THE FAUNA OF BRITISH INDIA,

INCLUDING

CEYLON AND BURMA.

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EDITED BY SIR ARTHUR E. SHIPLEY, G.B.E., Sc.D. Cantab., HON. D.Sc. Princeton, HON. LL.D. Michigan, F.R.S.

BIRDS.—VOL. III.

(Second Edition.)

BY

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

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INTRODUCTION.

THE present volume, No. 3 of the Avifauna, completes the work in so far as it deals with the *Passeres*. In the three volumes are contained 303 genera, 786 species, or a total of 1336 species and subspecies. In the first edition of the Avifauna the *Passeres* were contained in two volumes, the total number of genera being 313 and the total number of species 936. Oates, however, did not include the family *Eurylaimidæ* in the *Passeres* and this would add 6 genera and 9 species recognized at that time and would have brought the totals of genera and species up to 319 and 945 respectively.

Although the actual number of species dealt with in the present three volumes is only 786 it must be remembered that a very large number of forms accepted by Blanford and Oates as full species were, in reality, nothing more than geographical races. In 1895 the division of species into subspecies had not been accepted and, in consequence, many geographical races were exalted to the position of species, a status to which they had no right whilst, on the other hand, many others equally good were totally ignored.

In addition to the birds enumerated in the first edition, a certain number of entirely new species have been discovered, more especially in Burma. A certain number, also, of birds from adjoining countries have now been

recorded as having been obtained within the Indian Empire. It is, however, due principally to the proper defining of the geographical races that there is so great an increase in the number of birds dealt with and this is what we should expect to find in so vast a country as that dealt with in the limits of this work.

The present volume contains 509 pages, 7 coloured illustrations and 90 woodcuts; in addition to these is given a map showing the region dealt with in the Fauna of India Series and upon this map will be found the great majority of the names of the places referred to.

The woodcuts are reproduced from the first edition of the Avifauna, whilst the coloured plates are the work of the author.

No one who has not read and re-read this volume can appreciate the immense labour and wide learning of the author. The large number of facts mentioned under each species or subspecies is enormous, and that the highest degree of accuracy possible has been obtained is due to the learning, industry and painstaking care of the author.

A. E. SHIPLEY.

February 1926.

PREFACE.

In completing the third volume of the 'Avifauna of British India' the Author feels that the most difficult part of his work has been accomplished and it seems an opportune moment to express his thanks to all those who have helped him. In the first place his gratitude is due to the authorities of the Natural History Museum who have done everything in their power to facilitate the execution of his work and to place at his disposal the unrivalled collections of Indian birds and the magnificent library. To the Staff of the Ornithological Section he is deeply indebted for the constant assistance given and the courtesy shown him and he would like especially to mention Dr. P. Lowe, Mr. N. Kinnear and Mr. J. Wells. To Dr. Hartert and others who have kindly read portions of his manuscript his thanks are also due whilst he recognizes that it is almost impossible to realize the immense amount of work that has fallen upon the Editor, Sir A. E. Shipley, especially in the way of proof-reading, carried out with a thoroughness and success which would have been impossible had he not had at his disposal the resources of a great University as well as those of the finest Libraries and Collections within the Empire.

The Author would like to draw attention to the fact that in any work on Natural History it is impossible to design any sequence for orders, families and genera which shall be entirely satisfactory. Unfortunately for the Ornithologist, no consecutive arrangement of Families can give a proper idea of how they interlink, one into another; the only satisfactory manner of dealing with the Aves would be by a genealogical tree, branching in all directions from the one great parent branch.

E. C. STUART BAKER.

February, 1926.

SYSTEMATIC INDEX.