

DICRANOSTREPTUS MEGARHYNCHUS.

New-Ireland Drongo.

Edolius megarhynchus, Quoy et Gaimard, Voyage de l'Astrolabe, Zool. vol. i. p. 184. pl. 6.

Edolius intermedius, Lesson, Traité d'Orn. p. 380.

Dicrurus megarhynchus, Gray, Gen. B. i. p. 286.—Bonap. Consp. Gen. Av. i. p. 352.—Gray, Cat. Birds of New Guinea &c., p. 33.—Id. P. Z. S. 1861, p. 435.—Finsch, Neu-Guinea, p. 171.—Gray, Handl. B. i. p. 287.—Sclater, P. Z. S. 1869, p. 119.

Dicranostreptus mezorhynchus, Jerdon, Birds of India i. p. 430, note.

Dicranostreptus megarhynchus, Reichenb. Syst. Taf. lxxxviii. fig. 12.—Sclater, P. Z. S. 1877.—Sharpe, Catalogue of Birds, iii. p. 256.

Dissemurus megarhynchus, Tweeddale, Ibis, 1878, p. 79.

THIS large species of Drongo was described in 1830, by MM. Quoy and Gaimard, in their account of the Zoology of the Voyage of the 'Astrolabe.' Unfortunately, the habitat of the species was given as Dorey, New Guinea, a mistake which led to its being included in more than one list of New-Guinea birds. It has also been recorded from the Ké Islands by Mr. Gray; but this is doubtless owing to a misprint (as the Marquis of Tweeddale suggests), the locality being intended to apply to *Dicrurus megalornis*, which is confined to the last-named group of islands, and the locality of which is omitted in the proper column of places tabulated by Mr. Gray. In 1869, Dr. Sclater recorded it from the Solomon Islands; and more recently it has occurred in the collections made by Mr. George Brown in New Ireland. Specimens are also contained in the British Museum, which were presented by Captain Lambrick, R.N., who obtained them at Carteret Harbour, New Ireland; and the species will probably be found to be an inhabitant of that island, and of the Solomon group. Lord Tweeddale considers that it is a member of the genus *Dissemurus*, to which the Indian and Indo-Malayan Racket-tailed Drongos belong; and if this is the case, its appearance in a truly Papuan habitat is interesting and at the same time remarkable. The extraordinary length of the tail and the absence of a true racket, which is one of the characters of *Dissemurus*, taken in connexion with the locality inhabited by the species, induce me to consider it generically distinct, and I therefore follow Dr. Sclater and Mr. Sharpe in its nomenclature.

The following description is taken from the 'Catalogue of Birds' of the latter author:—

Above blue-black, with a very slight steel gloss on the back, rump, and upper tail-coverts; head and sides of neck metallic steel-purple, the feathers on the latter elongated and somewhat lanceolate; frontal plumes, lores, and sides of face dull purplish black; under surface of body dusky purplish black, with faintly indicated tips of glossy green on some of the feathers of the throat and chest; under wing-coverts purplish black like the breast; wings above dull glossy steel-green; quills purplish black, the secondaries externally dull steel-green, not so metallic as the coverts; tail-feathers purplish black, glossed with metallic steel-green on the outer edge of both webs, more distinctly and broadly on the centre ones, the outermost feather elongated and twisted in an inward curl at the tip; bill and feet black. Total length 20·5 inches, culmen 1·5, wing 7, tail 6, tarsus 1·05.

The specimen figured (of the natural size) in the Plate was sent by Mr. George Brown from New Ireland, and was kindly lent to me by Dr. Sclater.