

CORACIAS TEMMINCKI, *Wagl.*

Temminck's Roller.

- Coracias Temmincki*, Wagl. Syst. Av., p. 215.—Gray, Gen. of Birds, vol. i. p. 62, *Coracias*, sp. 5.—Id. List of Spec. of Birds in Coll. Brit. Mus., part ii. sect. i. *Fissirostres*, p. 33.—Bonap. Consp. Gen. Av., tom. i. p. 167, *Coracias*, sp. 8.—Cab. et Heine, Mus. Hein., Theil ii. p. 118.—G. R. Gray in Proc. of Zool. Soc., 1861, p. 433.—Wall. Ibis, 1864, p. 41.
- Rollier Temminck*, Levaill. Hist. Nat. Prom. et Guép., tom. iii. p. 46, tab. D.
- Garrulus (Galgulus) Temminckii*, Vieill. Nouv. Dict. d'Hist. Nat., tom. xxix. p. 435.
- Galgulus Temminckii*, Vieill. Ency. Méth. Orn., part ii. p. 869.
- Coracias Urvillei*, Quoy et Gaim. Voy. de l'Astrol. Ois., tab. 16.
- *Papuensis*, Quoy et Gaim. ib., p. 220.—Sclat. in Journ. of Proc. of Linn. Soc., Zool. vol. ii. p. 155.
- *pileata*, "Reinw." Bonap. Consp. Vol. Anis., p. 8. Gen. 87. no. 210.
- *pileata*, Reinw.? Blyth, Cat. of Birds in Mus. Asiat. Soc. Calcutta, p. 50.

IN reply to an inquiry "After whom was this very beautiful bird named?" the Professor of Natural History to future generations will say, "Conrad Jacob Temminck, a Dutch gentleman who lived in the latter part of the eighteenth and the early part of the nineteenth centuries, who devoted his whole life and much of his private fortune to the advancement of the science of ornithology, and under whose direction and fostering care the fine Museum at Leyden was rendered so rich in zoological stores as scarcely to be surpassed, if equalled, by any other in existence;" and he may add that "whatever was done by Temminck for the national Museum of his native country, no less a share of merit is due to his German coadjutor and successor, the more profoundly learned Dr. Hermann Schlegel, who laboured so assiduously that he rendered that celebrated collection one of the most perfect extant at the time."

It rarely happens that one of the finest species of a genus is selected to bear the name of a scientific man as its specific designation; but such is the case in the present instance; for it may be truly said that not a finer species of *Coracias* has yet been discovered. Its native countries are the Celebes and Moluccas, whence fine examples were brought by Mr. Wallace, one of which, now in my own collection, is from Macassar. I regret to say that, although more than fifty years have elapsed since the discovery of this bird, very little information has been placed on record respecting its habits, manners, or economy; in fact, the only reference to them that I can find is comprised in the following extract from Mr. Wallace's "Remarks on the value of Osteological Characters in the Classification of Birds," published in 'The Ibis' for 1864:—"For determining the true affinities of isolated groups we must have recourse to those characters which, having no direct dependence upon habits &c., are often persistent in a remarkable degree. Of these, no doubt the sternum is of the greatest value; but there are many others of almost equal importance. Such are:—the texture of the plumage; the form of the feathers, and their arrangement over the surface of the body; the form of the nostrils; the scutellation of the tarsi; the mode of nidification, with the form, colour, and texture of the eggs; the covering of the young bird, and its change of plumage; peculiarities of food, characteristic habits and peculiar attitudes and actions. As an instance of the value of such apparently trifling characters as the last, I may mention that the first time I saw a Roller (*Coracias Temmincki*) alive I was at once satisfied that it was a fissirostral bird, from a peculiar jerking motion of the head and tail when it alighted, which is common to Kingfishers, Bee-eaters, and Motmots, but never seen in the typical Passeres."

I have followed most of my confrères in placing *Coracias Papuensis* of Quoy and Gaimard among the synonyms of the present species; but Mr. Sclater, in his paper on the "Zoology of New Guinea," read at the meeting of the Linnean Society on the 17th of December, 1857, and published in the Journal of their Proceedings above referred to, remarks, "the two species must be accurately examined and compared before their identity can be considered unquestionable."

Mr. G. R. Gray in his "Remarks on, and Descriptions of, new Species of Birds lately sent by Mr. A. R. Wallace, from Waigiou, Mysol, and Gagie Islands," published in the 'Proceedings of the Zoological Society' for 1861, gives New Guinea as the habitat of this species; but this, I presume, is an error, since Mr. Wallace's specimens were obtained at Macassar, and Mr. Blyth states emphatically that it is Celebes, and *not* New Guinea.

Crown of the head, nape, and upper tail-coverts verditer green; back and scapularies brownish olive-green; wings, tail, and lower parts of the back deep blue, brightest on the shoulder; back of the neck and all the under surface dark greyish blue, approaching to black, the feathers of the throat having a fine line of blue down the centre; bill black; feet brown.

The Plate represents two birds, of the size of life. The frog is the *Hyla Reinwardtii*, and the plant the *Hoya fraterna*.