

TANYSIPTERA NYMPHA, G. R. Gray.

Red-breasted Tanysiptera.

Tanysiptera nympha, Gray, Ann. & Mag. Nat. Hist. 1841, p. 237.—Id. Gen. B. i. p. 78 (1846).—Id. Cat. Fissirostres Brit. Mus. p. 59 (1848).—Bp. Consp. Gen. Av. i. p. 157 (1850).—Gray, P. Z. S. 1860, p. 347.—Wallace, P. Z. S. 1862, p. 165, 1863, p. 24.—Schl. Nederl. Tijdschr. Dierk. ii. p. 250 (1866).—Sharpe, P. Z. S. 1869, p. 631.—Id. Monogr. Alced. p. 269, pl. civ. (1869).—Sclater, P. Z. S. 1873, p. 697.—Schl. Mus. Pays-Bas, Alced. Revue, p. 41 (1874).—Salvad. Ann. Mus. Civic. Genov. x. p. 127 (1877).

Dacelo dea, pt., Schl. Mus. Pays-Bas, Alced. p. 43 (1863).—Id. Vog. Nederl. Ind. Alced. pp. 33, 62 (1864).
Alcedo dea, Martens, J. f. O. 1864, p. 18.

THE first specimen of this beautiful Kingfisher, described nearly thirty years ago from a native skin, still exists in the British Museum with the wings of a *Halcyon* attached to it. The majority of skins which reach us even to this day are prepared by the native collectors, and arrive in a flat state, without wings. The first person who appears to have obtained a perfect skin was Mr. Wallace, who, in 1869, contributed the following note to Mr. Bowdler Sharpe's 'Monograph.' He writes:—"This rare species was obtained by my assistant, Mr. Allen, in the interior of the north-west peninsula of New Guinea; and the single specimen he obtained is, I believe, the only complete and authentic one in Europe. New Guinea is the only island which possesses more than two species of this genus, and may therefore be looked upon as its metropolis, and as more likely than any other part of the world to produce new forms of Kingfishers." Since Mr. Wallace's 'Voyage' one or two mutilated skins have been seen in this country. It appears to be entirely confined to North-western New Guinea; and the first idea, that it was a Philippine bird, is now admitted on all sides to have been a palpable mistake. The Leiden Museum has received a single specimen from Sorong; and D'Albertis procured a couple of individuals during his stay in North-west New Guinea. Beccari also met with it, and observes:—"Of *Tanysiptera nympha* I could only get one specimen. It is not very rare among the mangroves near Ramoi, and in the low places surrounding it. On several occasions it was met with by my hunters without their being able to kill it. It is wanting near Dorey, but reappears at Rubi, in the south of the Bay of Geelvink, a locality which seems interesting, and which I was sorry not to have visited, because several species which are only known from Salvatti and Sorong are found there, among others *Seleucides alba*."

The present species is distinguished at once from all the other *Tanysipteræ* by its red rump and under surface. I give the following description from Mr. Sharpe's 'Monograph.'

Head rich ultramarine, inclining to cobalt on the nape; ear-coverts and upper part of the back and scapulars jet-black; lower part of the back, rump, and upper tail-coverts rich vermilion; wing-coverts black, edged with ultramarine, the innermost ones rich cobalt; quills black, the inner web light rufous from the base, the outer web very narrowly washed with blue; tail-feathers deep blue, the interior ones tipped with white, the two middle tail-feathers rich blue, the spatula long and white, with a faint blush of rose; entire under surface rich vermilion, a little paler on the abdomen; bill and feet sealing-wax-red; eyes black. Total length 11 inches, of bill from front 1·2, from gape 1·7, wing 3·6, tail 2·8, middle rectrices 0·6, tarsus 0·3, middle toe 0·6, hind toe 0·2.

The figure in the Plate is life-sized, and is drawn from one of the specimens obtained by Signor D'Albertis, and I have been indebted for the loan of it to Dr. Sclater, through whose hands D'Albertis's collection passed.