

## MISCELLANEOUS NOTES.

## No. I. Note on Siamese Pheasants

The British Museum has recently received from Mr. K. G. Gairdner four most interesting skins from Siam.

The first of these is a beautiful specimen of *Phasianus humiae burmanicus* from the hills of northern Siam, shot at an elevation of about 6000 feet. This is a great extension of this fine pheasant's hitherto recorded range and adds yet another Game Bird to the Siamese list.

The other three skins are those of *Gennaeus lineatus* and must I think for the present be retained under typical *Gennaeus l. lineatus* until we get further skins to endorse or refute the value of the differences shown by these specimens.

Of the three skins two are those of males, one fine old bird, the other a male just having attained adult plumage; they were both shot on the Me Ping rapids half way between Chiengmai and Raheng; the third, which is a female, was shot near Raheng at a height of 1500 feet.

Raheng is a good long way north and east of the nearest point at which true *lineatus* has yet been found and it is not surprising to find that the skins show some remarkable points not wholly consistent with their being this bird.

The young male might be a typical *lineatus* from Pegu, except that its central tail feathers somewhat approach the more northern forms. The old bird however is very big with a much fuller bigger crest than *lineatus* usually indulges in, and with a tail of no less than 390 mm., which also approaches *sharpei* in general appearance.

The female is like that of *lineatus* but approaching somewhat to that of *rufipes* and not that of *sharpei*, the which, as far as we know at present, has always a dark under-surface with the feathers streaked not barred as in this specimen.

It will be very interesting to obtain more specimens, for it seems as if we might have here a new race combining features of *G. l. lineatus*, *G. l. rufipes* and *G. l. sharpei*.

E. C. Stuart Baker

British Museum, Dec., 14. 1919.

## No. II. Notes on Early Snipe.

I am indebted to Mr. E. Chapple for most of the birds upon which the following notes are based.

The first snipe of the season (1919) was shot by Major Forty on the 29th August.

On September 1st. one gun obtained one bird, and another three birds.

*September 8th.* Birds were still scarce, and Mr. Chapple secured three couple of Pin-tails. All birds were in a heavy state of moult, mostly with the first three primaries old, the fourth and fifth were new stumps, the next two about half-grown and the remainder full new feathers. The primary and greater wing-coverts were in a very ragged state through moult, most of them being missing. Two tails were also in moult, and in some cases the "pins" were in moult too.

*September 14th.* 24 couple, all Pin-tails. The first quarter of the moon was on the 2nd and full moon on the 10th, so those who base their calculations on the first large influx of birds coming down by the light of the moon can do so from this date, as this was the first good bag of the season. The state of the moult showed very little change from last week; though some birds were more advanced and one had complete new primaries.

*September 21st.* All Pin-tails, and not much change in the state of moult.

*September 28th.* All Pin-tails, but the birds appeared to be in rather heavier moult than those shot the two previous weeks, which would seem to show that they were fresh arrivals and that the others had continued their journey south.

*October 4th.* Three couple of Fan-tails were secured by three guns, and the rest were all Pin-tails. The Fan-tails were in almost complete new plumage, but some of the Pin-tails had three and others five old primaries, showing that they were in the same state of moult as the first arrivals a month earlier.

*October 8th.* 6 couple of Fan-tails and 8 couple of Pin-tails. There was no change in the moult of either since last week.

*October 15th.* Two Pin-tails sent in to show the state of their moult. One was an old bird and the other a young one. The old bird had one old primary, two new stumps for the second and third, and the moult of the wings was nearing completion. As regards the tail the upper and lower coverts were in full moult, the four centre feathers of the tail had been changed but the side feathers and the "Pins" were in moult. The young bird had lost the two centre feathers of the tail, otherwise there was practically no sign of moult. There was also a distinct difference in colour as the younger bird lacked the depth of colouring of the old bird.

From the difference in the state of moult and the depth of colouring it seemed that old and young birds could be identified at a glance, but an inspection of more young birds, a few days later, showed that in the majority of cases there was no difference

between the young and the old birds, either as regards the state of moult or depth of colouring.

The young birds were identified by the shorter bill (about 6 to 10 mm. less than the old bird) and by the lack of development of the corrugations on the bill, by brighter colour and smaller size of the legs, and lastly by the sutures on the skull.

Careful note of the first arrival of young birds was not taken, but it is believed that the first obtained was fully a month later than the arrival of the old birds.

*October 18th and 19th.* Both days yielded the same proportion of seven Pin-tails to two Fan-tails, but this must vary according to the suitability of the ground for the latter birds, as Fan-tails are nearly always found in the paddy. Their softer and more sensitive bills necessitating their feeding in the softer ground.

*February 25th 1920.*

E. G. HERBERT.

