HYPSIPETES NIGERRIMA, *Gould.*

Formosan Hypsipetes.

Hypsipetes nigerrima, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc. 1862, p. 282.
——— *nigerrimus*, Swinh. in Ibis, 1863, p. 287.

The only additional remark I have to make in connexion with this interesting species, beyond those given below from the pen of Mr. Swinhoe (who enjoyed opportunities for observing the bird in a state of nature), is that all the members of the genus *Hypsipetes*, of which the *H. psaroides* may be regarded as the type, are denizens of Asia, and that the sexes of all of them do not exhibit any marked difference in their colouring, neither do they vary materially in size.

"The nearest allies of this species," says Mr. Swinhoe, "are the *H. psaroides*, Vigors, from Nepaul, and the *H. ganeesa*, Sykes, from Assam, both of which are of blackish-grey plumage, and both have, like it, red bills and legs. I know no similar species from China. The only bird of this genus I have seen from the hills of southern China is a green species (my *H. Holtii*), very closely allied to *H. Maclellandi*, Horsf., from Bootan and Nepaul. The Formosan bird is at once distinguishable from its Nepaulese cousins by its much blacker colouring; hence the appropriate name suggested by Mr. Gould. This species is found in all the wooded parts of the interior mountain-range, feeding largely on berries and the small figs of the numerous species of *Fici* that abound, including those of the Chinese Banyan (*F. nitida*). Insects, chiefly small Coleoptera, also form part of its subsistence. In winter it rambles about the high country in small parties, and may be found at all altitudes clothed with forests. In the spring these parties disperse for the purpose of nidification, and at this season a few pairs may be found in the better-wooded portions of the low country.

"On my trip into the interior, in the latter half of April, I observed one of these birds in an orchard composed of venerable moss- and fern-covered trees. It perched on the highest twigs, and gave utterance to its song, which consisted of notes resembling '*swee-swee-swee*,' repeated loudly and in quick succession. There was not much melody in them. When it observed me, it flew to a further tree, whence finally I shot it.

"The *Hypsipetes* are longer-winged and smarter in flight than the *Pycnonotidæ*, but, as regards general habits, are closer in their affinities to them than to any other group.

"General plumage black, shot with dark green, especially on the upper surface; wings and tail edged with bluish or charcoal smoke-grey; eyelid black; irides deep chestnut; bill and legs brilliant coral-red; sole-pads and bases of claws dingy ochreous; claws black; inside of the mouth and tongue orange-red.

"In many of the specimens the feathers of the belly, axillaries, rump, and vent are margined with bluish grey.

"The sexes are alike; but the female has somewhat shorter wings.

"In the young birds the plumage is much browner, and the feathers of the under parts margined and tipped with greyish white. All my specimens were obtained in the spring of 1862; but many of them still retain markings of the immature plumage, thereby showing that the autumnal moult is not a complete transformation of the young into the mature plumage. In the adult, the wings are brownish black, the quills, especially the secondaries, being broadly margined with bluish grey; the wing-coverts are also black, but less distinctly margined. The tail is brownish black, all the feathers, except the outermost, being margined exteriorly, for the greater part of their length, with bluish grey. The feathers of the crown are long and lanceolate."

The figures are of the size of life.