

Agra, April 2, 1869.

SIR,—I recently sent to M. Jules Verreaux, for examination, a small box of bird-skins, in regard to which I shall address you later more in detail, as they include, I think, nearly *twenty* species new to our Indian avifauna; but I wish to put on record the names of some few of them about which I am pretty sure:—

*Pratincola rubetra*, from several parts of the Punjaub.

*Sylvia delicatula*, from Western Rajpootana.

*Aedon galactodes*, from Jodhpoor in Western Rajpootana.

This I owe to Dr. King.

*Anthus pratensis*, from near Ferozpoor.

*Anthus aquaticus*? from the Punjaub, west of the Sutledge.

*Alauda arvensis*, from near Lahore. This I owe to Captain Marshall.

*Emberiza striolata*, from the Taragurh hill, Ajmere, where it is said to breed. Mr. Brooks has since obtained this bird in Etawah.

*Emberiza schæniclus*, from dry reedy jheels, near Badlee, thirty miles south of Delhi.

I may also note that I have obtained several specimens of what both Dr. Jerdon and I believe to be *Larus argentatus*, at a jheel twenty miles south of Delhi, and that I have a specimen of what is undoubtedly, I believe (and in this Dr. Jerdon concurs), *Phænicopterus minor*, kindly sent me from the Delhi Museum, and brought from the Sambhur Lake, Jodhpoor. I ought to mention that this is, I think, the *P. rubidus* of Capt. Feilden\* (Ibis, 1868, p. 496); but that our bird is *P. minor*, Temm. (Pl. Col. 49), I have (after examining a good copy of that plate in Dr. Jerdon's possession) no doubt; the shape of the bill alone suffices to separate this species from *P. roseus*. Dr. Jerdon first made this identification; and I may also mention here

\* [Since Dr. Jerdon's letter (*suprà*, pp. 230–232) was published, Capt. Feilden has been so good as to send us his type-specimen, which we have submitted to Mr. G. R. Gray, who has kindly pointed out to us some important characters wherein it differs from the African *P. minor*, Temm., which we believe he will shortly make public. Meanwhile we venture to express our opinion that *P. rubidus* will be found to be a very good species.—ED.]

that he has recognized a bird in the Lucknow Museum (which, however, I have not yet seen) as *Philomela major*.

I also sent to M. Verreaux a Falcon allied to *Falco peregrinator*, which I wish provisionally to name *FALCO ATRICEPS*. The head, nape, cheek-stripe, cheeks, and ear-coverts all form one black patch. The rest of the upper surface pure slaty-blue, barred, just as in an old Peregrine, with dusky slate-colour. Beneath it is marked like *F. peregrinator*, and it has narrow bars on the lower surface of the primaries.

Also a new *Ploceus*, which I got in the terai, much larger than any of our Indian species; and though closely resembling *P. baya*, it is nearly double the weight of that bird, with a bill fully half as large again. Dr. Jerdon agrees with me that this is a new species, at any rate to our Indian avifauna; and I name it provisionally *PLOCEUS MEGARHYNCHUS*.

I have numerous specimens of a species of Vulture not included among the birds of India either by Dr. Jerdon or by Mr. Blyth. It is a large bird, much bigger than *Gyps bengalensis*, *G. indicus*, or *Vultur calvus*, and resembling *Gyps fulvus*, but of a rich ruddy-bay colour with conspicuous narrow pale median stripes to the feathers beneath, and a short stout bill, like *G. bengalensis*. I call it *GYPS FULVESCENS*, the Bay-backed Vulture.

I have also sent specimens to Paris of an *Accipiter* which seems to me to be quite distinct from *A. nisus*. This I call *ACCIPITER MELANOSCHISTUS*—the very dark (almost black) head and nape, the olive slate-colour of the rest of the upper surface, the peculiar closeness of the markings on the lower parts, as well as its somewhat greater size, serving to distinguish it from the species just named, and *à fortiori* from *A. gularis*, *A. brevipes*, *A. virgatus*, and others. It is not *Lophospiza trivirgata*, though in the colour of the upper surface of some specimens there is a close resemblance between them. My new bird has, of course, no crest.

Then I sent a Buzzard of a very deep smoky-brown, mingled beneath with dull red, the tail having conspicuous and well-defined greyish-white bars. I procured several specimens in the Punjab. It may be an African species; but till identified as such, I call it *BUTEO FULIGINOSUS*.

To a most remarkable species that I have met with in the interior of the Himalayahs, and of which I have also sent a specimen, I provisionally give the name of *PHYLLOPNEUSTE MACRORHYNCHA*; but it will have to be generically separated. It resembles *P. rama* in size and plumage; but the bill is enormous, reminding one of *Rhinochetus*.

I must also mention that I entertain no doubt of the *Saxicola* so common in Upper India, and heretofore identified with *S. ænanthe*, being really *S. isabellina*, Rüpp., *S. saltatrix*, Ménétr. I have, however, another nearly allied species which may be the true *S. ænanthe*.

I think I ought to notice that *Rollulus superciliosus*\* is not very uncommon in the cold weather in the immediate neighbourhood of Capt. T. Hutton's house at Jerepanee, Missouri. That gentleman procured three specimens this year. They frequent high grass, are exceedingly difficult to flush, and drop again within three or four yards; so that the only way to shoot them is with a pistol. I owe this information, as well as the specimens that adorn my collection, to Capt. Hutton. He further mentions that they are migratory, only remaining a month or so, but that whence they come—whether from the north or the south, from the interior of the hill-country or the Dhoon—he has, as yet, been unable to satisfy himself.

The species of *Budytes* are most troublesome. I hope M. Verreaux may be able to do something with them; I have sent him five species at least, and I have two others. It seems that *B. flavus*, *B. rayi*, *B. auricapillus*, *B. melanocephalus*, *B. cinereocapillus*, and *B. viridis* all occur here; but without a good series of European examples with which to compare ours, it is impossible to be certain.

Lastly, Dr. Jerdon writes to me that he has found *Tadorna scutellata* common in the Burrampooter, shy and wary, keeping to the middle of the river, in flocks of from twenty to forty.

Yours, &c.,

A. O. HUME.

\* [Cf. *Ibis*, 1867, p. 313, 1868, p. 472.—ED.]