

## PITTA CYANONOTA, Gray.

### Blue-backed Pitta.

*Pitta cyanonota*, Gray, Proc. Zool. Soc. 1860, p. 351.—Schl. Mus. Pays-Bas, *Pitta*, p. 8.—Id. Vog. Nederl. Indië, *Pitta*, pp. 18, 35.—Finsch, Neu-Guinea, p. 168.—Gray, Hand-l. B. i. p. 296, no. 4380.—Schl. Mus. Pays-Bas, Revue *Pitta*, p. 13.  
*Brachyurus cyanonotus*, Elliot, Monogr. Pittidæ, pl. xx.—Id. Ibis, 1870, p. 418.

THIS species belongs to the section of the genus *Pitta* which is called by some ornithologists *Erythropitta*, containing certain red-breasted species from the Indo-Malayan islands, the Moluccas, and New Guinea, which form a very natural group. The present bird is one of the best-defined species of the section, being distinguished at a glance by its blue back. It was discovered by Mr. Wallace in the small island of Ternate; and later on Dr. Bernstein also met with it in the same locality, to which for some time it was supposed to be confined. The latter ornithologist, however, afterwards procured the species in the island of Guebeh; so that, as Professor Schlegel remarks, it appears to represent in these two islands the *Pitta rufiventris* of Halmahera (or, as we English naturalists miscall the island, Gilolo). It is distinguished from the last-named bird by its blue back. The Dutch travellers Bernstein and Von Rosenberg procured a good series of specimens in Ternate, meeting with the species apparently all the year round. Sixteen specimens from this island alone are preserved in the Leiden Museum, having been killed in the months of May, June, August, and November. On the 6th of May, 1871, Von Rosenberg took two nestlings; so that this month may be taken as indicating the breeding-season, though it is evident that the eggs must be deposited in the month of April.

The following is a description of the species:—General colour of the upper surface blue, the crown dull reddish, brighter red on the nape, hind neck, and sides of crown; lores, sides of face, and throat dusky brown washed with reddish; fore neck and chest bright blue, forming a band; remainder of the under surface scarlet; tail a little duller blue than the back; wing-coverts blue, like the back, with a small spot of white on the shoulder, formed by white marks near the base of the outer web of some of the smaller coverts; quills blackish, washed with the same blue as the back on the outer web, broader on the secondaries, the innermost of which are like the back; the third primary marked with a spot of white near the base of the inner web only, the fourth primary having a white spot on both outer and inner web.

The figures in the Plate are drawn from specimens in my own collection; they represent the birds of the natural size. It should be noticed that the white shoulder-spot which is conspicuous in one individual, is absent in another.