

THE IRISH JAY.

Garrulus glandarius hibernicus subsp. nov.

BY

H. F. WITHERBY AND E. HARTERT.

IN the *Birds of Ireland* (1900) Mr. R. J. Ussher remarks (p. 88) :—" Mr. E. Williams, who has preserved a great many examples, thinks that the Irish Jay is of a warmer colour than the English bird." Recently Mr. W. J. Williams has sent several specimens to Hartert pointing out some of the differences. Meanwhile Witherby had been for some time seeking to procure sufficient examples on which to base a satisfactory conclusion. Witherby has now examined, by the kindness of the Earl of Rosse, Sir A. Armstrong, Bart., Major B. R. Horsburgh, Dr. R. Scharff of the Dublin Museum, and Mr. R. J. Ussher, sixteen examples; while Hartert has, at present, five at his disposal—all in the Tring Museum.

That the Irish Jay is very different from the British Jay (*G. g. rufitergum*) is evident at a glance, while an examination of a series of specimens shows that the differences are constant, and any of the specimens we have examined can easily be picked out from a large series of British Jays. In the Irish Jay the sides of the head and ear-coverts are much darker and more rufous, the breast and abdomen are suffused with rufous-pink, and in consequence much darker than the pale brownish-buff breast and abdomen of the British Jay; the flanks are like the breast, and darker and more rufous than in the British Jay; the under wing-coverts and axillaries are also dark rufous-pink; the throat is more suffused with pink; the "crest" is strikingly darker than in the British Jay, the feathers of the forehead being black, fringed with reddish-buff, those of the crown edged with rufous-pink and more strongly barred with blue than in the British Jay; the nape, mantle, scapulars and back are of a much deeper shade of rufous-pink than

in the British Jay. The most striking differences are in the dark rufous colouring of the sides of the head, ear-coverts and underparts and the darker "crest."

The measurements of the examples are :—Wing, 171–186 mm. ; bill (from nostril to tip), 18–21.5 mm. The measurements are perhaps slightly smaller on the average than those of *G. g. rufitergum*.

We have therefore no hesitation in separating this bird under the name of

GARRULUS GLANDARIUS HIBERNICUS.

Type : ♂ ad., Co. Wexford, November, 1910, in the Tring Museum. Cotype : ♀ ad., Birr, King's Co., 15. xii. 1910, in H. F. Witherby's coll.

Although all the specimens we have examined are easily separable from examples of the British Jay, some are darker than others, one specimen from Co. Waterford in the Dublin Museum being remarkably dark, while in some specimens in Witherby's collection the blue on the feathers of the crown is very conspicuous. Of fifty British Jays in the Tring Museum, only one, a male, shot near Tring, November 21st, 1902, by the Hon. Walter Rothschild, approaches *G. g. hibernicus*, but even this is paler than the latter, above and below, and especially in the head. The Irish Jay has a very restricted range, and is only found in parts of the province of Leinster and the adjoining part of Munster (*Birds of Ireland*) and has recently spread into South Ulster (BRIT. BIRDS, Vol. III., p. 341).

Three Irish birds have now been found to be distinct from their British representatives—Hartert has already referred in these pages to the Irish Dipper (*supra*, p. 136), while at the December meeting of the British Ornithologists' Club Mr. W. R. Ogilvie-Grant described the Irish Coal-Titmouse as distinct.