

SITTA HIMALAYENSIS, *Jard. and Selby.*

Himalayan Nuthatch.

Indian Nuthatch, Lath. Gen. Hist., vol. iv. p. 73?

Sitta Himalayensis, Jard. and Selby, Ill. Orn., vol. iii. pl. 144.—Gray and Mitch. Gen. of Birds, vol. i. p. 148, *Sitta*, sp. 10.

— *Nipalensis*, Hodgs. in Journ. Asiat. Soc. Beng., vol. v. p. 779.—Gray and Mitch. Gen. of Birds, vol. i. p. 148, *Sitta*, sp. 11.

— *Himalayana*, Blyth in Cat. of Birds in Mus. Asiat. Soc. Calcutta, p. 190.

— *vittacauda*, Jam. Mem. Wern. Nat. Hist. Soc., vol. vii. p. 490.

THIS little Nuthatch is very nearly allied to its European prototype *Sitta cæsia*, but is of a much smaller size, and moreover possesses a character in the white marks on the central portion of the two middle tail-feathers, by which it may be readily distinguished from every other at present known species of the genus. We have abundant evidence that it enjoys a wide range over the high lands of Central India, particularly the southern slopes of the Himalayas, examples having been contained in the collections obtained by Mr. Hodgson, Mr. Grace, and Capt. Boys. Mr. Grace shot his specimens near Darjeeling; Capt. Boys procured his on the north side of the Gogra Hill, near the pass; and Mr. Hodgson states its habitat to be the central and northern regions of Nepaul. Neither of these gentlemen has given any account of its habits and manners: there is, however, little doubt that they as closely assimilate to those of the European species as the two birds do to each other in form and colouring.

The sexes are so nearly alike that they are scarcely distinguishable.

All the upper surface blue-grey; lores, and a stripe passing from behind the eye down the sides of the neck black; cheeks and chin buffy white, the reddish tint gradually increasing in depth, until, on the flanks, lower part of the abdomen and under tail-coverts it becomes of a deep ferruginous hue; on the under surface of the shoulder is a patch of black, below which is another of white; primaries dark slaty black; two middle tail-feathers grey, with a stripe of white down the basal two-thirds of the centre of each; lateral tail-feathers black, the outer one on each side crossed by an oblique mark of white, and the next with a large spot of white near the tip of the inner web; irides dark brown; bill greyish horn-colour; legs brownish grey.

The figures represent the two sexes of the natural size.