

MONOGRAPH
OF THE
PITTIIDÆ.



BY
JOHN GOULD, F.R.S. &c.

PART I. *PT*

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[Price Three Guineas.]

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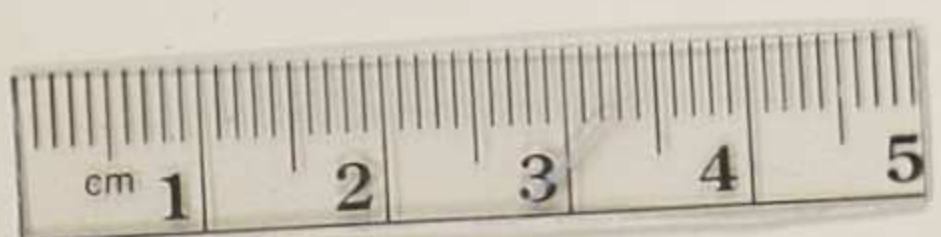




PITTA BENGALENSIS.

Stoull & Whart del et lith

Walter, imp



PITTA BENGALENSIS.

Bengal Pitta.

Pitta bengalensis, Vieill. Enc. Méth. Orn., 2^e partie, p. 685.—Jerd. Birds of India, vol. i. p. 503.—Gould, Birds of Asia, pt. 23 (1871).

Pitta brachyura, Less. Traité d'Orn., p. 394.—Gould, Cent. of Himal. Birds, pl. xxiii.

Pitta coronata (P. L. S. Müller), G. R. Gray, Hand-list of Birds, part i. p. 294.—Capt. Legge, Birds of Ceylon, pt. ii. p. 687.

Pitta triostegus (Sparrm.), Blyth, Cat. of Birds in Mus. Asiat. Soc. Calcutta, p. 157.

Corvus brachyurus, Linn. Syst. Nat. 1766, vol. i. p. 158.

Turdus triostegus, Sparrm. Mus. Carls., pl. 84.

[To give all the different names which have been applied to old species would be useless.]

IN Jerdon's 'Birds of India' it is stated that "this prettily plumaged Ground-Thrush is common in the Indian forests, but is also occasionally met with in every part of the country that is tolerably wooded. In the Carnatic it chiefly occurs in the beginning of the hot weather, when the land-winds first begin to blow with violence from the west: and the birds in many instances appear to have been blown by the strong wind from the Eastern Ghats; for, being birds of feeble flight, they are unable to contend against the strength of the wind. At this time they take refuge in huts and houses, or any building that will afford them shelter. The first bird of this kind that I saw had taken refuge in the General Hospital at Madras; and subsequently, at Nellore, I obtained many alive under the same circumstances. Layard states that in Ceylon it is migratory, coming in with the Snipe in the beginning of the cold weather. He further remarks that it is shy and wary, resorting to tangled brakes and ill-kept native gardens. It seldom alights on trees, and is generally found single; but I have seen three or four together; and it feeds chiefly on the ground, on various coleopterous insects. Like others of its family, it progresses by hopping, and is in general a most silent bird, but is said to emit at times a fine loud whistling note. Its Singalese name is said to be derived from its call—*Avitch-i-a*, pronounced slowly and distinctly. Blyth was informed that it uttered a loud screeching note." In the North-west Province of Ceylon, according to Captain Legge, the native name is *Ayittā*; and a correspondent, Mr. Parker, sent him the following explanation:—"It is said that this bird once possessed the Peacock's plumes; but one day, when he was bathing, the Peacock stole his dress; ever since that he has gone about the jungle calling for them, 'Ayittam, ayittam' (my dress, my dress). Another legend is that the Pitta was formerly a prince who was deeply in love with a beautiful princess. His father sent him to travel for some years, as was in olden times the custom with princes here. When he returned, the princess was dead; and the unfortunate prince wandered disconsolately about, continually calling her by name, 'Ayittā, Ayittā.' Out of pity to him, the gods transformed him into this bird." A very good account of the habits of this Pitta will be found in Capt. Legge's 'Birds of Ceylon,' to which island it is a winter visitant. The nest and eggs are described by Mr. Hume in his work entitled 'Nests and Eggs of Indian Birds' (p. 224).

There is no apparent difference in the colouring of the sexes; but specimens frequently occur among the skins sent to England with dark elongated marks down the stem of the feathers of the back and rump, while in others these parts are uniform in colour. Other differences also occasionally present themselves, the superciliary stripe being in some instances brownish buff, while in others it is of a lighter hue and, moreover, marked with green.

A line down the centre of the head from the bill to the nape black, narrow from the forehead to the crown, thence to the nape wide; a narrow black line under the eye, continued in a broader one down the sides of the neck, unites with the black at the nape; upper surface and greater wing-coverts dark grass-green; lesser wing-coverts glossy verditer-blue; rump and upper tail-coverts the same; primaries black, with pale bluish-grey tips, and with a large patch of white about the middle of their length, forming a conspicuous oval mark when the wing is spread; the secondaries are also black, conspicuously tipped with white, and the external ones margined with green; on the apical portion of the black, in those nearer the body, the green gradually increases in breadth till the black is nearly invisible; under surface of the wing black, interrupted by the oval spot of white, faintly tinged with blue; tail black, tipped with blue; chin and sides of the neck creamy white; breast and under surface light cinnamon-brown, brightest on the breast; vent and under tail-coverts bright scarlet; bill black, with a fleshy brown base; irides hazel; legs and feet pinkish flesh-colour.

