

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.