

OTOGYPS CALVUS.

Black Vulture.

Vultur calvus, Scop. Del. Flor. et Faun. Insub., p. 85.

Le Vautour royal de Pondichéry, Sonn. Voy. aux Ind., tom. ii. p. 182, pl. 104.

Vultur Ponticerianus, Shaw, Nat. Misc., pl. 941.—Gray, Ill. Ind. Zool., pl. 15. fig. 1.—Bonap. Consp. Gen. Av., p. 10, *Vultur*, sp. 3.—Lath. Ind. Orn., vol. i. p. 7.—Shaw, Gen. Zool., vol. vii. p. 25.—Temm. Pl. Col. 2; Ann. du Mus., tom. i. pl. 20.—Daud. Orn., tom. ii. p. 11.—Bonn. et Vieill. Encyc. Méth. Orn., part iii. p. 1173, pl. 196. fig. 2.—Dict. d'Hist. Nat., tom. xxxv. p. 260.

Otogyps calvus, Gray and Mitch. Gen. of Birds, vol. i. p. 6, *Otogyps*, sp. 2.—Gray, List of Birds in Coll. Brit. Mus., part i. *Accipitres*, p. 4; Ib. 2nd. edit. p. 5.—Adams in Proc. of Zool. Soc., part xxvii. p. 469.—Tytler in Ann. and Mag. Nat. Hist., 2nd ser. vol. xiii. p. 366.—Burgess in Proc. of Zool. Soc., part xxii. p. 1.

Hemigyys ponticerianus, Hodgs. Gray, Zool. Misc. 1844, p. 81.

Pondicherry Vulture, Lath. Gen. Syn. Supp., p. 6.—Id. Gen. Hist., vol. iv. p. 22.

THE *Otogyps calvus* is a truly Indian species, for it inhabits every part of that great peninsula; but it is not so gregarious, nor found in such great numbers, as the other members of the genus.

Dr. Adams states that "It is found in Bengal, the Deccan, and Lower Himalayan Range, but does not travel any distance into the interior of the mountains. This species is easily distinguished from the other Vultures by the red colour of the skin and neck. In size it is less than *Gyps Bengalensis*, the total length being about 2½ feet."

But by far the most valuable account of this species is that given by Captain Burgess, in the 'Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London' for 1854, where he says:—

"This Vulture, as far as I had opportunities of observing it, is much more common in the Deccan than either the large (*Vultur indicus*) or the small brown Vulture (*Vultur Bengalensis*). I have never, however, seen more than two or three together, and these generally in the low ranges of hills which intersect that part of the country. As this bird has doubtless been already figured, it is not my purpose in these notes to enter into any description of it, but merely to state what I have observed of its habits, food, manner and time of nesting, with any other information regarding it which I may have gained by actual investigation, or learned from credible sources. In its habits this Vulture, I should certainly say, is not gregarious: I do not remember to have seen more than four or five together; and then it has been for the purpose of partaking of a social meal. It flies in circles, with the wings extended, apparently without motion, and with their tips pointed upwards, the legs being stretched out beneath the tail. The food consists of decaying animal substances: one which I shot drinking in a stream disgorged the entire leg of a cat. It breeds during the months of February and March. In my notes taken at the time I find the following:—'March 7.—Found to-day, on the top of a rather low Peepul (a species of Banian tree), the nest of a Black Vulture, on which one of the old birds was sitting. The nest, which was very large, was built of small sticks; it contained one egg. On the same tree, a pair of the Black-headed Ibis (*Tantalus melanocephalus*) had also built their nest. March 19.—Shot a male Black Vulture sitting on one egg; the nest was about a yard in circumference, built on the top of a thorny tree; it was composed of the thorny branches, and other sticks below it. Among the thorny twigs forming the nest were two small nests, belonging to birds of the Passerine order, containing young.' In both these cases only one egg was found, of a pure white colour, $3\frac{8}{10}$ inches in length by $3\frac{1}{10}$ inches in width. In a third also only one egg was found. The natives say the bird lays two eggs, containing a male and a female bird; but these facts seem opposed to such a statement."

I am indebted to J. H. Gurney, Esq., for permission to copy the drawing of this species of Vulture, made for him by Mr. Wolf from a fine living example.

Base of the bill, face, and wattles naked and of a dull red; ruff at the base of the neck white; downy feather on the fore part of the neck pale brown; the remainder of the plumage black, with a wash of grey on the shoulders and the outer webs of the primaries; legs and feet deep pinkish red; nails black.

The figure, which represents a fully adult male, is about one-third of the natural size.