



REGULOIDES SUPERCILIOSUS.

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

Walter imp.

REGULOÏDES SUPERCILIOSUS.

Yellow-browed Warbler.

- Motacilla superciliosa*, Gmel. edit. Linn. Syst. Nat., tom. i. p. 975.
Sylvia superciliosa, Lath. Ind. Orn., vol. ii. p. 526.
Phyllopneuste reguloides, Hodgs. in Gray's Zool. Misc., p. 44.
Reguloïdes superciliosus, Blyth, Zool., 1863, p. 8329.
Phyllobasileus superciliosus, Cab. Journ. für Orn., 1853, p. 81.
Regulus superciliosus, G. R. Gray, Cat. of Birds in Coll. Brit. Mus., p. 54.
Reguloïdes proregulus, Jerd. Birds of India, vol. ii. part i. p. 197.
Regulus modestus, Hanc. in Annals of Natural History, 1838, vol. ii. p. 310.
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MUCH confusion has arisen respecting the pretty species figured on the accompanying Plate, in consequence of its having been regarded by many authors as identical with the bird obligingly sent to me by the late Baron de Feldegg, of Frankfort, and figured in my 'Birds of Europe' as *Regulus modestus*, under the impression that it was a newly discovered species.

The true home of the *Reguloïdes superciliosus* (the Yellow-browed Warbler of Latham) is in Asia; but it is not confined to that quarter of the globe. Mr. Swinhoe has killed it in China; nearly every collection from India contains examples; it has been repeatedly obtained in many parts of the continent of Europe; according to the review of Drs. Blasius and Baldamus's continuation of Naumann's 'Vögel Deutschlands,' in 'The Ibis' for 1862, once or twice near Berlin, and nearly a dozen times in Heligoland; and we now know that it has occurred twice in England: hence it becomes necessary to give it a place in the 'Birds of Great Britain.' I have carefully compared the English specimens with others from the various localities above mentioned, and I am quite unable to detect any differences between them, either in size, colour, or markings.

The first occurrence of the bird in Britain was recorded in the 'Annals of Natural History,' vol. ii., by Mr. John Hancock, of Newcastle-on-Tyne, who shot it on the banks near Hartley, on the coast of Northumberland, on the 26th of September, 1838, and who says:—"Its manners, so far as I had an opportunity of observing them, were so like those of the Golden-crested Wren that I at first mistook it for that species. It was continually in motion, flitting from place to place in search of insects, on umbelliferous plants and such other herbage as the bleak banks of the Northumberland coast afford; such a situation could not be at all suited to the habits of this species, and there can be little doubt it had arrived at the coast previous to, or immediately after, its autumnal migration." Referring to this specimen in a communication to 'The Ibis,' dated Newcastle-on-Tyne, March 14th, 1867, Mr. Hancock says:—"In 1838 I sent to the 'Annals of Natural History' a notice of a small Wren, which I had shot at Hartley in the September of that year, and which I then identified with the *Regulus modestus* of Mr. Gould's 'Birds of Europe;' but I now find my bird to be distinct from the species there described and figured. The Rev. H. B. Tristram has kindly favoured me with a view of a series of specimens of both species. The one is distinguishable from the other by a broad belt of pale yellow across the rump; and that gentleman informs me that the species so characterized was described by Pallas under the name of *Motacilla proregulus*. The other is given by Gmelin under the denomination of *M. superciliosa*. Now my specimen has no such belt across the rump, while that figured by Mr. Gould possesses this character. My bird, therefore, must stand as *Reguloïdes superciliosus*."

In a note to this communication, the editor of 'The Ibis' (Professor Newton) remarks, "Mr. Swinhoe had already shown, in the 'Proceedings of the Zoological Society' for 1863, the distinctness of *R. superciliosus* and *R. proregulus*, which had been thought to be synonymous; but he was not aware that the *Regulus modestus* of Mr. Hancock's former notice and the *Regulus modestus* of Mr. Gould were specifically different. He rightly identified Mr. Hancock's specimen with *R. superciliosus*, but quoted "*Regulus modestus*, Gould," as a synonym, under the impression, which, we believe, has hitherto generally prevailed, that the bird shot in Northumberland and that obtained in Dalmatia were specifically identical."

For a knowledge of the occurrence of a second example in England I am indebted to the Rev. T. W. Huthwaite, a subscriber to the present work, who in a letter to me, dated "Brockworth Vicarage, Gloucester, Nov. 5th, 1867," says:—"Mr. T. White, the birdstuffer of Cheltenham, has a *Regulus* which, I presume, you would wish to see and figure; and I am sure he will readily let you have a sight of it." I immediately wrote to Mr. White, who at once forwarded it for my inspection, and at the same time informed me that it had been shot by his son, Mr. J. T. White, within a mile of Cheltenham, on the 11th of October previous, and

was unfortunately very much injured in the wing. On an examination of the specimen, I at once perceived that it was a second British example of the *Reguloides superciliosus*. The bird is now in the possession of Sir John Harpur Crewe, Bart., of Calke Abbey, Derbyshire.

The above comprises all that is known respecting the bird in connexion with our islands.

Mr. Swinhoe states that it "summers in North China and Japan, and is abundant during the cold season throughout Southern China, and in winter it is not uncommon about woods and groves in Formosa, its loud single call-note (*Sweet!*) always attracting attention to its presence. It is very rarely in company with others, is lively, and constantly in motion in pursuit of its insect-food, and seems to be entirely happy in its own resources."

"This little Warbler," says Mr. Jerdon, "so rare in Europe, is tolerably common in most parts of India during the cold weather, and at all times on the Himalayas. I have obtained it at Nellore, on the Malabar coast, in Central India, and at Darjeeling. Mr. Blyth observes, 'This bird is solitary; and its song-note is nearly similar to that of *Phylloscopus sibilatrix* of Europe, but considerably weaker.' He also describes a nest which was brought to him as that of this bird; but I cannot help thinking that the person who brought it was mistaken or wished to deceive. It is very like the nest of a *Nectarinia*; and it is certainly unusual for any of the tribe to remain in the plains to breed."

The sexes are precisely alike in colour, and Mr. Jerdon's description, being taken from freshly killed examples, may be regarded as correct:—

"Above olive-green, brightest on the rump, wings, and tail; crown dusky, with a pale mesial line not always very distinct; two conspicuous yellowish-white bars on the wings, the hinder one the broader of the two; behind this a dark patch; tertiaries conspicuously margined with whitish; secondaries and some of the primaries slightly tipped with the same; axillaries with the fore part of the wing underneath pale yellow; supercilia and plumage beneath albescent; bill dusky above, yellow beneath; legs pale brown; irides dark."

The figures in the accompanying Plate are of the natural size. The plant is the common Birch, with its catkins.



Gould, John. 1873. "Yellow-browed Warbler, *Reguloïdes superciliosus* [Pl. 68]." *The birds of Great Britain* 2, -. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.323882>.

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