

## PITTA NOVÆ GUINEÆ, Müll. & Schleg.

### New-Guinea Pitta.

- Pitta novæ guineæ*, Müll. & Schleg. Verh. Nat. Gesch. Ned. Ind., no. 21.  
*Brève à tête noire*, Quoy et Gaim. (nec Cuv.) Voy. Astrol. pl. 8. fig. 3.  
*Pitta novæ guineæ*, G. R. Gray, Proc. Zool. Soc. 1858, p. 175. sp. 39.  
*Brachyurus novæ guineæ*, Bon. Cons. Av. vol. i. p. 256. sp. 24 (1850).  
*Brachyurus* (*Melanopitta*, Bon.) *novæ guineæ*, Elliot, Mon. of the Pittidæ (1863).  
*Melanopitta novæ guineæ*, Bon. Cons. Voluc. Anisodact. p. 7, no. 197 (1854).

[The above synonyms are taken from Mr. Elliot's 'Monograph of the Pittidæ.']

HOWEVER rare this *Pitta* might have been when Mr. Elliot wrote his 'Monograph,' it has since become very common, and there are but few collections of birds in which it is wanting. When the 'Astrolabe' visited New Guinea it was only known to come from one locality; since then it has been discovered in the Aru Islands, whence Mr. Wallace brought many examples, while other collectors have greatly added to our stores. One of the most striking features by which the present species may be distinguished from its congeners is the beautiful silvery white line which separates the black of the throat from the peculiar oil-green colour of the chest and flanks. In size it is about equal to *Pitta mackloti*, and rather like, in its general appearance, the splendid bird which bears the name of *rosenbergi*. As regards colour, but little difference occurs in the plumage of the sexes, while in size the male is a trifle larger than the female in all its admeasurements.

Independently of the mainland of New Guinea, where it was discovered by the naturalists of the 'Astrolabe,' and the Aru Islands, as before stated, Mr. Gray adds the island of Salawatti.

"The New-Guinea Pitta," says Mr. Elliot, "was discovered by Messrs Quoy and Gaimard during the first voyage of the 'Astrolabe;' and their type (from which I took my description) was labelled 'Triton Bay.' They state that it has also been killed on the Bay of Dorey, where, however, it is very rare. It was not considered by them as a distinct species, but merely supposed to be the *P. atricapilla* of Cuvier, from which it can readily be distinguished by the entire absence of blue on the rump, and by having a small white spot only on its primaries.

"It is a rare bird; and my plate of it was executed in Paris, under the direction of my friend Mons. J. P. Verreaux, from the type now contained in the Museum of the Jardin des Plantes."

Head and neck black; back and wings dark green; lesser wing-coverts light blue; primaries dark brown, a white spot in the centre of the fourth, fifth, and sixth; tail brownish green; breast light green, with metallic reflections; abdomen black; crissum and under tail-coverts deep red; bill dark brown; feet and tarsi very light brown.

Total length of male  $6\frac{1}{2}$  inches, wing  $3\frac{1}{2}$ , tail  $1\frac{3}{8}$ , bill 1, tarsi  $1\frac{1}{4}$ .

*Hab.* New Guinea.

The figures in the accompanying Plate are of the size of life.