BUDYTES CINEREOCAPILLA.

Grey-capped Wagtail.

Motacilla cinereo-capilla, Savi, Nuov. Giorn. Lett., no. 57, p. 190.—Idem, Orn. Tosc., tom. iii. p. 216.
——— *borealis*, var. β, Blas. List of Birds of Eur., Eng. edit., p. 12.
——— *flava cinereocapilla*, Schleg. Rev. Crit. des Ois. d'Eur., p. xxxviii.
——— *Feldeggi*, Mich.
——— *dalmatica*, Bruch.
——— *melanocephala*, Savi (nec Licht.), summer dress.
Budytes cinereocapilla, Bonap. Consp. Gen. Av., tom. i. p. 249, *Budytes*, sp. 2.
——— *nigricapilla*, Bonap. ibid., *Budytes*, sp. 4 ?

A very beautiful specimen of this Wagtail having been killed in Cornwall, by Mr. Vingoe, of Penzance, it becomes necessary to give a figure and an account of the species in the 'Birds of Great Britain,' which I am happy to do, inasmuch as it affords me an opportunity of giving some further information respecting the puzzling members of the genus *Budytes*. At present their synonymy is in the utmost confusion; and the opinions of ornithologists as to which is and which is not entitled to rank as a species are equally conflicting, some believing that several of the so-called species are identical, while others are disposed to separate them still further than has yet been done; and it is not until numerous specimens of both sexes from all the different countries frequented by these birds are brought together, placed side by side, and carefully compared, that the vexed question as to the number of species which really exist can be satisfactorily determined. It is even a question with me whether the bird I have figured under the name of *Budytes flava* be really the true *Motacilla flava* of Linnæus, or if the one here represented be not the bird so named by the illustrious Swede. If this should ultimately prove to be the case, then my specific name of *neglecta* must be restored, and the above list of names sink into synonyms. The confusion in the synonymy and the conflicting opinions of ornithologists have in a great measure arisen from the circumstance of all the species being nearly of the same size, and from the females and young being very similar in their colouring. To define each species unerringly it becomes necessary to compare the fully adult males of all with each other; and if this be carefully done, I venture to assert that it will be an easy matter to distinguish the various members of this elegant group of birds, and to prove that they comprise even more than have yet been characterized. To affirm for one moment that the yellow-headed *Budytes Rayi* of our island and the black-headed *B. melanocephala* (Licht.) of the Lower Nile, the Crimea, and Asia Minor are identical, is to my mind simply absurd. After a careful study of these Wagtails during the last forty years, I believe I may confidently state that four of them pass the summer in Europe—and that these are the *Budytes Rayi* (which at that season frequents the British Islands), the *B. flava* (vel *B. neglecta*) of Western Europe and Sweden (?), the *B. cinereocapilla* of Southern and Central Europe (which migrates to Norway in spring for the purpose of breeding), and, lastly, the *B. melanocephala*, Licht. (distinguished by its jet-black head and deep yellow breast and throat), of the eastern portions of Europe, particularly the Crimea, Asia Minor, and the Nile Valley.

It would, perhaps, be out of place to enumerate here the species of the genus *Budytes* which are extra-European; but I may mention that birds of this form inhabit most parts of the Old World. Unless we except the assertion that a *Budytes* has been discovered in Alaska, none are found in America; nor is there any bird therein which might be regarded as representing these lively little birds. In India and China there are more species than in Europe, all of which, I believe, are different from the European.

Professor Schlegel appears to consider that the *Budytes cinereocapilla* is confined to Italy; but I can assure him that I both saw and shot numerous examples on the Dovre-fjeld, in Norway. Some of these were much darker than others, and, moreover, had a dark patch on the centre of the breast, which appeared to be due to the abrasion of the yellow portion of the feathers having rendered their black bases visible.

Respecting the specimen killed in Cornwall Mr. Rodd informs me that "it was observed for some days about the place where it was at last captured, viz. amongst some loose cabbage-plants on the ridge of bank-sand which separates the eastern marsh from the sea-beach, between Penzance and Marazion, very near the Marazion Railway Station. It was in the month of May. It uttered a very neat and melodious song, which, considering the time of the year, may be regarded as a love-song; but no mate was seen at the time."

Of all modern authors, it appears to me that Bonaparte is the one who has taken the most correct view