

PARUS JERDONI, *Blyth.*

Jerdon's Tit.

Parus Jerdoni, Blyth, Journ. Asiat. Soc. Beng., vol. xxv. p. 445.

— *xanthogenys*, Jerdon in Madras Journ. of Lit. and Sci., vol. xi. p. 7.

MR. BLYTH was quite correct when he described this species as distinct from *Parus xanthogenys* and *P. spilonotus*; for although nearly allied to both those birds, and particularly to the former, it presents several characters by which it may be distinguished: it is more robust in form, has a smaller amount of yellow colouring on the cheeks, and is destitute of the yellow superciliary stripe, in lieu of which a small yellow mark commences some distance behind the eye, and extends backwards to the nape; in *P. xanthogenys*, too, the yellow of the face and under surface predominates over the black, while precisely the reverse occurs in *P. Jerdoni*, where the black mark, occupying the throat, chest and centre of the abdomen, is broad and very conspicuous, and where the yellow is suffused with greyish-olive, and is consequently not so bright; the primaries, secondaries and wing-coverts in *P. Jerdoni* are jet-black, and the spots at their tips are small and white.

My collection contains examples of both sexes, and also a young bird; which latter differs from the adult in the absence of the deep colouring of the centre of the abdomen, that part being dark olive-grey, like the same part in the young *Parus major*, which this bird more nearly equals in size than either *P. xanthogenys* or *P. spilonotus*.

While *Parus xanthogenys* and *P. spilonotus* are inhabitants of the southern slopes of the great Himalayan range, the present species, on the other hand, is a native of the Peninsula of India, where it enjoys a range extending from the latitude of Bombay to that of Cape Comorin; throughout this vast extent of country it is to be found in every district of a hilly character suited to its habits, and particularly in the Neilgherries.

The following brief note by Mr. Jerdon comprises all the information hitherto recorded respecting the bird here figured:—

“This species is also an inhabitant of the Neilgherries, but I only observed it in the warmer parts, about the edges of the hills. I have hitherto observed it in no other locality, but it is mentioned in Mr. Elliott's and Col. Sykes's Catalogues. Food and habits like those of *Parus atriceps*. Irides light brown.”

I cannot conclude this account without recording my obligations to Major Hutt, for the examples of this bird kindly presented to me by him.

Forehead, crown, crest, ear-coverts, sides of the neck, chin, throat, breast and centre of the abdomen glossy jet-black; stripe behind each eye, cheeks, sides of the breast, and a patch on the nape beneath the crest, fine yellow; upper surface olive-green, washed with dark grey on the rump; wings black, the lesser coverts margined with olive-green, the greater coverts with a variable-shaped spot at the tip of each; primaries white at the base, and narrowly edged from the middle to near the end of the external webs, and tipped with white; secondaries tipped, and the two nearest the body broadly edged with white; tail slaty-black, the external web of the outer feather and the tips of the whole white; flanks dull greyish olive-green; bill black; feet bluish-grey.

The young differs in having all the tints much paler, and the throat and chest olive instead of black.

The Plate represents both sexes of the natural size, on the *Ixora rosea* of Dr. Wallich.