THE FAUNA OF BRITISH INDIA

INCLUDING

CEYLON AND BURMA

BIRDS.—VOL. V.

(Second Edition.)

BY

E. C. STUART BAKER, O.B.E., F.Z.S., Etc.

THE FAUNA OF BRITISH INDIA

INCLUDING

CEYLON AND BURMA.

Published under the authority of the Secretary of State for India in Council.

EDITED BY E. C. STUART BAKER, O.B.E., F.Z.S., Etc.

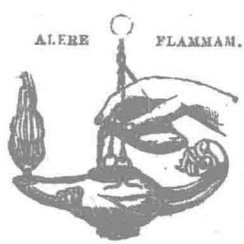
BIRDS.—VOL. V.

(Second Edition.)

BY

E. C. STUART BAKER, O.B.E., F.Z.S., Etc.

LONDON:
TAYLOR AND FRANCIS, RED LION COURT, FLEET STREET.
March, 1928.



PRINTED BY TAYLOR AND FRANCIS,
RED LION COURT, FLEET STREET.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

READERS of the 'Fauna of British India' will note with the deepest regret that the present volume contains no Editor's Preface for, shortly after the issue of the fourth volume of the Avifauna, Sir Arthur E. Shipley passed away. We lose in him an editor with whom to work was a pleasure and whose courtesy, tact, and kindness were unfailing, The scientific world is the poorer for his loss, whilst the author of the Avifauna volumes and, I am sure, the authors of all the other volumes also, feel that they have lost a personal and much valued friend as well as editor.

We are very glad to be able to announce that Col. J. Stephenson, C.I.E., has been selected to edit future volumes of the Fauna and we welcome in him one who is already known to us in name and reputation if not in person.

The present volume of the Avifauna is the fifth of the series and will be the last but one dealing with the birds themselves. It contains the following Orders:—(1) The *Accipitres*, or diurnal Birds of Prey; (2) the *Columbæ*, or Doves and Pigeons; (3) the *Pterocletes*, or Sand-Grouse; (4) the *Gallinæ*, or Game-Birds; and (5) the *Hemipodii*, or Bustard Quails. All of those Orders were accepted by Blanford and the only changes made are minor ones in families and genera, the most important, perhaps, being the acceptance of Beebe's two subfamilies of Game-Birds, the *Phasianinæ*, or Pheasants, and *Perdicinæ*, or Partridges. These are based, as Beebe has himself observed, on characters which may not prove universally correct but which are convenient and correct in so far as we are at present aware.

The number of species and subspecies described in these orders is 306, an increase of 108, practically a third more than admitted in the same orders by Blanford in 1898. An analysis of the increase is very interesting and is a wonderful tribute to the acumen and thoroughness of our leading Indian ornithologists of the nineteenth century. No fewer than 52 of the additional subspecies now accepted had already been named by Hume, Blyth and others, and their differences pointed out. Thirty-eight new subspecies have been created since 1898, whilst 18 additional species and subspecies have been added to our Avifauna, nearly all upon our North-Eastern and South-Eastern borders. Two species have been eliminated as not separable, and 24 species, accepted as such in the first edition, have now been relegated to the rank of subspecies.

The Orders of Aves dealt with in this volume are very generally accepted and, as each is fully discussed as it is reached in the following pages, it is unnecessary for me to comment on them here, or to give my reasons for accepting these and discarding others.

I do not imagine that the classification I have adopted is final, or that my nomenclature is without any mistakes, or the division of many species into subspecies complete. I would ask my readers to remember that each volume of the Avifauna merely forms a basis upon which future systematists may work and, for this reason, volume has succeeded volume in the shortest time compatible with fairly accurate work. Had all the time desirable from the author's point of view been expended on each species and subspecies, its synonymy and nomenclature, years would have elapsed between each volume and the greater finality attained would not have compensated for the many evils of delay. It is hoped that the present volumes may induce ornithologists, more particularly those who specialize in areas smaller than the whole Indian Empire, to set to work to correct the many mistakes they must contain and to publish their corrections as soon as possible.

Already much good work has been done in this way. Notably Dr. C. B. Ticehurst, who has specialized on Sind

and Punjab birds, has ferreted out certain names older than those I have employed, whilst he has also shown that certain additional geographical races must be admitted in the extreme North-West of India. In the opposite corner of the Empire, Mr. H. C. Robinson has done similar work in reference to the Malay States and Peninsula, Burma and Siam.

The next volume will complete the Birds and, if there is room, will also contain the corrigenda and addenda to the first volume, the further corrigenda and addenda for the remaining five volumes to come out with the synonymy in a seventh volume.

In the present volume I have had the advantage of working with Mr. Robinson on certain groups, whilst the magnificent collection of well-made skins of birds, with excellent data, which he has brought home with him has helped to elucidate many points hitherto doubtful on account of the paucity of material for examination. I have also to thank this gentleman for assistance in proof reading and for much important information on Malaysian Birds.

To Messrs. H. F. and G. Witherby my thanks are due for permitting the reproduction of the plate of *Chalcophaps indica indica* by Lodge, which originally appeared in 'Indian Pigeons and Doves.' As usual the Authorities at the Natural History Museum have done everything possible to facilitate my work and have given me the constant assistance without which it would have been impossible to have brought out the various volumes at such short intervals.

E. C. STUART BAKER.

March 1928.

SYSTEMATIC INDEX.