

Article XXI.—A NEW IBIS FROM MT. KENIA, BRITISH EAST AFRICA.

BY FRANK M. CHAPMAN.

PLATES XXIII AND XXIV.

Mr. and Mrs. Carl E. Akeley have recently presented to the American Museum a pair of Ibises, together with their nest, a portion of an egg-shell, and three young, which they collected on the south slope of Mt. Kenia, British East Africa, at an altitude of 9000 feet. They also observed the same species on the higher parts of Mt. Elgon and of the Aberdare Mountains. It appears to represent an undescribed generic type for which, with relation to its range and in honor of its discoverers, I propose the name

Oreoibis akleyorum gen. et sp. nov.

Char. gen.—Most nearly related to *Hagedashia*, but pileum with a conspicuous crest of rounded feathers, 90 to 100 mm. in length; entire orbital and loreal space bare and not papillose, resembling, in this respect, *Lophotibis* (which, however, has the tarsus scutellate not reticulate as in the present genus). Related also to *Lampribis* but with the forehead and the base of the mandible feathered, the bill shorter and heavier, the crest more pronounced. Type, *Oreoibis akleyorum*.

Char. sp.—Agreeing in size with *Hagedashia hagedash*, in color most closely resembling *Lampribis olivacea*, but crest wood-brown, malar stripe buffy, greater wing-coverts externally bronzy as in *Hagedashia*, back greener.

Type.—No. 111218, Am. Mus. Nat. Hist., ♂ ad., alt. 9000 ft., south slope of Mt. Kenia, British East Africa, Sept. 5, 1910; Mr. and Mrs. Carl E. Akeley.

Description of Type.—Head and neck all around rich wood-brown, the anterior portion of the crest slightly darker medianly, the longer feathers with faint silvery lateral margins; an evident but not sharply defined buffy malar stripe; back and interscapulars olive-green with bronze reflections, the former margined with wood-brown; lower back, rump, and upper tail-coverts dark blue with greenish reflections; wing-quills dark purple, the exposed portions richer, the color increasing in intensity on the inner secondaries which are tinged with greenish on the terminal portions of the outer vanes, while the tertials become bronzy olive-green; primary and greater wing-coverts purple, the outer vanes of the latter, except at the tip, golden bronze producing, in the proper light, a well-defined area of this color; remaining wing-coverts highly metallic vivid green with, in certain lights, strong purplish reflections; this color occupies about the basal half of the closed wing and is sharply defined from the colors of the rest of the wing; breast dark wood-brown with green reflections, rest of underparts olive-green, richer on the flanks, the feathers all more or less margined with brownish; thighs purplish wood-brown; lower tail-coverts much

like upper tail-coverts; under wing-coverts and axillars purplish black; bill dark maroon, brownish basally; bare areas on the head dull black; feet brownish horn; in life "bill red, bare portions of head ashy black, legs olive; iris dark brown" (Akeley).

Culmen, 119; mandible from gonys, 48; distance from gonydeal angle to interramal feathers, 49; depth of bill at posterior margin of nostril, 27; width at same place, 17; from posterior margin of nostril to posterior margin of bare orbital space, 48; wing, 368; tail, 168; tarsus, 65.5; middle toe and claw, 75; hind-toe and claw, 36; bare portion of tibia, 30 mm.

Description of female.—Resembles the male in color but is slightly smaller. Culmen, 113; mandible from gonys, 46; distance from gonydeal angle to interramal feathers, 48; depth of bill at posterior margin of nostril, 24.5; width at same place, 16; from posterior margin of nostril to posterior margin of bare orbital space, 48; wing, 336; tail, 162; tarsus, 64.5; middle toe and claw, 69; hind-toe and claw, 32; bare portion of tibia, 26 mm.

Description of young in natal down.—Uniform brownish black; the orbital and loreal region bare as in the adult.