The Plate represents an adult male and a younger bird, both of the natural size.







EUCICHLA CYANURA.

J. Gould and H. C. Fisher del. et lith.

Walter, Imp.



EUCICHLA CYANURA.

Blue-tailed Pitta.

Turdus cyanurus, Gmel. edit. Linn. Syst. Nat., tom. i. p. 828.—Lath. Ind. Orn., vol. i. p. 361.
Myiothera affinis, Horsf. Trans. Linn. Soc., vol. xiii. p. 154.—Lath. Gen. Hist., vol. iii. p. 66.
Pitta cyanura, Vieill. Gal. des Ois., tom. i. p. 246, pl. 153.—Gould, Birds of Asia, part 15.
Punglor, Java, Horsfield.

OF the numerous members of the present very beautiful family of birds, the comparatively common *Pitta cyanura* must be regarded as one of the most elegant; it is also one of the few species respecting which any information has been placed on record. The following interesting account, by Solomon Müller, of the bird, its habits, and economy is taken from the recently published 'Monograph of the Pittidæ,' by Mr. D. G. Elliot, of New York, a gentleman deserving the praise of all ornithologists for his labours in their own branch of science:—

"The *Pitta cyanura* is a mountain-bird, and is but seldom met with in level wooded regions, but is most often seen on old coffee-plantations and in places closely overgrown with shrubbery and seeds, at a height of from 600 to 3000 feet above the level of the sea. It is found usually in the gloomiest spots, and generally on or near the ground.

"They are often met with in pairs, and frequently also singly. Whenever several birds are together, say five or six, they are invariably in such cases one family, of which the young have but lately left the nest, and for a certain period still remain with the old. When two old males meet, they often fight with each other, in the same manner as the Quail and other quarrelsome birds do which are in the habit of dwelling on the ground: as with those species, the time for these battles among the *Pittæ cyanuræ* is generally shortly before their breeding-season, the appointed time for which seems to be from January to May.

"Upon one occasion we discovered near Mount Parang, in the Parang Regencies, a nest of this bird, on the 4th of February, which, like another brought to us a few weeks later, contained five eggs; a third nest with four eggs we found during the month of March, on the western slope of Mount Pangerango; and finally a fourth, with an equal number of eggs, we succeeded in obtaining at the beginning of April.

"The nest is generally built a little above the ground, hardly ever more than from 6 to 8 feet. It is most often placed in a secluded spot among the tough branches of the parasitic orchids growing on the trunk of some old tree. These closely grown plants being frequently damp and mouldy throughout, it follows that occasionally the nest becomes soaked through from beneath.

"On the whole, the *Pitta cyanura* is not of very shy habits, although one is sometimes met with at which it is not easy to get a shot. When chased, they fly along the ground with a strong, free, rapid flight, take refuge at various distances, and alight either near the ground on a projecting stump or upon the branch of some trunk. Seeking their food upon the ground, they are seen sometimes, like a chicken, scratching with their feet, and greedily examining with their bill the scattered dry leaves and the uncovered spot of ground. Their food consists of earth-worms, beetles, and other insects and their larvæ."

The male has the crown of the head, lores, a broad stripe from the base of the lower mandible, and the occiput deep velvety black; over each eye a broad stripe of rich gamboge-yellow; all the upper surface and tertiaries rich golden brown; wing-coverts deep black, with an oblong mark of white at the tip of the outer web of each feather; primaries and secondaries black at the base, passing into brown at the tip; two or three of the central secondaries narrowly margined on their apical portion with white; upper and under tail-coverts and tail very rich deep blue; throat white, washed with pale yellow, which gradually deepens into gamboge-yellow on the sides of the neck; below this light-coloured gorget a band of rich deep blue; remainder of the under surface crossed alternately with narrow bands of orange-yellow and deep blue, and suffused with a lilaceous bloom on the centre of the abdomen; bill black; feet flesh-colour.

The female has the head light orange-brown, striated with brownish black on the crown, the black mark on the side of the head finely striated posterior to the eye with orange; throat white, washed with light orange-brown on the sides; the line of blue bounding the gorget very narrow; the alternate bands of the under surface black and pale greyish brown, instead of blue and orange, and the lilaceous hue much paler; in all other respects the plumage resembles that of the male.

The Plate represents the two sexes, of the size of life.







EUCICHLA BOSCHII.

J Gould & W Hart del et lith

Walter, Imp.



EUCICHLA BOSCHII.

Van der Bosch's Pitta.

Pitta boschii, Müll. et Schleg. Verh. Nat. Gesch. Ned. Ind., pp. 5, 16, pl. 1.—Moore, Proc. of Zool. Soc., 1854, p. 273.—Gray and Mitch. Gen. of Birds, vol. i. p. 213.—Elliot, Mon. Pittidæ, pl. xxxi.—Gould, Birds of Asia, part 25 (1873).

Pitta elegans, Less. Voy. de la Bonite, pl. 3.—Temm. Pl. Col. text.

Pitta (Eucichla) elegans, Gray, Hand-l. of Birds, part i. p. 296.

