show conspicuously during flight, and add considerably to the interest of the scenery of the surrounding brushes, as well as to that of the gardens of the inhabitants of Moupin, who appear to regard it with favour, and to exempt it from molestation when it familiarly intrudes itself into their dwellings.

The following is M. Verreaux's description and account of this species.

"The general colour is of a greyish olive-brown, greyer upon the head; a great part of the feathers of the head, neck, and breast are more or less terminated with silvery white; numerous brown spots centred with white, though scarcely visible, upon the neck and back; the long and soft rump-feathers are uniform in colour with the body; the wing-feathers are black, with a large reddish-brown spot in the centre, and are all bordered with pale greyish blue, those nearest the body more strongly tinted with the same of a somewhat darker tint; the tail is reddish brown above, with the extremity of a pure white, less extensive on the middle feathers; their under surface is black, and the white tipping is more apparent; a little black spot covers the lores and extends a short distance under the eye; a large red patch covers the abdomen, thighs, and under tail-coverts; bill black; irides pale yellow; tarsi of a light reddish brown; nails darker.

"The female differs in being somewhat less bright and smaller in size—a fact we have been able to determine by an examination of five males and the same number of females received by the Museum from the western part of Sse-tchuan, where M. Armand David found the bird to be very abundant, as well as in the mountains of Moupin and Eastern Kokonoor. It is met with in small bands very generally distributed, except in the plains, but less frequently in large forests than on the edges of woods, roads, and near habitations. It is one of the most common birds of these regions; and M. David has often seen them in winter enter inhabited houses, and steal maize, either in ear or flour, even from the stoves. The people do not molest them, any more than they do other small birds, preferring to forgive their little thefts for the sake of the pleasure afforded by their continued soft and melancholy song and their lively and elegant movements. It is a sedentary species, and builds among the bushes a cup-shaped nest of grass, in which are deposited five or six bluish eggs. Like the members of the genera Garrulax and Pterorhinus, it never takes extensive flights, but flits rapidly from bush to bush in bands more or less numerous and noisy, and which are commonly seen hopping on the ground in search of food.

"We have given the name of *Elliotii* to this beautiful species, as an acknowledgment of the efforts made every day by our clever colleague and friend, Mr. D. G. Elliot, in the interest of science. The numerous works he has already published, and those in the course of publication, are proofs of the immense sacrifices he has made for the development of natural history."

The figures are of the natural size.