Description of egg.—(Based on part of shell figured). Ground-color pale pea-green more or less stained with cinnamon-rufus and with irregular blotches of chestnut more or less evenly distributed. Much less heavily marked, therefore, than the egg of *Hagedashia* as figured in Cat. Eggs B. M., II, pl. i, fig. 5.

Remarks.—Any opinion in regard to the generic status of Ibises depends largely upon the relative classificatory value given to the manner in which the head is feathered. To ignore this character would result in the union of genera whose distinctness has long been recognized, while the consistent application of similar standards leads us to the view of Reichenow¹ who, in a recent article, places *Lampribis* and *Hagedashia* in the genus *Theristicus*. The two former are forest-inhabiting, the latter frequents plains and pastures where its more active habits, both on the ground and in the air, are apparently reflected in its longer legs and tail and markedly more pointed wings, while its color scheme is evidently related to the open nature of its haunts and is as different from that of *Lampribis* and *Hagedashia* as plain is from forest. There is, therefore, abundant reason for the numerous generic differences which exist between the American and African birds, and we imagine that few ornithologists will endorse Reichenow's estimate of their generic relationships. To have referred *Lampribis* to *Harpiprion* would have been more to the point. When, however, it comes to a consideration of the African birds *inter se*, the lines are more tightly drawn.

Having no material with which to discuss the standing of the various races of *Lampribis olivacea*, I may simply state that my single specimen of this species (collected by Du Chaillu on the River Muni in Western

¹ Ornith. Monatsb., 1903, pp. 132–136.

Africa and loaned me by the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia) closely agrees with Elliot's plate (P. Z. S., 1877, Pl. LI) but lacks the purplish on the lesser wing-coverts which, as Salvadori¹ has said, was probably added for artistic effect.

The brownish margins of the feathers of the underparts of this specimen, which are accurately shown by Elliot's plate, are said to indicate immaturity, but it is worthy of note that the bare forehead and face are similar to those of the adult, evidence of the genetic value of this character. More striking proof of this belief is furnished by the newly hatched young of *Oreoibis* which, as the accompanying plate shows, have the bare areas of the head similar in extent to those of the adult. As an alternative, therefore, to placing distantly related Ibises under one genus, I feel that we are here warranted in accepting the pterylosis of the head as of significance in creating generic distinctions.

Hagedashia, *Lampribis*, and *Oreoibis* form a group of closely related generic forms which agree in possessing certain characters in common (*e. g.*, rounded wings, short tarsi, and a more or less well defined malar stripe) while other characters (*e. g.*, crested pileum and pattern of wing coloration) are shared by only two of the three, and in the feathering of the head no two are alike. In some respects *Oreoibis* is intermediate between *Lampribis* and *Hagedashia*, having the crest and general color of the former, and the size, type of bill and pattern of wing-covert coloration of the latter; but in its bare facial areas and feathered chin it is unlike any other Ibis except *Lophotibis*, from which it is widely differentiated by possessing reticulate in place of scutellate tarsi.

It is not often that in publishing a description of a new generic type of bird one may also include a photograph of its nest and young, and a description of its habits. Thanks, however, to Mr. and Mrs. Carl E. Akeley, the discoverers and collectors of this fine new Ibis, I can present the accompanying plate and append the following field-notes written by Mr. Akeley:

"We first observed this Ibis when camped in the bamboo forest at about 8000 feet altitude on the Aberedare Mountains. Night after night, just at dusk, a pair of them would fly over our camp always in the same direction. It was rare that we could get a glimpse of them as they flew high above the forest, but their loud, raucous cries seemed to drown all other forest sounds. At this time we supposed them to be Caffer Ibises (*Hagedashia*), which we had collected on Lakes Naivasha and Elementeita, some 3000 feet lower down in the Rift Valley. The calls seemed to me to be precisely similar to those of that species and we assumed that the birds were coming up into the mountain forests to spend the night.