BEAUTIFUL in coloration as is the lovely group of birds termed Pittas, the present species is certainly one of the most charming of them. Mr. Elliot, in his Monograph of the family, restricts the generic term *Pitta* to this bird and its two elegant allies, *Pitta cyanura* and *P. schwaneri*; while Reichenbach, as long back as the year 1850, applied to the three species the subgeneric term *Eucichla*. In my 'Birds of Asia' I retained all these Old-World Ground-Thrushes under the genus *Pitta*; but I think it more convenient in the present work to subdivide them according to my own views or those of the various ornithologists who have paid attention to the subject with a view to their classification. That the species above mentioned form a natural section, I have for many years clearly seen. Specimens of both sexes of *Pitta boschii* were brought from Sumatra by the late Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles; and I remember I shortly after formed the intention of naming the species *Pitta rafflesi*, an intention never carried out—which I now much regret, as it would have been very pleasing to me if the bird had borne the name of our celebrated countryman. The specimens referred to ornamented for many years the interesting Museum of the Zoological Society of London, the contents of which have since been scattered to the winds. Sumatra is unquestionably the native country of this fine bird; Mr. Elliot has added that of Malacca also—I believe, on the authority of Dr. Cantor; and he is probably correct in so doing, although, as yet, I have no positive evidence that any examples have been sent from there. The present bird not only differs from its two immediate congeners in being more redundantly coloured, but also in the female being more finely decorated than those of the other species; but, as will be seen on reference to the opposite Plate, she wants the blue and rich cross bars of the under surface.

Most (if not all) of the Pittidæ are solitary in their habits, and frequent the innermost and sterile parts of the forests almost too rugged for man to traverse, and which he would not venture to traverse did not his knowledge of birds tell him that the monotonous call he hears proceeds from one of Nature's living jewels.

Messrs. Müller and Schlegel, when writing on this species, say "the mission to Sumatra with which we were intrusted in the first half of the year 1833, by the then Governor-General Baron Von der Bosch, enabled us to increase our collection by a considerable harvest, both as regards the department of animals and that of plants. Under obligations of gratitude towards his Excellency for the execution of our coveted enterprise, we chose to introduce into the realm of science one of the handsomest birds discovered in the island of Sumatra under his venerated name."

The male has the centre of the crown deep black, bounded on each side by a broad band, which commences with rich yellow at the nostrils, gradually passes into rich orange, and finally on the nape into fiery or reddish orange; below this another band of black encircling the eyes, embracing the cheeks, and passing round the back of the neck; throat white, narrowly edged with yellow, which colour becomes rich orange on the sides of the neck; upper surface and wings cinnamon-brown, the tips of the coverts and outer edges of the secondaries margined with white slightly tinged with blue; upper tail-coverts and tail deep bright blue; under surface rich deep indigo-blue, crossed on each side of the breast with narrow crescentic lines of fiery orange-red, which nearly meet in the centre; on each side near the vent a patch of yellowish buff; bill black, apparently flesh-colour on the base of the under mandible; legs and feet fleshy brown.

The female is coloured like the male on the upper surface; but the under surface, in lieu of the indigo-blue and red lines, is crossed from the throat by narrow concentric lines of dark brown and dull yellow.

The figures represent the two sexes, of the natural size.







EUCICHLA SCHWANERI.

Seoul and H.C. Richter del. et lith.

Walter Inp.



Pitta schwaneri

Of the five mentioned wants the first of its abdomen and Motley Low, and G. Plate illustrate these birds surpassingly

The male the occiput over each eye of white at central section passing into neck; below and broad centre of the blue on the

The female rich orange primaries very similar

The Plate

EUCICHLA SCHWANERI.

Schwaner's Pitta.

Pitta schwaneri, Temm. in Leyden Museum.—Bonap. Consp. Gen. Av., tom. i. p. 256.—Id. Consp. Voluc. Anisod. 1854, p. 7. no. 200.—Elliot, Mon. of Pittidæ, pl. xxx.—Salvad. Ucc. Born., p. 244.—Gould, Birds of Asia, part 15.

Of the five nearly allied species *Pitta cyanura*, *P. boschi*, *P. schwaneri*, *P. gurneyi*, and *P. ellioti*, the last-mentioned is the rarest. In point of beauty it is just intermediate between two others; for while it wants the fiery and blue chest-markings of *P. boschi* it excels the *P. cyanura* in the rich blue of the centre of its abdomen. The native country of this fine bird is the island of Borneo, where it was found by Schwaner and Motley near Banjarmassing; and it has since been discovered in North-western Borneo by Mr. Hugh Low, and Governor Ussher and Mr. Treacher met with the species on the Lâwas river. The accompanying Plate illustrates both sexes as accurately as may be; but to do more than approximate to the colouring of these birds is out of the question—their tints being lovely in the extreme, and their iridescent hues so surpassingly beautiful as to be inimitable in a drawing.

The male has the crown of the head, lores, a broad stripe from the base of the lower mandible, and the occiput deep black, passing into rich blue where it joins the deep cinnamon-brown of the upper surface; over each eye a broad stripe of the richest gamboge-yellow; wing-coverts black, with a large oblong mark of white at the tip of the outer web of each feather; primaries and secondaries black; two or three of the central secondaries narrowly edged with white, within which is a tinge of blue near the tip; chin white, passing into rich gamboge-yellow below, and into a still richer tint of the same colour on the sides of the neck; below the throat-gorget, the breast and flanks are alternately barred with narrow bands of deep blue and broader bands of gamboge-yellow, terminating on the flanks in a conspicuous patch of fine yellow; centre of the abdomen deep blue; upper and under tail-coverts and tail rich deep blue, glossed with lighter blue on the margins of the feathers.

