

## CARCINEUTES AMABILIS, *Hume.*

### Tenasserim Kingfisher.

*Carcineutes amabilis*, Hume, Stray Feathers, 1873, p. 474.—Sharpe, op. cit. 1874, p. 484.—Hume, op. cit. 1875, p. 51.

*Carcineutes pulchellus*, Hume (nec Horsf.), Stray F. 1874, p. 470.—Blyth & Walden, Birds of Burma, p. 70.—Hume, Stray Feathers, 1878, p. 79.

For many years I had in my collection a fine male of the present species from Siam; at the time that Mr. Sharpe was writing on the family I over and over again brought it under his notice; and I still maintain that it is not specifically the same as the Malaccan *C. pulchellus*. Nor was I surprised when, in 1873, Mr. Hume described the Banded Kingfisher from Upper Pegu as a new species, as I felt sure that it would turn out to be the same as my Siamese specimen—a conclusion I have since verified, thanks to Lieut. Wardlaw Ramsay, who very kindly lent me some birds from Tenasserim, which, on comparison, turned out to be identical with the Siamese example in my collection.

Mr. Hume, when he characterized the species, described it as similar to *C. pulchellus*, but the males entirely wanting the rufous collar on the nape, while the females have the upper surface ochraceous comparatively narrowly banded with black. Now Mr. Sharpe, when he challenged Mr. Hume respecting the distinctness of the Pegu bird from the Malayan, was doubtless right in disposing of the presence or absence of a nuchal collar as a valid specific character; and he impugns also the distinctions accorded to the female. I can only say that with regard to the latter I consider Mr. Hume to be right and Mr. Sharpe wrong, as I imagine every one who consults my figure will be prepared to admit. The late Lord Tweeddale, in his notes to Mr. Blyth's 'Birds of Burma,' agrees with Mr. Sharpe in considering that *C. amabilis* is specifically the same as *C. pulchellus*; and he speaks of birds from the Malayan peninsula without any rufous collar as "very common." Mr. Hume states that he had at the time examined twenty males from Malacca, all of which had a rufous collar, but he has since come to the conclusion that, after all, the Banded Kingfisher from Tenasserim and Pegu is the same as the Malayan bird.

Deserted by Mr. Hume as I am at present, I still venture to maintain the distinctness of *Carcineutes melanops* as a species, but on different grounds. *C. amabilis*, in my opinion, cannot be separated from *C. pulchellus* on account of the presence or absence of the nuchal collar, but on account of its larger size, more splendid crest, and different shade of blue coloration. In addition to the larger crest, it will be seen, on carefully examining the feathers of the latter, that they are grey for nearly the full extent of the feather. In addition to this the female is paler in colour and more narrowly banded than the same sex of *C. pulchellus*.

The localities mentioned by Mr. Hume for this species in Tenasserim are as follows—Meetan, Amherst, Mergui, Palaw-ton-ton, Bankasoon, and Malaroon, where they were obtained by Mr. Davison, who observes:—"I did not meet with this species to the north of Amherst; but there and to the southward it occurred sparingly. Of course, as is well known, this species is not a water Kingfisher. It frequents the forest, avoiding the dense parts. I have killed a good number, both in Tenasserim and the Straits; but I have not, as described by Mr. Wallace (in Sharpe's 'Monograph'), met with them specially frequenting thickets near streams. I have found them in all kinds of localities in the forest, sometimes, it is true, near streams, sometimes many miles away from water. Their food, I found, consisted chiefly of small lizards and various insects, such as wood-lice etc." Mr. Eugene Oates shot a pair of birds near Thayetmyo in the evergreen forests; and Lieut. Wardlaw Ramsay procured the species in the Karen Hills. As already mentioned, I possess a skin from Siam.

I have stated above the characters which induce me to consider the present bird distinct from *C. pulchellus*; and my Plate will demonstrate them quite clearly. Mr. Oates describes the soft parts as follows:—"Bill bright red; inside of mouth somewhat pale red; eyelids and orbital region pale salmon-red; iris yellowish white; legs greenish brown; claws horny." Mr. Hume's description of the soft parts runs thus:—"Legs and feet dull pale green; claws black; bill vermilion-red; base of lower mandible brownish red; gape generally yellowish white; irides purplish grey." The female has the soft parts of the same colour as the male.

In the Plate the figure of the male is taken from my Siamese specimen, and that of the female is from a bird in my own collection also.