

BAZA GURNEYI, Ramsay.

Gurney's Cuckoo-Falcon.

Baza reinwardti (nec Müll. & Schl.), Tristram, Ibis, 1882, pp. 133, 141.

Baza gurneyi, Ramsay, Journ. Linn. Soc. xvi. p. 130 (1883).—Salvad. Orn. di Papuasie e delle Molucche, iii. App., p. 506 (1882).—Grant, Proc. Zool. Soc. 1888, p. 188.

For a considerable time the Cuckoo-Falcon of the Solomon Islands was supposed to be specifically the same as *B. reinwardti*, a species of somewhat extended distribution in Papuasie, as it occurs over the greater part of New Guinea and Salwati, as well as in the islands of Mysol, Misori, Ceram, Amboina, and the Ké and Aru groups. The history of the separation of the Solomon-Island bird is not very clear, but appears to be somewhat as follows:—In 1880 Mr. E. P. Ramsay described Mr. Cockerell's collections from the Solomon group, and recorded an example of a *Baza* from "Cape Pitt," which he said agreed exactly with Port-Moresby specimens. Later, in 1882, he described the species from the Solomon Archipelago as *Baza gurneyi*, and he observes:—"When I first notified *B. reinwardti* from the Solomon Islands, I was under the impression I had a veritable Solomon-Island bird before me. It now turns out that such was not the case: hence the mistake." Mr. Ramsay omits to tell us where the supposed "Cape Pitt" specimen *really* came from after all, and as he gives the localities for his *Baza gurneyi* as "Ugi" (Rev. G. Brown) and "Cape Pitt" (Cockerell), it will be seen that he has left the subject in a state of considerable uncertainty. What seems certain is that *B. gurneyi* is confined to the Solomons, one of Lieut. Richards's skins from Russell Island being now in the British Museum (cf. Tristram, *l. c.*), and the same institution has recently received two specimens collected by Mr. C. M. Woodford in Guadalcanar; the two last-named localities can be depended upon, as well as that of the island of Ugi.

When writing his account of *Baza reinwardti* for his work on Papuan ornithology, Count Salvadori remarks on a specimen collected by the Rev. G. Brown, but to which no locality was attached. This specimen is in the Tweeddale collection, and agrees thoroughly with a New-Ireland specimen also obtained by Mr. Brown and now in the British Museum, so that there can be little doubt as to the habitat of New Ireland being correct for the first specimen, as suggested by Count Salvadori. Both these individuals likewise agree with the specimen described and figured in the present work, which is a male from New Britain, collected by the late Dr. Kleinschmidt. The truth is that *B. gurneyi* is only an insular form of Papuan *B. reinwardti*, distinguished by its light under surface, broader terminal black band to the tail, and almost pure white under wing-coverts. The birds from New Britain and New Ireland are, again, a paler edition of *B. gurneyi*, with the same light under surface and white under wing-coverts, but still further distinguished by the light grey bars of the under surface. They are quite as worthy of a name as *B. gurneyi*; and as the Germans have called these islands by the title of the Bismarck Archipelago, we will attach the name of the great Chancellor to the Cuckoo-Falcon of that locality, as we fully believe it to be distinct. In the event of our surmise proving correct, the Plate of the present work must be referred to *Baza bismarckii*.

The figure in the Plate is of the natural size and is drawn from the specimen mentioned above.

[R. B. S.]