The female has the crown of the head, lores, and stripe through the eye dull black; stripe over the eye rich orange-yellow; throat dull white, washed with orange, which deepens on the sides of the neck; primaries brown; bands of the under surface more distinct, but of a much paler hue: in all other respects very similar to the male.

The Plate represents the two sexes, of the size of life.



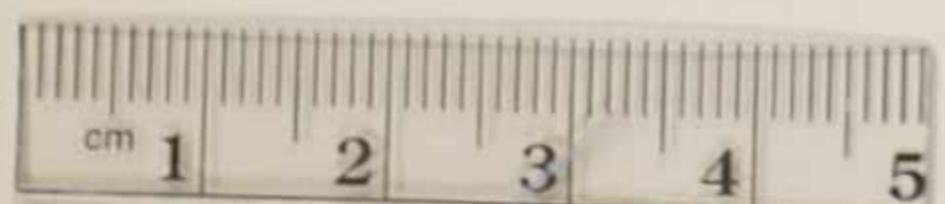




EUCICHLA GURNEYI.

J. Gould & W. Hart del. et lith.

Walter imp.



EUCICHLA GURNEYI.

Gurney's Pitta.

Pitta gurneyi, Hume, Stray Feathers, vol. iii. p. 296.—Gould, Birds of Asia, part 29.—Hume & Davison, Stray Feathers, 1878, p. 244.
Brachyurus gurneyi, Hume, tom. cit. no. 6, pl. 3.

WE are indebted to the pages of 'Stray Feathers' for a knowledge of this new and magnificent Pitta; and I can readily conceive with what real pleasure Mr. Allan Hume took up his pen to write a description of so interesting a bird.

Mr. Hume has given a most careful description of both sexes of the *Pitta gurneyi*, and his reason for dedicating this bird to his friend Mr. J. H. Gurney. He remarks:—

"No more beautiful or interesting addition to our Indian avifauna has been made for many a long day; and its discovery is one of the results of the systematic ornithological survey of the Tenasserim Provinces which for the past two years has been vigorously prosecuted by my curator Mr. William Davison and my whole staff.

"Though conspicuously different from any one of them, this new species is most nearly allied to *P. cyanura*, Gmel. (*guiana*, P. L. S. Müll.), *P. schwaneri*, Temm., *P. boschi*, S. Müll.

"There is the same cuneiform blue tail, the same comparatively small bill, the same more or less rufous olivaceous upper surface, the same difference in the sexes, an orange-brown replacing on the head of the female the more marked colours of that portion of the male.

"The habitat of this fine bird is Tenasserim, where it is a seasonal visitant to the evergreen forests of the southernmost portions of the province. Mr. Davison, who collected the specimens, gives the following note on their habits:—

"This is apparently only a migratory species in Tenasserim, and occurs, so far as I have observed, only in the southern portion of the province. Laynah was the most northern locality at which I observed it, and Kenong within the estuary of the Pakchan, but on the Siamese or southern side, the most southern.

"A few specimens begin to make their appearance in the forests round Malewoon and Bankasoon (where my specimens were mostly collected) about the 10th or so of February; but they remain scarce during February, March, and the first two weeks in April. After that they become rather more numerous, and continue so to the end of May and until the regular monsoon rains have set in, when they rapidly disappear, though even in July a few specimens may be met with. The bird confines itself to the evergreen forests, never, that I am aware, venturing into the open or even into gardens. It is shy and retiring, and on the slightest indication of danger hops rapidly away, managing generally to keep some obstacle intervening between itself and the approaching person. It is by no means a common bird even when it does occur; and it was only by persistently hunting them, and never missing an opportunity of securing a bird where possible, that I and my people succeeded in getting the number we did.

"Its habits are like those of other members of the genus, keeping to the ground; it feeds on snails, worms, slugs, and insects of all kinds. When disturbed, unless closely pressed, it seldom flies, but hops rapidly away, until it gains the cover of some tangled cane-brake or other refuge, where it remains until satisfied that all danger has passed, when it emerges again into the more open spots. Favourite resorts are the narrow valleys lying between the hills. These, though densely wooded, contain little or no undergrowth.

"The note is quite that of *Pitta*, but yet differs notably from that of the other species. When suddenly come upon or otherwise alarmed it utters a peculiar note, a sort of *kir-r-r*. It has a habit of jerking up its tail and dropping its wings slightly as it hops along, which I have never observed in its congeners.

"As above mentioned, it is almost exclusively a ground-bird; but one evening I shot a male high up in a tree; it attracted my attention by the peculiar short double note it was uttering, quite unlike its ordinary note, and every time it uttered it, it flapped its wings and jerked up its tail. Usually it is found singly, occasionally a couple together. During the morning and evening they call, and may then be heard answering one another in all directions."

The figures in the Plate represent, and are drawn from, a pair of birds kindly given to me by Mr. Hume.

