## CAPRIMULGUS MAHRATTENSIS, sykes.

Mahratta Nightjar.

Caprimulgus Mahrattensis, Sykes in Proc. of Comm. Sci. of Zool. Soc., Part II. p. 83.—Gray and Mitch. Gen. of Birds, vol. i. p. 48.

I find that Colonel Sykes was the first to notice and give a defined description of this delicately marked species of Caprimulgus. The Colonel's collection was chiefly formed in the Dukhun; and in the East India Company's Museum there are specimens of this bird collected by Mr. Griffiths on the banks of the Sutlej, and others from Shikarpoor, near Caubul; it is evident therefore that the species is very generally diffused over the western portions of India. Two specimens were contained in the collection made by Capt. Boys, and one in that formed by Dr. John Murray, Civil Surgeon at Agra; and it is from this specimen, now forming part of the fine collection of Indian birds belonging to Andrew Murray, Esq., of Aberdeen, that one of my figures was taken.

The species to which the Caprimulgus Mahrattensis is most nearly allied, is the C. Isabellinus of Africa; from which, however, among other characters, it may be readily distinguished by the shorter and more square form of the tail; and Colonel Sykes remarks that it differs from the C. monticolus, Frankl. and C. Asiaticus, Lath., "in the prevalent greyness of the plumage, and in the absence of the subrufous collar on the nape of the neck."

No account whatever can be given of its habits, the following brief entry in Captain Boys' Notes being all that has yet been placed on record respecting it: "One shot at Sultanpoor, Jan. 2, 1840, weighed twenty drachms. Others were shot at Parunpoor on the Ganges, Dec. 15, 1846." In the absence then of all information on the subject, we may reasonably infer that they are very similar to those of the other true Caprimulgi.

General tint pale stone-colour, produced by very minute pencillings of brown on a pale buff ground; near the tips of the feathers the pencillings are interrupted, leaving an irregular-shaped mark of buff, immediately beneath which is a smaller irregular mark of brownish black, which shows very conspicuously on the crown and scapularies; primaries blackish brown, the first with a large oval spot of white about the middle of the inner web, the two next crossed by a band of white stained with buff on the outer web; the remainder of the primaries and the tips of the first three buffy brown, freckled and crossed by irregular bars of blackish brown; tail similar in general appearance to the upper surface, but crossed by narrow irregular bars of black; the two outer feathers on each side largely tipped with buffy white; throat similar to the upper surface, but with a white pear-shaped mark on either side below the angle of the gape; abdomen stone-colour, crossed by narrow irregular bars of brown; irides dark brown; bill reddish, with a black tip; legs dirty flesh-colour.

The female differs in having the entire upper surface more strongly marked, in having the tips of the outer tail-feathers not so largely marked with buff, the white spots on the first three primaries much smaller, and the white less pure, and in being a little less in all her admeasurements.

The Plate represents both sexes of the natural size, near a Rheum Webbianum.