

RALLICULA FORBESI, Sharpe.

Forbes's Rail.

WE have figured in the accompanying Plate a Rail which appears to us to be undoubtedly new to science. It is a third species of a most interesting genus, which, so far as we know at present, is entirely confined to New Guinea, the two species hitherto described, viz. *Rallicula rubra* and *R. leucospila*, being from the Arfak Mountains in North-western New Guinea. The former of these has been recently figured by Dr. Guillemard in the 'Proceedings' of the Zoological Society for 1885; but of *R. leucospila* no figure at present exists, nor have we ever seen a specimen.

Forbes's Rail seems to differ from both the above-mentioned species in having the back and wings entirely black, the female, or young bird, having ochreous spots on the back. *R. rubra* is, as its name implies, a reddish bird, while *R. leucospila* has the black feathers of the upper parts edged with white. Like its congeners, *R. forbesi* has the curious tufted tail which allies the genus *Rallicula* to the African genus *Corethrura*.

The colours of the species are so simple that only a short description is necessary. The adult bird is everywhere deep chestnut, excepting the back and wings, which are black. The rump is dusky blackish, barred with dull rufous; the upper tail-coverts chestnut, barred with black, the tail-feathers chestnut, with the black bars less perfectly indicated, and reduced to spots on the ends of some of the longer coverts; the flanks and lower abdomen are dusky blackish, with dull reddish bars; the under tail-coverts very long, chestnut, broadly barred with black. Under wing-coverts and axillaries black, barred with white; the quills black below, with broad spots or bars of white or ochreous buff on the inner web. Total length 8.5 inches, culmen 1.15, wing 4.25, tail 2.45, tarsus 1.35.

A second bird sent by Mr. Forbes is probably the adult female, and only differs in having the back and wings spotted with ochreous buff. Total length 8 inches, culmen 1.15, wing 4.2, tail 2.2, tarsus 1.35.

Mr. Forbes obtained these specimens somewhere on the Owen Stanley range in South-eastern New Guinea, but the exact locality is not marked on the label.

The figures in the Plate are of the natural size, and are drawn from the typical examples described above.

[R. B. S.]