THE HISTORY OF THE

REIGN OF

CHARLES THE FIRST

IN THE

SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

BY

JOHN RICHARDSON

OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF

OXFORD

IN TWO VOLUMES

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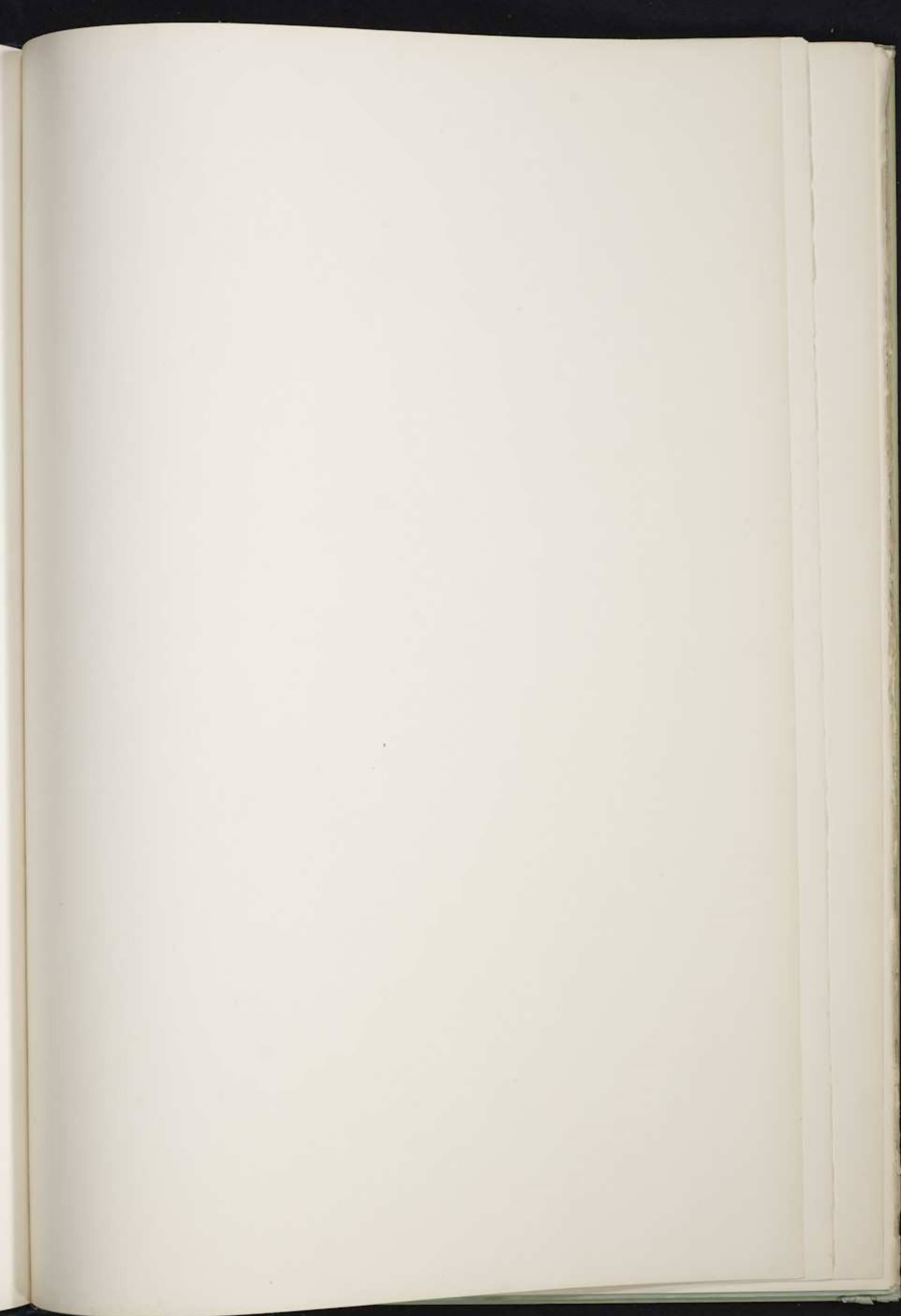
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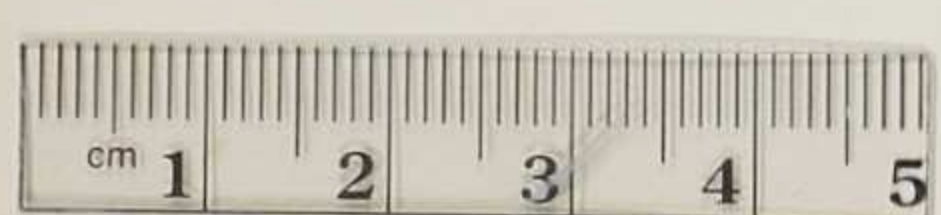




EUCICHLA ELLIOTI.

J. Gould & W. Hart, del. et lith.

Walter, Imp.



EUCICHLA ELLIOTI.

Elliot's Pitta.

