

TODOPSIS CYANOCEPHALA, Q. & G.

New-Guinea Todopsis.

- Todus cyanocephalus*, Quoy et Gaimard, Voy. de l'Astrolabe, Zool. p. 227, pl. v. fig. 4.
Philentoma cyanocephala, Jacq. et Pucher. Voy. Pôle Sud, Zool. iii. p. 79, pl. xx. fig. 2.
Tchitrea ? cæruleocephala, Gray, Gen. B. i. p. 260.
Todopsis cæruleocephala, Bp. Comptes Rendus, xxxviii. p. 652.
Todopsis cyanocephala, Gray, P. Z. S. 1858, p. 177; 1859, p. 156; 1861, p. 434.—Id. Cat. Mamm. & Birds New Guinea, p. 27.—Finsch, Neu-Guinea, p. 168.—Sclater, P. Z. S. 1873, p. 696.—Meyer, Sitz. k. Akad. Wien, lxix. pp. 74, 78.—Salvad. Ann. Mus. Civic. Genov. x. p. 148.
Tchitrea cyanocephala, Gray, Hand-l. B. i. p. 334, no. 5031.

ONE of the greatest difficulties I have had to contend with in the present work has been the utter want of any notes on the habits of most of the birds which it becomes my duty to figure. In the work on the Birds of Australia I had my own personal observations to record, the result of two years' acquaintance with the birds in their native wilds; in the Birds of Asia there is generally a chance of finding some field-notes among the papers of Mr. Hume or some of his excellent coadjutors in India; while, of course, in writing the 'Birds of Great Britain,' there was always a plethora of works to consult, which rendered it rather a matter of selection than of copying. In the present work, however, the case is quite different. Many of the species figured are from obscure or little-known localities, penetrated by European naturalists for the first time, where no leisure for studying the habits of the birds shot was obtainable; or the collection has been made by trained native hunters, whose only object is to shoot and preserve specimens, and from whom, of course, no information on the economy of the birds can be expected. The above remarks have been called forth by the fact that all my attempts to gain the slightest clue to the habits of *Todopsis* have failed, neither the early nor the recent travellers in New Guinea having given us any information on the subject. This is the more to be regretted, as I find myself at variance with several ornithologists as to the position of these little birds. From my knowledge of the Australian Wrens of the genus *Malurus*, I cannot help the conviction that, notwithstanding their long broadened bills and plentiful bristles, the members of the genus *Todopsis* are Warblers and not Flycatchers, and should be placed in the vicinity of the above-named genus. Count Salvadori arrived at this conclusion quite independently; and I am glad to have his support in this opinion. On the other hand, Mr. Sharpe considers them to be Flycatchers, and regards this (the usual) view of their position as strictly correct. I am indebted to my friend Mr. Sharpe for the opportunity of seeing his MSS. on these birds, and for permission to copy the careful descriptions of this and the succeeding species from the fourth volume of the 'Catalogue of Birds,' as follows:—

Adult male. Crown of head bright turquoise-blue, extending in a narrow band down the nape and hind neck; lores, and a narrow frontal band, feathers above the eye, sides of face and of neck, and hinder neck velvety black; middle of the back and scapulars bright cobalt, as also the lesser wing-coverts; greater and primary coverts black, externally edged with purple; quills black, the secondaries externally bright cobalt, the innermost purplish blue; entire back from below the mantle velvety black, with a slight purple gloss; upper tail-coverts deep purple; tail-feathers black, dull blue on the outer webs, the two centre feathers entirely shaded blue; cheeks and entire under surface of body dark purple; under wing-coverts black.

Total length 6 inches, culmen 0·65, wing 2·35, tail 2·4, tarsus 1·0. Signor D'Albertis describes the bill, feet, and iris as black.

Adult female. General colour above chestnut-brown, the wing-coverts like the back; quills dark brown, externally edged with chestnut; crown of head bright turquoise-blue, extending in a band down the nape; a narrow frontal line, lores, sides of face, and sides of the hinder crown purplish black; cheeks and throat dull cobalt; lower throat, breast, and centre of the body dull creamy white, the lower