

Heteroglaux Blewitti, Sp. Nov.

General appearance not unlike that of Athene brama, but size larger and wings shorter. Whole head, back, and sides of neck, interscapular region, and scapulars, unspotted dark earth brown; a very strongly marked, dark brown, transverse throat bar.

Mr. Blewitt tells me that he has been for long vainly endeavouring to procure a specimen of this owl, which frequents the densest forests of the western portion of the Tributary Mehals, and is shy to a degree. At last on the 14th December, 1872, he shot a fine female at Busnah, in the Phooljan State. Most of my Indian readers know how long, and zealously, Mr. Blewitt has devoted himself to ornithology, and how eminently successful he has been as an oologist, and will not therefore wonder at my dedicating to him this new and remarkable species, which he has hitherto been the only person to obtain, as also the first to discriminate.

The following are the dimensions and description of a female of this new species, the generic characters of which are alone, I think, sufficient to distinguish it from all other known owls.

Length, 9·5; expanse, 22·5; wing, 5·8; tarsus, 0·91; mid-toe, to root of claw, 0·9; 4th, or longest primary, exceeds 1st secondary by 1·2; bill, straight from nostril to point, 0·55; tail from vent, 2·9; wings, when closed, reach to within 0·5 of end of tail; foot, length, 2·1; breadth, 2·3; weight, 8·5 ozs.

The lores, a line over the eye, a broad line under the eye, and a triangular patch immediately behind the eye, white; the bristles of the lores, with the terminal halves, black; the longest bristles reach just to the tip of the bill. From the gape, runs a stripe backwards, enveloping the whole of the ear coverts, in colour a rather dark earth brown, obsoletely barred with albescent; chin and throat, and the sides of the lower mandible, below the stripe above mentioned, pure white; across this from the base of the lower mandible, on one side to the base on the other, runs a conspicuous, transverse, dark brown band. Forehead, top, and back of the head, back, and sides of the neck, scapulars, and interscapular region an uniform, rather dark earth brown; on lifting the feathers of the back of the neck, and on lifting similarly the scapulars, each feather is found to have a white bar about mid-way between base and tip, or in some cases nearer the tip, but these are not visible when the feathers are in repose. The wings are hair brown, darkest on the primaries, secondaries, and their greater coverts, and more nearly concolorous with the

scapulars, on the lesser and median coverts, and tertiaries. All the quills have four or five conspicuous white spots on the outer webs, and corresponding imperfect bars (not quite reaching to the shafts) on the inner webs, which bars are pale brown towards the tips, and higher up, pure white. The winglet which is almost blackish brown is similarly marked. The primary greater coverts similar, the rest of the greater, and some of the median, coverts, with very large conspicuous white spots near the tips on the outer webs. The lesser coverts, and most of the median unspotted; rump and upper tail coverts, uniform brown, rather darker than the interscapular region, some of them exhibiting, when lifted, a concealed white bar as in the scapulars. Tail hair brown, tipped white, and with three conspicuous transverse white bars, a fourth, a less perfect one, concealed by the upper tail coverts. The breast feathers are mostly white, but are broadly tipped with hair brown, which owing to the overlapping of the feathers is what is chiefly seen. The sides of the breast of this same color, but with traces of white bands well inside the tips, and not noticeable till the feathers are lifted. Centre of abdomen, tibial, and tarsal plumes, toe feathers, and lower tail coverts pure white; sides of abdomen, sides, and flanks, broadly banded with hair brown.

Athene pulchra, Sp. Nov.

Closely allied to A. brama, but much smaller, the color of the upper surface usually a darker, and purer brown, and the white markings, smaller.

I have had one specimen of this owl, sent me by Captain Fielden, by me now for some time, but having only a single specimen, I hesitated to characterize the Pegu owl as distinct. I have now four good specimens before me, two of them sent by Mr. Oates, and it appears to me certain that they must be separated. I do not suppose that these birds weigh much more than half what our Indian ones do. In length they vary from 7.25 to 7.8 against 8 to 9.5 in *brama*, while the wings vary from 5.3 to 5.8 against 6 to 6.65; and an expanse of 19 to 19.5 against 21 to 22.5 in the Indian bird. No doubt the general character of the plumage is the same as in *brama*; but the spotting of the head is smaller and neater. The general color of the upper surface is a darker and purer brown; the dark throat band is more strongly marked. The tail exhibits five, or six, narrow transverse bands, or traces of these, against four or five, far broader, and more distinctly marked bands in *brama*.