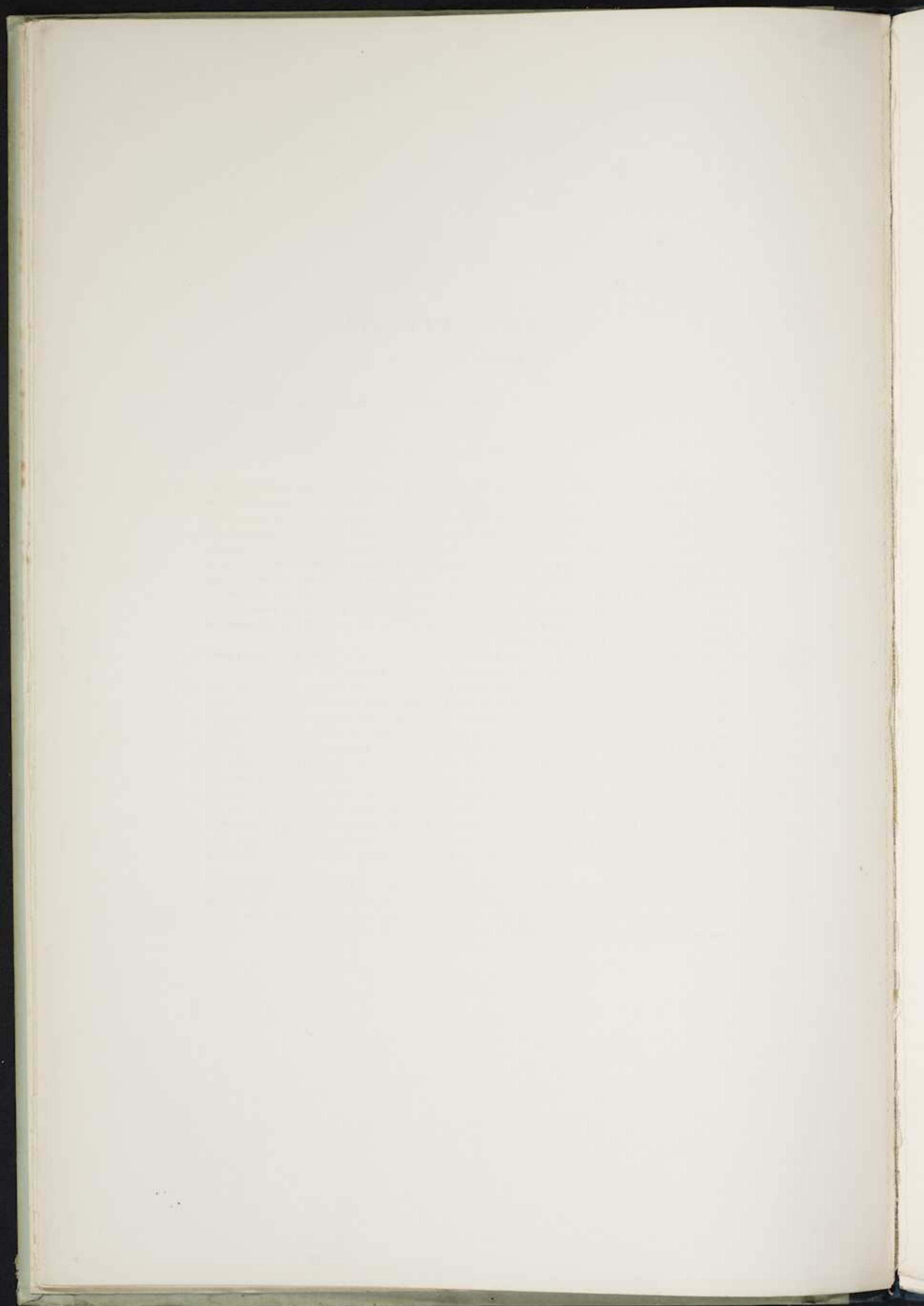
Pitta ellioti, Oustalet, Nouvelles Archives du Muséum, vol. x. Bulletin, p. 101, pl. ii. (1874).—Gould, Birds of Asia, part 31 (1879).

THE present species is represented by specimens of both sexes in the Paris Museum ; and no other collection can at present boast of the possession of this beautiful and unique bird. Its home appears to be the interior of Cochin China, a country concerning the ornithology of which scarcely any thing has yet been written, but one which, if we may judge from the little we do know, would yield a rich increase to our knowledge of Asiatic zoology. Situated as it is, there can be no doubt that Cochin China must receive a considerable influx of the winter migrants from China, while its indigenous avifauna, if we may make a deduction from the few species recorded, must consist of a mixture of Indian, Chinese, and even Malayan forms. With regard to the latter we may remark that the present species alone is sufficient to establish a Malayan element as existing in Cochin China ; for Elliot's Pitta is not allied to any of the known Chinese members of the genus, but belongs to that section, with longish tails and a generally blue coloration, for which the term *Eucichla* has been proposed as a distinct generic title.

As might be expected in the case of a bird so recently described, nothing is known of its habits ; and I therefore content myself with translating the description given by Dr. Oustalet.

“Feathers of the head, which are elongated behind so as to form a sort of crest, emerald-blue, more glistening on the forehead and eyebrow than on the crown. A black band, starting from the nostrils, passes on each side below the eye, and ends abruptly near the nape. The back is ultramarine blue, shaded with green and with brownish, the feathers of this part of the body being brown at the base, blue in the middle, and edged with green, the upper tail-coverts presenting the same tints. The quills are rather dark purplish brown ; and the secondaries have their outer webs of an ashy brownish colour. The tail-feathers are intense ultramarine blue, at least on the external webs, the inner webs being more or less shaded with green. The throat is very clear blue passing into whitish, the breast of an ashy-green colour. A band of very dark bluish from the lower breast ends between the legs ; the flanks and region of the vent are ornamented with black transverse bands, rather numerous, which are clearly defined on a yellow ground ; the under tail-coverts are black at the base, and pass into green or ultramarine blue at their tips. The beak is dark reddish brown ; and the tarsus and toes are rather reddish, but are doubtless of a darker colour in the living bird.”

