



ENICURUS CHINENSIS, Gould.

Chinese Forktail.

Enicurus sinensis, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc. 1865, p. 665.

I ADMIT that I have but slender grounds for describing the large *Enicurus* from China as distinct from the *E. Leschenaulti* of Java. In size they are very similar, but all the Chinese examples that have come under my notice have only the forehead white, while in the skins from Java the entire crown is of this colour, and, in some instances, the silky white feathers extend almost to the nape and approach to lengthened plumes; in other respects the specimens from those distant localities are as similar in colour as they are in size: however the case may be, I deem it desirable to give a name to the Chinese bird and to figure it; time and a greater amount of materials than we at present possess will alone enable the ornithologist satisfactorily to determine whether the continental and insular birds be the same or not.

The *E. Chinensis* and *E. Leschenaulti*, whether two or one and the same bird, are the largest species of the genus yet discovered. It is interesting to observe how closely similar in structure and style of colouring are the whole of the members of this well-marked form; certain modifications of structure occur it is true in the little *E. Scouleri*, but, on comparison, a general sameness will be found to pervade the whole.

It may not be out of place to insert here Dr. Horsfield's notes on the Javan bird; for any information, however scanty, is worthy of record respecting the species of so singular a form as *Enicurus*.

"This bird is exclusively found near small rivulets; in the beds of these, particularly where they abound with rocks and gravel, it is seen running along with alacrity, moving its tail incessantly, and picking up worms and insects. It is very locally distributed, and uniformly deserts the neighbourhood of populous villages. The southern coast of Java abounds in small streams, descending rapidly from the southern hills and shaded by luxuriant shrubs. Here I first discovered this bird, in the district of Pajittan, in the year 1809; I afterwards met with it again, along this coast, in the district of Karang-ballong and in the provinces south of Kediri. Among more central regions it frequents the banks of an elevated lake near the declivities of the mountain Prahū, where I found it more numerous than in any other part of Java. In the extensive forests of Pugar and Blambangan I never noticed it, although I devoted a considerable time to their examination."

Chinese examples of this bird are contained in the collection at the British Museum and in my own; judging from which I do not perceive any difference in the size or markings of the two sexes.

Forehead to the middle of the crown, lower part of the back, rump, upper tail-coverts, tips of the greater wing-coverts, bases of the secondaries, two outer tail-feathers, the tips of all the others, the under coverts of the shoulder, the abdomen, and under tail-coverts pure white; primaries blackish brown; the remainder of the plumage deep black; bill black; feet fleshy white.

The figures are of the size of life.



Gould, John. 1866. "Chinese Forktail, *Enicurus chinensis*, Gould. [Pl. 70]." *The Birds of Asia* 4(XVIII), -. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.323054>.

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