

SITTA CINNAMOVENTRIS, *Blyth.*

Cinnamon-bellied Nuthatch.

Sitta cinnamoventris, Blyth, Journ. of Asiat. Soc. Beng., vol. xi. p. 459.—Ib. Cat. of Birds in Mus. Asiat. Soc. Calcutta, p. 189.—Gray and Mitch. Gen. of Birds, vol. i. p. 148, *Sitta*, sp. 9.
— *castaneovestris*, Hodgs.

It could scarcely have been expected that the discriminating eye of Mr. Blyth would have failed to detect the differences which exist in the two Chestnut-bellied Nuthatches of India, and accordingly we find that he has distinguished them by their size and the intensity of their colouring. To the largest bird with the paler-coloured breast, accurately represented on the accompanying Plate, he has assigned the name of *cinnamoventris*, and he remarks that it "is altogether a stouter bird, with the bill especially much broader, and not, as in the other (*S. castaneovestris*), distinctly and conspicuously compressed for the basal two-thirds The generic markings and coloration are so similar, that really I do not see how they can be further characterized apart, yet a glance suffices to show their non-identity as species. With respect to colour, the hues of *castaneovestris* are altogether softer and more delicate, and in both sexes the grey of the upper part of the head and neck is conspicuously paler than that of the back; whereas in *cinnamoventris*, although the head and nape are seen, on particular inspection, to be somewhat lighter than the back, this would scarcely be noticed, unless attention were expressly directed to the observation. In *castaneovestris* the upper tertiaries are uniformly bluish grey, and in the rest there is no strongly marked distinction between the dusky of the inner web and the grey external margin; but in the other species the external blue-grey contrasts abruptly with the black of the internal portion of the feather, which last too extends over a considerable part of the outer web, as is not the case in *castaneovestris*: this distinction may perhaps vary somewhat in amount of development in different specimens, but I suspect will always be found to prevail more or less decidedly. In the male *S. castaneovestris* the colour of the whole under-parts, from the white throat to the mottled under tail-coverts, is of a deep dark ferruginous; while in the female it is not very much darker than in a British Nuthatch; in the new species, the fore neck, breast, and lower parts are uniformly coloured, and much paler than in the male *castaneovestris*, but deeper than in the female, being of a dull rusty cinnamon tint, which suggests the term *cinnamoventris* as a specific appellation."

This species is an inhabitant of the South-Eastern Himalayas, and its range must extend far and wide over the districts of India, since specimens occur in nearly every collection brought from thence to this country.

Upper surface dark blue-grey, paler on the head and back of the neck; lores and stripe running from behind the eye down the sides of the neck black; chin and cheeks white; primaries, inner webs, and the portion of the outer webs of the secondaries next the shaft, slaty black; two centre tail-feathers blue-grey; lateral tail-feathers black, margined with grey, with a spot of white on their inner webs near the tip, gradually decreasing in extent as the feathers approach the centre; the external feather has also a mark of white at the base of the external web; under surface of the shoulder black; at the base of the under side of the primaries a mark of white, which is continued along the margins of their inner webs; under surface deep rusty cinnamon; under tail-coverts dark brown, mottled with white; eye brown; bill blue-grey at the base; front of tarsi and toes blue-grey.

The female only differs from the male, in having the under surface of a very much paler or reddish brown hue.

The figures represent two males and a female of the size of life.