I have not seen a specimen of this species myself, but am indebted to Professor Milne-Edwards for a painting of the birds taken from the specimens in the Museum of the Jardin des Plantes. The painting was executed by the well-known artist M. Huet (to whom also my thanks are due), and upon it are founded the figures in the Plate representing the male and female, of the size of life.





LEUCOPITTA MAXIMA.

Thomson & H.C. Richter del. a lith.

Water. imp.

LEUCOPITTA MAXIMA.

Great Pitta.

- Pitta maxima*, Müll. & Schl. Verh. Nat. Gesch. Ned. Ind. Zool., p. 14.—Westerm. Bijdr. Dierk., p. 45, *Pitta*, pl. 1.—Gray, Gen. B., i. p. 213.—Wallace, Ibis, 1859, p. 112, 1860, p. 197.—Schl. Vog. Nederl. Ind. *Pitta*, p. 30.—Gray, Hand-l. B., i. p. 296.—Gould, Birds of New Guinea, part 2.
Brachyurus maximus, Bp. Consp., i. p. 253.—Elliot, Monogr. Pittidæ, pl. 12.
Gigantipitta maxima, Bp. Consp. Vol. Anisod., p. 7.
Pitta gigas, Wallace, Malay Arch., ii. p. 3.
Brachyurus (Leucopitta) maxima, Elliot, Ibis, 1870, p. 413.
-

THERE are several species of this form which are nearly, if not quite, equal to the present bird in size ; so that the specific name of *maxima* would be by no means justified if naturalists were content to class all these birds under the heading of the genus *Pitta*. By many writers, however, the large Ant-Thrushes of Malasia and the eastern Himalayas are generically separated as *Hydrornis* ; and Mr. George Robert Gray was inclined to range the present bird under the same heading. In this I cannot agree ; I think that it should be kept along with the true *Pittæ*, of course in the short-tailed group. I have, however, thought it more convenient, in the present Monograph, to class the species under different generic headings, as they fall so naturally into groups which possess the same form and style of coloration. By many ornithologists I am aware that these characters will be considered only of subgeneric importance at the most ; but the adoption of generic titles for these various groups is, to my mind, of great convenience in a family like the Pittidæ.

The habitat of this beautiful bird is the Moluccan island of Gilolo. Very little has been recorded of its habits. Mr. Wallace, in his 'Malay Archipelago,' writes that during his stay in the above-mentioned island his boy Ali shot "a pair of one of the most beautiful birds of the East—*Pitta gigas*, a large Ground-Thrush, whose plumage of velvety black above is relieved by a breast of pure white, shoulders of azure blue, and belly of vivid crimson. It has very long and strong legs, and hops about with such activity, in the dense tangled forest bristling with rocks, as to make it very difficult to shoot." From the above short note of Mr. Wallace's we can imagine what a beautiful sight it must be to see this finely plumaged bird in its native forests ; and even in a tropical island like Gilolo, where brilliantly coloured birds abound, there can be few to compete with the subject of our present article.

No description of the male bird is necessary, as it stands alone among the Pittidæ and has no near allies. The Plate gives a correct idea of the plumage ; and the principal figure is full-sized.

The female is a rather smaller bird. The colouring of the bill in this Great Pitta is black, and the legs are blackish brown ; the tail is rounded at the tip, and there are no coloured bands across the base of the tail.







J. Gould & W. Hart del. et lith.

CYANOPITTA STEEREI.

Walter imp.



CYANOPITTA STEERII.

Steere's Pitta.

Brachyurus steerii, Sharpe, Nature, August 3, 1876.—Id. Trans. Linn. Soc., 2nd ser. Zool. i. p. 329, pl. xlix.

Pitta steerii, Gould, Birds of Asia, part 29.

Melanopitta steerii, Tweed. Proc. Zool. Soc., 1878, p. 949.

OF all the fine birds brought to light by Dr. Steere's expedition to the Philippine Islands this is decidedly one of the most striking (his grandest novelty being, of course, the *Sarcophanops steerii*). Not only is this new Pitta one of the largest of the family, falling not far short of the well-known *Pitta maxima* in size, but it is also perfectly distinct as regards its coloration; for there is no species which is blue underneath as the present bird is. From its black head, it ought to be associated with the group called by Bonaparte *Melanopitta*; but from all these it is easily distinguished by its unique coloration, which reminds one most of *Pitta maxima*, though there are differences almost sufficient to warrant its being placed in a different section from that bird; and I therefore propose the name of *Cyanopitta* for it.

Dr. Steere discovered this Pitta in the Province of Zamboanga, in the large island of Mindanao. He stayed for some time hunting in the neighbourhood of Zamboanga and Dumalon; and he procured several new species of birds during his residence in that island. It was in the forests adjoining the above-mentioned places that he met with this beautiful Pitta, which was also found by Mr. Alfred Everett near Zamboanga.

