

EPIMACHUS SPECIOSUS.

Great Promerops.

- Le Grand Promérops de la Nouvelle-Guinée*, Sonn. Voy. N. Guin. p. 163, pl. 101.
Le Promerops brun de la Nouvelle-Guinée, id. tom. cit. p. 164, pl. 100.
Grand Promerops à paremens frisés, Buff. H. N. Ois. vi. p. 472.
Promerops de la Nouvelle-Guinée, Buff. Pl. Enl. vi. pls. 638, 639.
Upupa speciosa, Bodd. Tabl. Pl. Enl. p. 39.
 — *striata*, Bodd. tom. cit. p. 39.
New-Guinea Brown Promerops, Lath. Gen. Syn. i. pt. 2, p. 694.
Grand Promerops, Lath. tom. cit. p. 695.
Upupa fusca, Gm. S. N. i. p. 468.
 — *magna*, Gm. tom. cit. p. 468.
Le Promérops rayé, Audeb. et Vieill. Ois. Dor. i. pl. 7.
Le Promerops à large parure, Levaill. H. N. Promér. et Guêp. pls. 13, 15.
Promerops striata, Shaw, Gen. Zool. viii. p. 144.
 — *superbus*, Shaw, tom. cit. p. 145.
Falcinellus superbus, Vieill. N. Dict. d'Hist. Nat. xxviii. p. 166.
 — *magnificus*, Vieill. tom. cit. p. 167.
Epimachus magnus, Cuvier, Règne Anim. i. p. 407.
 — *superbus*, Steph. Gen. Zool. xiv. p. 77.—Wagler, Syst. Av. *Epimachus*, sp. 1.—Less. Traité, p. 321, Atlas, pl. 73. fig. 1.—Rosenb. J. f. O. 1864, p. 123.
Cinnamolegus papuensis, Less. Ois. Parad. Syn. p. 32.—Id. H. N. pls. 39, 40.
Epimachus speciosus, Gray, Gen. B. i. p. 94.—Schl. Mus. P.-B. *Coraces*, p. 94.—Elliot, Monogr. Parad. pl. xix.
 —Salvad. Ann. Mus. Civic. Genov. vii. p. 785, ix. p. 190.—Sharpe, Cat. B. iii. p. 162 (1877).
 — *magnus*, Bp. Consp. i. p. 411.—Wall. Ibis, 1861, p. 287.—Id. P. Z. S. 1862, p. 160.—Id. Malay Arch. ii. p. 255.—Schl. J. f. O. 1861, p. 386.—Id. N. T. D. i. p. 332.
 — *maximus*, Gray, P. Z. S. 1861, p. 433.—Id. Hand-l. B. i. p. 105.—Beccari, Ann. Mus. Civic. Genov. vii. p. 710.—Id. Ibis, 1876, p. 249.

In spite of the long list of synonyms with which this species has been burdened by naturalists, the actual information respecting its habits is almost wanting; neither can I pretend to give a long account of the bird, simply for the reason that there is nothing to tell. I cannot weary my readers with a dissertation on the various incidents through which this fine Bird of Paradise has reached the very complicated synonymy which has marked its scientific history. Suffice it to say that, owing to our meagre knowledge of the bird in a natural state, the males and the females have generally been taken for separate species; and although imperfect skins have been sent to Europe in some numbers for the last hundred years, we have had to wait until quite recently for the gladdening of our eyes by the receipt of the perfect bird.

It is at once the largest and the most remarkable, if not the most beautiful, of the thin-billed Birds of Paradise, which comprise the Rifle-birds, the Twelve-wired *Seleucides*, and the lately discovered Sickle-billed *Drepanornis*. Only two species of *Epimachus* are known—the subject of the present article, and *E. ellioti*; the latter is still represented by the single type specimen in my collection, the habitat of which, though supposed to be the island of Waigiou, is not yet known for certain.

Mr. Wallace did not meet with the present species during his explorations in Papuasias. He says, “This splendid bird inhabits the mountains of New Guinea, in the same district with the Superb (*Lophorina atra*) and the Six-shafted (*Parotia seapennis*) Paradise-birds, and, I was informed, is sometimes found in the ranges near the coast. I was several times assured by different natives that this bird makes its nest in a hole underground, or under rocks, always choosing a place with two apertures, so that it may enter at one and go out at the other. This is very unlike what we should suppose to be the habits of the bird; but it is not easy to conceive how the story originated if it is not true; and all travellers know that native accounts of the habits of animals, however strange they may seem, almost invariably turn out to be correct.”

The following note appears in Dr. Beccari's Ornithological Letter:—

“The *Epimachi* have been separated from the other birds of Paradise; but I think this is paradoxical. The form and the length of the beak of *Epimachus maximus* is most variable; the young males and females