

XVII. ON A SMALL COLLECTION OF
BIRDS FROM THE MISHMI HILLS,
N E FRONTIER OF INDIA

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The birds mentioned in this article were collected by Capt. R. S. Kennedy, I.M.S., in the Mishmi Hills during the months of March and April, 1913, and though but few in number form a most interesting collection. It contains a splendid specimen of *Ithaginis cruentus kuseri*, hitherto represented by two specimens only which were obtained in Yunnan.

1. *Garrulus bispecularis* (Vig.).

Blanford, *Fauna of British India*, Birds, i, p. 39.
British Museum Catalogue, iii, p. 100.

No. 25385. Not sexed. Mishmi Hills, 8500 ft., 22-iii-13.

This specimen is a fairly typical specimen of *bispecularis*, rather dark above and brightly coloured. It exactly resembles the type of *Garrulus owstoni* from Formosa, so named by Ingram, but which is merely a synonym of *bispecularis*.

2. *Nucifraga hemispila* (Vig.).

Blanford, *Fauna of British India*, Birds, i, p. 41.
British Museum Catalogue, iii, p. 54.

No. 25389. ♀, Mishmi Hills, 8000 ft., 5-iv-13.

Although now it is often accepted as such I do not consider *hemispila* a sub-species of *caryocatactes* as the former bird and *multipunctata*, which is a sub-species of the latter bird, overlap in their breeding grounds without, as far as I can see from the material in the British Museum, in any way grading into one another. *Hemispila* is the common form over the North Eastern Frontier of India and breeds in Tibet and further east, but I have also received skins of *multipunctata* killed in Tibet during the breeding season.

The three forms of nutcracker should therefore stand as follows:

Nucifraga caryocatactes caryocatactes,
Nucifraga caryocatactes multipunctata (Vig.), and
Nucifraga hemispila (Vig.).

3. *Garrulax leucolophus leucolophus* (Hardw.).

Blanford, *Fauna of British India* Birds, i, p. 77.
British Museum Catalogue, vii, p. 435.

No. 25383. Not sexed. Etalni, Mishmiland, 2200 ft., 13-ii-13.

A quite typical *leucolophus* showing no signs of an approach to *belangeri*.

4. *Yuhina gularis gularis* (Hodg.).

Blanford, *Fauna of British India*, Birds, i, p. 211.
British Museum Catalogue, viii, p. 631.

No. 25388. ♀ Mishmi Hills, 8000 ft., 5-iv-13.

On the upper parts this bird is very close to *Y. gularis yangpiensis* (Sharpe), but has not the chestnut tinge on the throat, a character which appears to be always present in *yangpiensis*.

5. *Oreocincla mollissima* (Blyth).

Blanford, *Fauna of British India*, Birds, ii, p. 154.
British Museum Catalogue, v, p. 157.

No. 25386. ♂, Mipi, Mishmi Hills, 8500 ft., 9-iii-13.

I have recently shown that the form *dixonii* must be suppressed (*Bull. B.O.C.* clxxxviii, p. 81), as the alleged differences between this and *mollissima* are not specific but merely individual and are found in a certain number of specimens throughout the whole area inhabited by this bird. The present specimen has boldly marked wings, considerably better marked than most of the birds hitherto called *dixonii*.

6. *Glaucidium brodiei* (Burton).

Blanford, *Fauna of British India*, Birds, iii, p. 307.
British Museum Catalogue, ii, p. 212.

No. 25382. ♀ Etalni, Mishmiland, 2200 ft., 13-ii-13.

7. *Tinnunculus alaudarius* (Gmel.).

Blanford, *Fauna of British India*, Birds, iii, p. 428.
British Museum Catalogue, i, p. 425.

No. 25384. ♂, Mipi, Mishmi Hills, 5000 ft., 22-iii-13.

This is a rather large specimen for a male and is in very pale abraded plumage, but otherwise is quite typical *alaudarius* and agrees closely with birds killed in Great Britain.

8. *Turtur orientalis* (Lath.).

Blanford, *Fauna of British India*, Birds, iv, p. 40.
British Museum Catalogue, xxi, p. 403.

No. 25387. ♂, Mipi, Mishmi Hills, 8500 ft., 9-iii-13.

9. *Ithaginis cruentus kuseri* (Beebe).

No. 25380. ♂, Upper Matun Valley, Mishmi Hills, 8000 ft., 28-iii-13.

This most beautiful blood pheasant was recently described by Beebe from two skins in the Museum d'Histoire Naturelle de

Paris. These two skins, both of males, were received from Tsékon, Yunnan, and were collected by R. G. Soulie; one is still in the Paris Museum and the second is now in the British Museum collection. Compared with the latter skin the present specimen is considerably brighter, the black is more intense, the crimson both of the breast and other parts is more vivid and perhaps more extended into the abdomen, the green is richer and the grey of the back deeper and clearer in tint. All these differences, however, are probably only due to the present skin being fresh whilst the others are somewhat faded.

There is, however, one other difference which calls for remark and that is in regard to the white striations on the upper parts. In the Mishmi skin these are very narrow, little more than shaft stripes in fact, whereas in the Yunnan skins the striations are decidedly broader, in some cases as much as $\frac{1}{2}$ of an inch. An examination of the series of *Ithaginis cruentus cruentus* in the Museum shows that individuals of this species vary very considerably in this respect, and I am therefore unable to assume that this characteristic is anything but individual in the present case also. If, however, at any future time more specimens be obtained and the striations be found to be constantly narrow as in this bird, it would, combined with the general more intense colouration, suffice to divide it subspecifically from *cruentus kuseri*.

It is a most remarkable and interesting fact that the same species—or sub-species—should be found inhabiting areas so wide apart as Yunnan and the Mishmi Hills, and it is a great feather in Captain Kennedy's cap securing so great a rarity. He writes about the specimen as follows:—

“The specimen was shot in the Upper Matun Valley, Mishmi Hills, at an altitude of 8000 ft., lat. $29^{\circ} 20'$ and long. $96^{\circ} 20'$ (roughly).

“In that part of the Mishmi Hills this bird occurred in considerable numbers, and one frequently saw their droppings or scratchings when searching for takin.

“They are not wary and quite a number were shot by the various parties: they formed a most welcome addition to the larder, being good to eat. I believe Capt. Bailey sent a couple of female skins to the Bombay Nat. Hist. Society.

“I do not remember seeing traces of these birds at a lower altitude than 6500 ft., and think they might be said to occur, *in winter*, from about 6000 ft. up to the snow line, which, in these hills is of course comparatively low.

“The takin, Slater's moonal and tragopan have a similar range, though perhaps the moonal and tragopan remain a little lower. The hills in which they occur are clothed with forest, largely, though not entirely, composed of fir and pine trees with an undergrowth of rhododendron. In some places the forest gives way to grassy slopes, and to these slopes the blood pheasants repair to feed, morning and evening; and it is then that one can bag them for the pot so easily. They form large flocks; I have

seen 30-40 in one flock. When startled they run away into the jungle. They can fly—I have seen them fly across a stream, when frightened, but ordinarily do not, and must be shot on the ground.

“Their call is the same as that of the common Himalayan blood pheasant which I have shot in the Chumbi Valley.”

10. *Arboricola torqueola* (Valenc.).

Blanford, *Fauna of British India*, Birds, iv, p. 125.
British Museum Catalogue, xxii, p. 107.

No. 25381. Not sexed. Mishmi Hills, 9000 ft., 5-iv-13.

Quite typical.

