

**81 A.—*Ninox scutulata*, Raff.? *N. burmanica*. Sp. Nov.**

It is under Raffles' name that Mr. Sharpe considers that the Nicobar birds should stand. He appears to have seen only one specimen, a female collected at Trinkut with a wing 7·4. I cannot doubt that this specimen was *affinis*. The larger race that occurs on the Nicobars has the wing about 8·1 and 8·4 in males and females, and they should perhaps be placed with the Burmese race; they are much larger, and not at all of the same type as the extreme south of India, Ceylonese, and Straits race. In dealing with these *Ninoxes*, Mr. Sharpe defines the species as follows:—

Head, grey; much lighter than the back, which is browner; tail, clear grey, tipped with white, the black bands in strong contrast.

a. Axillaries barred with brown and white; breast spots, brown; size, large. Wing 8 to 8·75 inches ... .. *lugubris*, Tick.

b. Axillaries uniform orange chestnut; breast spots, chestnut. Size, small. Wing, 6·65 inches *affinis*, Tytler.

Head, dark brown, generally uniform with the back, seldom greyer; tail, dark brown, with blackish brown bars ... *scutulata*, Raff.: *hirsutus*, Tem.

*Lugubris* he assigns to the Indian peninsula and the Himalayas. *Affinis*, which is clearly distinct and of which further hereafter, belongs, though Mr. Sharpe does not specifically mention this, equally to the Andamans and Nicobars.

Lastly his *scutulata*, he assigns to the whole of India, Ceylon, Malaisias, through China to Japan and southwards into the islands of the Malayan sub-region. Thus uniting under this head, the little *malaccensis*, Eyton from the Straits, *japonicus*, and *borneensis*, Bonp., and *florensis*, Wallace.

I myself am very doubtful whether the Indian *lugubris* and *scutulata*, *apud* Sharpe, can be definitely separated. No doubt typical specimens corresponding with Mr. Sharpe's diagnosis may be selected, but many specimens will be found which it is not possible thus to classify.

The points Mr. Sharpe insists on are:—(1) the greyiness of the head, much lighter than the back in *lugubris*, and the dark brown head, generally uniform with the back in what he calls *scutulata*; and (2) the pale grey tail, tipped with white in *lugubris*, and the dark brown tail in *scutulata*.

I do not think however, that these distinctions hold good. I have some birds with very dark tails and conspicuously greyer heads; others with very light tails and yet of a generally dark brown upper plumage, and the head darkest of all and not in the least grey.

My impression is that either we must unite Mr. Sharpe's two species *lugubris* and *scutulata*, or that we shall have to divide them into several more species. (1) one for the plains of Central and Northern India, the true *lugubris*, (2) one for Ceylon, Travancore, and the Straits, *hirsutus*, Tem, which, if Sumatran specimens prove identical, must stand as *scutulata*, (3) one for Nipal and the Eastern *Himalayas*, *nipalensis*, (4) one for Tipperah, Cachar, and other neighbouring localities eastward, a very large dark form only provisionally designated by me as *innominata*, and (5) one for Pegu and Tenasserim intermediate between this last and *nipalensis* with which the Nicobar birds closely correspond. I shall deal, however, with this question more fully hereafter, at present I merely wish it to be understood that the Cachar birds (? *innominata*, sp. nov.) belong to a very large dark race, the upper surface a nearly uniform deep chocolate brown with the head if anything darker than the rest of the body—while those from the Nicobars like those from Pegu and Tenasserim, are intermediate in size and color between the Cachar form and *nipalensis*, Hodgs.

I am quite ready to make only one species of the lot, but if *lugubris* is to be separated, so also must be, I think, the other races above indicated.

81 *bis*.—*Ninox affinis*, Tytler.

I am afraid Mr. Sharpe's diagnosis of this species, "axillaries uniform orange chestnut, breast spots chestnut, wing 6·65," will scarcely hold good.

The axillaries are not always uniform, they are sometimes banded with brown, and are pale buff instead of being orange chestnut; the breast spots are not always chestnut, in one specimen they are ferruginous buff, precisely the same color as in specimens of other Indian and Malayan *Ninox*. Lastly, the wing in the male is certainly sometimes as large 6·9, for I have one specimen of this size, and the wings of the females run to 7·4 and 7·6, and I entertain no doubt that Mr. Sharpe's *N. scutulata* from the Nicobars (Cat. Vol. II, p. 159,) a female with the wing 7·4 belonged really to the present species.

82 *ter*.—*Hirundo andamanensis*, Tytler.

Nothing has yet been seen of this supposed species, which I suspect will prove to be nothing but the immature male of the common Eastern Chimney Swallow.

82 *quat*.—*Hirundo gutturalis*, Scop.

Under which name, and not *H. rustica*, as given in my first paper, the Chimney Swallow so common at the Andamans should probably stand.

96.—*Chætura indica*, Hume.