



## ALCEDO BENGALENSIS, Gmel.

### Indian Kingfisher.

- Alcedo bengalensis*, Gmel. Edit. Linn. Syst. Nat., tom. i. p. 450.—Bonn. et Vieill. Ency. Méth., Orn., part i. p. 291.—Shaw, Gen. Zool., vol. viii. part i. p. 102.—Id. Steph. Cont., vol. xiii. part ii. p. 103.—Sykes, Proc. of Comm. of Sci. and Corr. of Zool. Soc., part ii. p. 84.—McClell. Proc. Zool. Soc., part vii. p. 156.—Jerd. Madras Journ. of Lit. and Sci., vol. xi. p. 231.—Pears. Journ. Asiat. Soc. Beng., vol. x. p. 636.—Gray and Mitch. Gen. of Birds, vol. i. p. 81.—Gray, Cat. of Spec. of Birds in Brit. Mus., part ii. sec. i. p. 63.—Id. Cat. of Spec. and Draw. of Mamm. and Birds pres. to Brit. Mus. by B. H. Hodgson, Esq., p. 57.—Blyth, Journ. of Asiat. Soc. Beng., vol. xv. p. 11.—Id. Cat. of Birds in Mus. Asiat. Soc. Calcutta, p. 49.—Bonap. Consp. Gen. Av., tom. i. p. 158.—Dr. F. B. Hamilton's MS., vol. i. p. 27.—Cass. Cat. of Halc. in Mus. Acad. Sci. Philad., p. 3.—Horsf. and Moore, Cat. of Birds in Mus. East Ind. Comp., vol. i. p. 129.—Kittl. Kupf. Vög., t. 29. fig. 2.—Cab. et Hein. Mus. Hein., Theil ii. p. 144.—Irby in Ibis, vol. iii. p. 228.—Swinh. in Ibis, vol. iii. pp. 31 & 328.—Bonap. Consp. Vol. Anisod. in Ateneo Italiano, no. 11, Agosto 1854.—Sieb., Temm. and Schleg. Faun. Jap., tab. xxxviii.
- Alcedo hispidioides*, Less. Compl. Buff., tom. ix. p. 345.
- *hispidula*, Cat. of Rivoli Coll., pp. 2, 3.
- *Bengalensis*, var. *Indica*, Reichenb. Handb., tom. i. p. 3, 3a, tab. 393. fig. 3047.
- Ispida Bengalensis*, Klein, Av., p. 34, no. 2.—Briss. Orn., tom. iv. p. 475.—Buff. Hist. Nat. des Ois., tom. xiii. p. 297.
- *minor*, Briss. Orn., tom. iv. p. 477.
- Alcedo ispida Bengalensis*, Sieb., Temm. et Schleg. Faun. Jap., p. 76.
- *japonica*, Bonap. Consp. Vol. Anisod. in Ateneo Italiano, no. 11, Agosto 1854.
- The Little Indian Kingfisher*, Edw. Nat. Hist. of Birds, vol. i. pl. 11.
- Chota Kilkila* of the Hindoos (Jerdon).
- Chota match-ranga* of the Musselmans (Dr. F. B. Hamilton).
- Seeta koon*, Malwa (Boys).
- Match-ranga* of the Bengalese (Blyth and Hamilton).
- Rajah whodan*, Malay (Blyth).
- Mal-pilli hudua* (*piuchi* or "small"), in Ceylon (Blyth).
- Tow-yii-long* of the Cantonese (Swinhoe).

IF I were writing the history of the British Kingfisher (*Alcedo ispida*), I should state that the middle portion of Europe was probably the centre of its area of range, and that from thence it radiated westward to the British Islands, northwards to Norway and Sweden, southward to Morocco, and eastward to Asia Minor, and that, in the latter country, it inosculates with another species, the *Alcedo Bengalensis*, the subject of the present memoir. Here, then, the two species meet; but this appears to be the western limit of the Indian bird, its true habitat being Scinde, Bombay, and the whole of the Peninsula of India, wherever situations suited to its habits occur; thence it advances eastward to China and Japan, and southward through the Indian Islands to Timor, according to the authors of the 'Fauna Japonica.' Specimens from these widely extended localities present certain trifling differences both in size and colour, but not to the extent observable between the Indian and European species,—the *Alcedo Bengalensis* differing from the *A. ispida* not only in being considerably smaller in size, but more brilliantly coloured, and in the more decided character of the markings of its head and wing-coverts, these features being so apparent that the experienced ornithologist would have no difficulty in deciding at a glance to which country a specimen belonged, were his opinion required. I have said this much on the subject in order to prove the right of Asia to claim a true and distinct species of this form among her avi-fauna; but as the subject has been most carefully investigated by my friend Schlegel in the 'Fauna Japonica,' it is only justice to him to transcribe his remarks:—

"*The common Kingfisher of Bengal.*—This bird, which takes the place of the ordinary Kingfisher throughout a great part of southern and eastern Asia, does not appear to differ from that species except in its smaller size, and occasionally by the depth of the tints of its plumage. Some modern authors, regarding these differences of too little importance to serve as a means of specific distinction, have considered these birds as belonging to the same species, and have not even admitted the existence of several races of this bird. Putting on one side this question of nomenclature, we shall limit ourselves to record the observations we