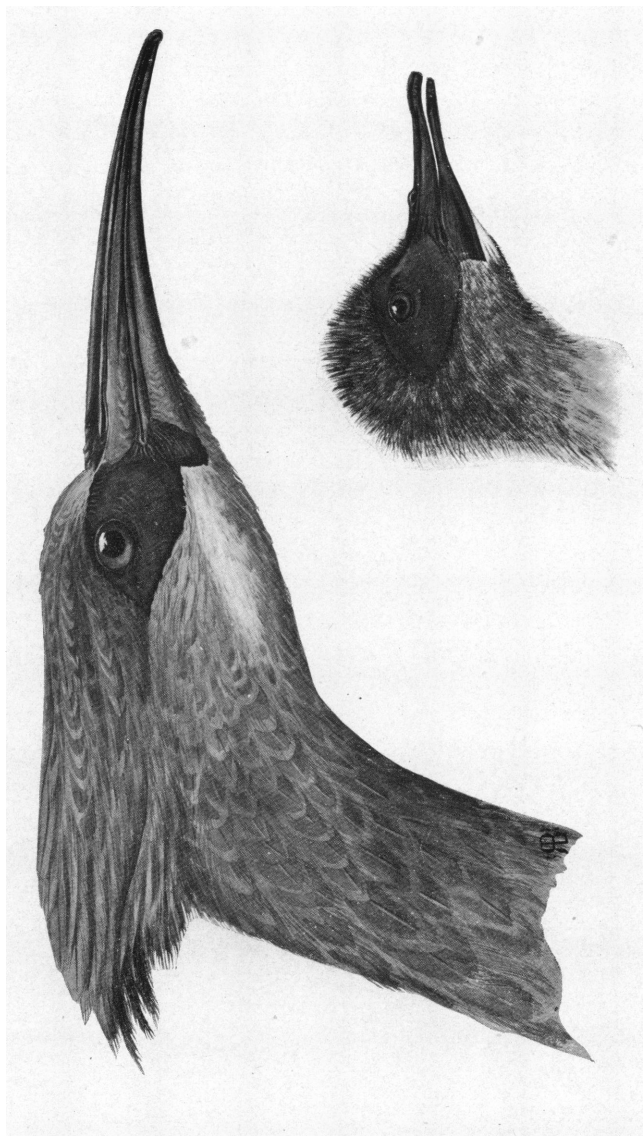
¹ Ibis, 1903, p. 182.

"Later, while hunting in the forests of Mt. Kenia, we flushed a small flock that were feeding on the ground in the dense jungle where the bamboo and forest proper meet. This is at about 10,000 feet. On this occasion, as the birds flew from the ground, they perched for an instant on low branches, throwing out their crests and we realized that they were not *Hagedashia*. Then for many weeks we had no opportunity to observe a specimen, though every evening a number of pairs would fly over high above our camp deadening all other sounds with their extraordinary clamor.

"At last one of them, hard pressed by a hawk, after curving and dodging above our camp until nearly exhausted, took refuge between our tents and it was secured. This was the only specimen collected on that trip.

"In 1910, when camped in dense forest at about 9000 feet on Kenia, Mrs. Akeley observed a nest within a hundred yards of our camp. It was loosely constructed of dead branches on the limb of a small tree about 25 feet from the ground, and contained three young and a fragment of an egg-shell. We secured the birds, old and young, after photographing them and their nest. The stomach of the male contained only a few fragments of beetles while that of female contained a large quantity of vegetable matter — apparently green leaves, beetles, and segments of Myriopods. The abdomen of the female was less denuded of feathers than that of the male.

"This is a mountain-inhabiting Ibis and we observed it only in the Aberdare Mountains at 9000 feet; on Mt. Kenia from 6000 to 12,000 feet (timber line); and on Mt. Elgon from 8000 to about 10,000 feet, while *Hagedashia* was not found to range above 6000 feet."



OREOBIS AKLEYORUM.

Head of adult, one-half natural size. Head of young, natural size.



NEST, THREE YOUNG, AND PART OF EGG-SHELL OF *Oreothis akeleyorum*.
Photographed by C. E. Akeley.

