

PARUS XANTHOGENYS, *Vig.*

Yellow-cheeked Tit.

Parus xanthogenys, Vigors in Proc. of Comm. of Sci. and Corr. of Zool. Soc., p. 23.—Gould, Cent. of Birds, pl. 29. fig. 1.—Gray and Mitch. Gen. of Birds, vol. i. p. 192.—Blyth, Cat. of Birds in Mus. Asiat. Soc. Calcutta, p. 103.—Ib. Jard. Contr. to Orn. 1852, p. 50. pl. 87. fig. 1.—Hutton, Journ. Asiat. Soc. Beng., vol. xvii. p. 690.—Bonap. Consp. Gen. Av., p. 228.—Horsf. Cat. of Birds in Mus. East Ind. Comp., p. 370.

——— *apolontus*, Blyth, Journ. Asiat. Soc. Beng., vol. xvi. p. 444.

Machlolophus xanthogenys, Cab. in Mus. Hein., Theil i. p. 91, note.

WHEN I published my "Century of Birds from the Himalaya Mountains," in 1832, this bird was so scarce that few persons in Europe were aware of its existence, and I would fain believe, that the discovery of a Crested Tit, bearing a great similarity to the well-known *Parus major*, excited a degree of interest among ornithologists generally; the recent discovery, then, of at least three other species, similarly ornamented on the head, and each presenting good specific distinctions, must surely not only enhance the interest which attaches to the subject in no ordinary degree, but serve to show how little we have hitherto known of the natural productions of that great country, India. It is the elevated portions of this fine region which appear to be most favourable to the members of this group of birds; of which, rich as it is in species, I doubt not others will reward the researches of the naturalist who may venture to explore Burmah, Siam, the confines of China, and the countries lying still farther to the east. I believe the natural habitat of the present species to be the north-western Himalayas, as it is from thence that all the specimens I have seen have been received, and it was there that the late Hon. F. J. Shore and the late Captain Boys procured their examples.

There appears to be little or no difference in the colouring of the sexes, as is the case with our own *Parus major*, to which, with the exception of the crest, the species bears a general resemblance.

I observe that the white margins and tips of the wing-feathers are much more clearly defined in freshly moulted birds than in those which have borne their feathers for some time.

Captain Hutton informs us that this bird is "common in the hills throughout the year. It breeds in April, in which month a nest, containing four partly-fledged young ones, was found at five thousand feet elevation; it was constructed of moss, hair and feathers, and placed at the bottom of a deep hole in a stump at the foot of an oak-tree. The colour of the eggs was not ascertained."

The late Hon. F. J. Shore "saw a great number of both sexes on the 1st of October, 1828, on the ridge between Paoree and Oölka. It builds a nest of grass in the holes of trees, and usually lays five white eggs, blotched with dirty brownish-white patches."

The late Captain Boys procured examples on the 12th of April, 1842, between Bhurthal and Ranghur, and observed that their eyes were dark brown, their bills black, and their legs bluish-grey.

Lores, crown, crest, space behind the eye, sides of the head, chin, throat and centre of the abdomen glossy-black; superciliary stripe, patch on the nape, cheeks, sides of the neck and breast fine yellow, becoming duller on the flanks; upper surface olive, becoming paler on the rump; wings black, the lesser coverts margined with olive, the greater with a nearly triangular spot of yellowish-white at the tip of each; primaries slaty-grey, with a patch of white at their base, succeeded by another of black; the third, fourth, fifth and sixth edged with white; secondaries grey with darker margins, and tipped with white; tertiaries black, edged with yellowish-white, this colour spreading into a large patch on the outer three-fourths of the tip; tail black, margined with olive; the tips of the whole of the feathers, and the outer web of the external one white; bill black; feet blue-grey.

The Plate represents the two sexes of the size of life, on the *Daphne involucrata* of Dr. Wallich.