

BUPHUS COMATUS.

Squacco Heron.

- Ardea comata*, Pall. Reise, tom. ii. p. 715.
 — *ralloides*, Scop. Ann. Hist. Nat., tom. i. no. 121.
 — *squaiotta, castanea*, et *erythropus*, Gmel. edit. Linn. Syst. Nat., tom. i. pp. 633, 634.
 — *audax*, La Peyr. Neue Schwed. Abh., tom. iii. p. 306.
 — *Marsigli*, Lepechin, Nov. Comm. Petrop., tom. xiv. p. 502, tab. 14. fig. 1.
 — *pumila*, Lepechin, ibid., p. 502.
Ardeola ralloides, Boie, Isis, 1822, p. 559.
Buphus comatus, Boie, Isis, 1826, p. 356.
 — *castaneus et ralloides*, Brehm, Vög. Deutschl. p. 589.
 — *Illyricus*, Brehm, ib., p. 590, tab. 31. fig. 1.
Egretta comata, Swains. Class. of Birds, vol. ii. p. 354.
Botaurus comatus, Macgill. Man. of Nat. Hist., Orn., vol. ii. p. 125.
Cancrophagus ralloides (Boie), Kaup, Natiirl. Syst., p. 42.

ON the banks of Old Father Thames, within twenty-five miles of London, the pleasure-seeker may gratify his taste by land or by water, and the lover of nature may revel in the varied character of the scenery. Such woods, waters, and meads as those of Taplow, Cliveden, and Hedsor, my own favourite resorts for observation, form such an elysium for the naturalist as rarely occurs. I was once standing at the door of the celebrated inn of this charming locality, when a person in the garb of a gentleman hurried out and eagerly inquired for the next train to London, adding that one hour at Temple Bar was worth twelve months' life in the country. For myself I would not care if I never saw the old Temple Gate again, and would at any time leave the hurried Babel of London to hear the song of the Thrush or witness the skipping of the Bleak before the huge Trout of our queen of rivers; but he and I, with hundreds of others, each having his especial liking, are essential to make up a world. Among birds this diversity is shown in another manner; for their nature, and not their tastes, prompts each kind to affect the especial locality for which it was designed—some the mountain-tops, others the forest, the marsh, and the sea-shore. They are equally diversified in their colours and adornments,—those of the tropics being dressed in modest as well as brilliant hues, those of the snow-clad mountains in spotless as well as glittering tints, those of the stagnant waters being adorned with hues as beautiful as any of the others, while those of the seas are not wanting in variety of colouring.

It is in the swamp, in the stagnant marsh, in the still waters, where the newt wriggles in the warm shallows, and the frog croaks in the rush-beds, where the buckbean flourishes, the flowering rush raises its stately head, and the forget-me-not carpets the margin, that the beautiful bird figured in the accompanying Plate loves to dwell; for there it finds both security and an abundant supply of food. It is in such situations, in Southern Europe, that it is by no means uncommon; and it has several times been killed in the British islands; to us, however, it is only a casual visitor, and it must therefore be regarded as one of the rarities of our avifauna.

Although most of the English counties, from Cornwall to the border, have from time to time been favoured with its presence, there is none in which it has been more frequently seen than in those of Norfolk and Suffolk. Speaking of Cornish localities in which it has occurred, Mr. Rodd enumerates St. Hilary, St. Levan, Sennen, Treveife, Madron, and Scilly, and adds that the examples obtained were generally in immature plumage, but some of them had the occipital and dorsal plumes partly developed. Mr. R. C. Musgrave informs me that a specimen in his father's, Sir George Musgrave's, possession was shot by one of his gamekeepers in June 1845 while perched on a tree at Lazonby, in Cumberland.

Mr. Stevenson, to whom I am indebted for so many notes on the birds of Norfolk, writes me word that the first recorded instance of its occurrence in that county is in Messrs. Paget's 'Sketch of the Natural History of Yarmouth,' in which it is stated that "one was caught in a bow-net hanging out to dry, by Ormesby Broad in July 1820." In May 1831 another was shot at Oulton, near Lowestoft, in Suffolk, and is now in the collection of Mr. J. H. Gurney, at Catton. A third, killed at Ormesby or Filby, two adjoining Broads, on the 12th of June 1834, is described in Dr. Hooker's MS. as a "singularly beautiful specimen," and was purchased by Captain Chawner of Alton, Hants, who was at that time collecting at Yarmouth. This bird is likewise referred to in some MS. notes of the late Mr. Lombe, whose splendid collection of British Birds is still in the possession of his daughter, Mrs. E. P. Clarke of Wymondham. In these notes, which were made in Mr. Lombe's copy of "Bewick," I also find a record of a fourth example,