The following is a description of the typical specimens:—

Above dull green, with a shade of brighter grass-green under certain lights; wing-coverts silvery cobalt, forming a large shoulder-patch; bastard wing, primary-coverts, and greater coverts black, the latter blue at the ends, the innermost more or less green on the inner webs; primaries black, greenish towards the ends of the outer webs of the shorter ones; the secondaries more and more green on the outer webs as they approach the innermost, which are entirely green, the third to the seventh primaries having a large white spot forming an alar speculum; upper tail-coverts silvery cobalt, forming a band across the lower rump, some of the upper tail-coverts black; tail black; crown of head, nape, and sides of face black; cheeks and throat white; rest of under surface of body light blue, the centre of the abdomen black; under wing-coverts black.

Another specimen, apparently a somewhat younger bird, was also procured by Dr. Steere, and had the lower part of the belly pale vermillion.

I am under the greatest obligation to Dr. Steere for his kindness in lending me so many of his rare birds. The figures in the Plate represent the only two specimens of this Pitta procured by him, and are of the size of life.







PHENICOCICHLA ARQUATA, Gould.

Gould & Wilson del. et lith.

Water. Sep.



PHŒNICOCICHLA ARQUATA, *Gould.*

Necklaced Pitta.

Pitta (*Phœnicocichla*) *arquata*, Gould, in Ann. and Mag. Nat. Hist., 4th series, vol. vii. p. 340.—Id. Birds of Asia, part 23.—Gray, Hand-list of Birds, pt. iii. p. 344. sp. 4370a.—Salvad. Ucc. di Borneo, p. 241.—Sharpe, Ibis, 1879, p. 263.

THE beautiful Necklaced Pitta, *Phœnicocichla arquata*, of which the present drawing represents three examples, makes Borneo its home.

This bird is somewhat allied to the *Pitta granatina* of Temminck and the *P. concinna* of Eyton. If there be any difference in size, it is perhaps a trifle smaller than either of those species; but is at once distinguishable from both by its very remarkable necklace.

In the year 1872 this beautiful Necklaced Pitta was described and figured in the 'Birds of Asia' under the specific name of *arquata*, and it was at the time the only specimen that had been collected. It formed part of an early collection made by Mr. Alfred Everett in the Sarawak district, and was a worthy commencement of the ornithological work for which that gentleman has since become so distinguished. Since then only one other specimen has been discovered, and that was found by Mr. W. H. Treacher on the Lâwas river in North-western Borneo: this second specimen now belongs to the University Museum of Oxford; and it shows how rare these birds are when, in a country like Borneo with several collectors at work, eight years elapse before a second example is obtained.

The "necklace," as I term the row of blue markings on the breast, is quite peculiar to this Pitta, and reminds me more than any thing else of the necklaces of shells (*Elenchus irisodontis*) which the Tasmanian women used to wear, as I saw them years ago, before they became extinct from the face of the earth.

Forehead, lores, and throat reddish buff; crown, nape, and breast rich rusty red; over, but posterior to, the eye a lovely stripe of blue, as in *Pitta granatina*; a broken tooth-like bar of the same hue across the breast, separating the rich rusty red of the chest from the deep scarlet of the abdomen; upper surface of the body and scapularies brownish olive; primaries and secondaries brown, tinged with green; the secondaries are also tipped with splendid blue, but not so conspicuously as in *P. granatina*; tail blue, tinged with olive; legs and bill black.

The fine specimens from which the accompanying figures were taken were received from Borneo. One is now in my collection, and the other in the Oxford Museum, as mentioned above.

The Plate contains three figures, of the natural size.

THE HISTORY OF THE

REIGN OF

CHARLES THE FIRST

BY

JOHN BURNET

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

IN TWO VOLUMES

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MELAMPITTA LUGUBRIS, Schl.

J. Gould. F. W. Hart del. et lith.

Walter imp.



MELAMPITTA LUGUBRIS, *Schl.*

Black Ground-Thrush.

Melampitta lugubris, Schl. N. T. D., iv. p. 47.—Sclater, Proc. Zool. Soc., 1873, p. 696.—Gould, Birds of New Guinea, pt. 2.

WHAT are the natural affinities of this most curious bird? is a question which will exercise the ingenuity of ornithologists for some time to come. The generic appellation *Melampitta*, or "Black Ground-Thrush," bestowed upon it by Professor Schlegel, shows that by that eminent ornithologist the bird was evidently considered a near ally of the genus *Pitta*; and this is the position which I myself would assign to it. But the interesting aspect of the question still remains with regard to the affinities of the Mascarene genus *Philepitta*, another systematic puzzle to ornithologists. As the name of the latter genus implies, it was considered to be a relation of the Pittidæ, in which family it has generally been included; but Mr. Sharpe has referred it to the Paradiseidæ—an indication of the difficulty presented by the structural peculiarities of the bird.

An important link between *Pitta* and *Philepitta* seems to be offered in the present species, which unites the general appearance of a true Ground-Thrush with something of that velvety plumage for which *Philepitta* is famous; and therefore I cannot but regard this discovery of Baron von Rosenberg's as of the highest interest to the ornithologist, not only as uniting genera whose affinities were doubtful, but also as exhibiting another of the mysterious links which unite the fauna of Madagascar and certain portions of the Malayan archipelago.

Nothing is known of the present species beyond the fact that it was discovered in the northern peninsula of New Guinea, and was afterwards met with by d'Albertis in the Atam district.

The entire bird is black with a slight bluish tinge, the feathers of the forehead, region of the eye, lores, base of mandible, and chin having a velvety appearance. The length is about six inches.

My Plate is taken from Signor d'Albertis's Atam specimen, and represents the species of the size of life.

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