



STACHYRIS RUFICEPS, *Blyth*

*J. Gould & H.C. Richter, del et lith*

*Water-brap*

## STACHYRIS RUFICEPS, *Blyth.*

### Red-headed Stachyris.

*Stachyris ruficeps*, Blyth, Journ. Asiat. Soc. Beng., vol. xvi. p. 452.—Id. Cat. of Birds in Mus. Asiat. Soc. Calcutta, p. 150.—Horsf. and Moore, Cat. of Birds in Mus. East-Ind. Comp., vol. i. p. 409.—Gray and Mitch. Gen. of Birds, vol. iii., App. p. 10 (App. to p. 228).—Moore, Proc. of Zool. Soc. 1854, p. 141.—Bonap. Consp. Gen. Av., tom. i. p. 332, *Stachyris*, sp. 3.—Jerd. Birds of India, vol. ii. part i. p. 22.—Id. Ibis, 1872, p. 299.

————— *præcognitus*, Swinh. Ibis, 1866, p. 310.—Id. Proc. of Zool. Soc., 1871, p. 373.

*Timalia (Stachyris) ruficeps*, G. R. Gray, Hand-list of Birds, part i. p. 315.

————— *pileata*, McClell. Proc. of Zool. Soc., part vii. 1839, p. 161.

*Syak-birang-pho*, Lepchas (Jerdon).

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HAVING carefully compared Mr. Swinhoe's Chinese specimens of his *Stachyris præcognitus* with Nepaulese examples of Mr. Blyth's *S. ruficeps*, I am unable to perceive sufficient difference between them to warrant their being regarded as distinct; I have no alternative therefore but that of placing the Consul's name as a synonym of the latter. The accompanying illustration of two birds and a nest, taken from Chinese examples lent me by Mr. Swinhoe, will enable those who may possess Himalayan examples to judge for themselves whether I am right in considering them identical. Size is evidently of but little value; for one of my Nepaulese examples is much smaller than any Chinese specimen I have ever seen. If the above view of the case be correct, then it is evident that this little bird has a wide range, extending over Nepaul, Sikhim, and the Khasia hills, while Mr. Swinhoe also gives the island of Formosa and the Ichang gorge of the Yangtze river as other places it inhabits.

The following notes, by Mr. Jerdon, Mr. Moore, and Mr. Swinhoe, comprise all the information I have been able to find recorded respecting this bird. The meaning of Mr. Swinhoe's remarks in connexion with it, given in his first account of the species in 'The Ibis' for 1866, I am at a loss to understand; for he therein compares the bird with various genera which seem to me in no way allied to *Stachyris*.

"This bird," says Dr. Jerdon, "is found in Nepal, Sikhim, and the Khasia Hills. It is common at Darjeeling, frequenting high trees in small parties, searching the foliage for minute insects. A nest and eggs, said to be of this species, were brought to me at Darjeeling. The nest was a loose structure of grass and fibres, and contained two eggs of a greenish-white colour, with some rusty spots."

Mr. Moore remarks that this species is "allied in form and size to *Stachyris pyrrhops*, but having the crown light ferruginous, and the chin and middle of the throat white, with slight black central streaks to the feathers; rest of the upper parts plain olive, and of the lower whitish, with a fulvous tinge on the sides of the neck and breast; bill and legs pale horny.

"Length 4 inches; wing  $2\frac{1}{2}$ ; tail 2; bill, to frontal plumes  $\frac{1}{5}$ , to gape  $\frac{1}{10}$ ; tarsus  $\frac{1}{2}$ .

"In some specimens the crown and nape are bright ferruginous, and the whole of the underparts pale ferruginous."

In his Revised Catalogue of the Birds of China and its Islands, published in the 'Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London' for 1871, Mr. Swinhoe says:—"Very like *St. ruficeps*, Blyth, of Nepal, but smaller, with much smaller bill, and with the red of the head confined to the crown."

The figures and the nest are of the natural size.