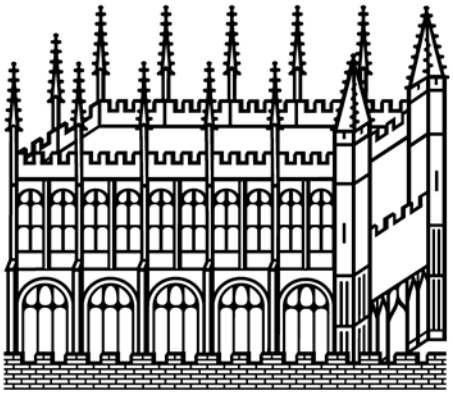

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PART XVI.] [SEPTEMBER 1890.

# COLOURED FIGURES

OF THE

# BIRDS OF THE BRITISH ISLANDS.

ISSUED BY

LORD LILFORD, F.Z.S. &c.,

PRESIDENT OF THE BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION.

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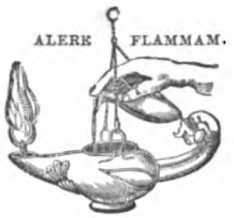


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J. G. Keulemans del et lith.

Mintern Bros. imp.

7/8

SHORE-LARK.

Otocorys alpestris *(Linn.)*.

# SHORE-LARK.

*OTOCORYS ALPESTRIS* (*Linn.*).

---

Alauda alpestris, *Linn.* S. N. i. p. 289 (1766); *Naum.* iv. p. 149; *Macg.* ii. p. 159; *Hewitson*, i. p. 178*.
Otocorys alpestris, *Yarr.* ed. 4, i. p. 604; *Dresser*, iv. p. 387.

*Berg-Lerche, Alpen-Lerche,* German.

The Shore-Lark is something more than an occasional straggler to the British Isles; but it cannot be claimed as a regular winter visitor, though rarely a season passes without several specimens being obtained on our coasts, and in some years great numbers have been netted and shot. It is a strictly circumpolar bird, breeding in the Arctic Circle all round the northern coasts of Europe, Asia, and America; but wandering along the shores or on the sandy plains of Western and Central Europe in winter, in larger or smaller flocks, never remaining long in one district.

This is one of the few birds which appears to be increasing in numbers, certainly in the numbers which visit our coasts, these visits being confined to the eastern and southern shores of Britain. The breeding-

habits of the Shore-Lark have been fully described by various Siberian and N. American explorers. The manners and flight of this bird closely resemble those of the Sky-Lark, singing as it mounts into the air; but also often singing on the ground. The song is musical and soft, not so powerful as that of the Sky-Lark; and Mr. Wolley remarks that it often sings in Lapland perched on the top of a rail or a barn. There is no authentic record of the Shore-Lark having occurred either on the west coast of Great Britain or in Ireland.

2.

J. G. Keulemans del. et lith.

7/8

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SKY-LARK.
Alauda arvensis, *Linn.*

# SKY-LARK *.

*ALAUDA ARVENSIS, Linn.*

---

Alauda arvensis, *Linn.* S. N. i. p. 287 (1766); *Naum.* iv. p. 156; *Macg.* ii. p. 163; *Hewitson,* i. p. 176; *Yarr.* ed. 4, i. p. 614; *Dresser,* iv. p. 307.

*Alouette des Champs,* French; *Feld-Lerche, Lerche,* German; *Alondra, Zurriaga, Terrera,* Spanish.

Too universally distributed to be unknown, too conspicuous to be unnoticed, too attractive to remain unadmired or unappreciated, the Sky-Lark needs no description. There is no corner of the British Isles which is not enlivened by his song, for his numbers do not perceptibly diminish, albeit to his other attractions he adds, unfortunately for himself, the reputation of being a savoury morsel for the gourmand, and a profitable investment for the professional birdcatcher. The extension of cultivation, which has probably caused the diminution of the Goldfinch and other species, by destroying the plants which formed their favourite food, has operated in favour of the Sky-Lark, which delights

* I consider it fair to my Subscribers to state that in this article, and a few others on the family of Larks, I have called in the aid of the able and ever ready pen of a far more competent and experienced writer than myself.—Lilford.

especially in open cornfields, though equally at home everywhere excepting in woods or plantations. While many remain in the same quarters throughout the year, yet their numbers are largely reinforced by migration in the spring and autumn. In these migrations the males appear generally to precede the females. You may see the Sky-Larks, who have been scattered in pairs and families through the spring and summer, as autumn approaches assembling in vast flocks, both on the stubble of cornfields and near the sea-shore.

An interesting illustration of discriminating instinct in the Sky-Lark is noticed by Professor Newton, who observes that "the appearance of a Merlin will cause a sudden cessation of the song, at whatever height the performer may be, his wings are closed, and he drops to the earth like a falling stone; the Kestrel, however, is treated with indifference, and in the presence of a Sparrow-Hawk the Sky-Lark knows that safety is to be sought aloft."

The Sky-Lark usually scrapes a hollow in the ground for her nest, which is generally placed under the shelter of a tuft of grass or a clod. In the north of England the Sky-Larks generally remain in flocks in the open fields until the first fall of snow, when they promptly retire to the south. In mild seasons, like that of 1889-90, a few remain in Northumberland throughout the winter.

# CRESTED LARK.

## *ALAUDA CRISTATA, Linn.*

---

Alauda cristata, *Linn.* S. N. i. p. 288 (1766); *Naum.* iv. p. 134; *Hewitson,* i. p. 178; *Yarr.* ed. 4, i. p. 632.
Galerita cristata, *Dresser,* iv. p. 285.

*Cochevis huppé,* French; *Cujada, Carretera,* Spanish; *Haubenlerche,* German.

Though the Crested Lark is a common bird on the Continent of Europe as close to our shores as Holland, Belgium, and the North of France, not a dozen authenticated instances of its occurrence in England have been recorded, and these, almost without exception, have been noted in our southern counties in autumn and winter.

This Lark is very abundant in Central and Southern Europe and throughout North Africa, and its profusion was noted by Lord Lilford in Spain and Cyprus. Towards the Sahara and in the East closely allied forms are found, which are not easily discriminated from the present species. [O. S.]

CHROMO-LITHO. ART STUDIO, LONDON.

$\frac{7}{8}$

CRESTED LARK.

**Alauda cristata**, *Linn.*

8

# WOOD-LARK.

*ALAUDA ARBOREA, Linn.*

---

Alauda arborea, *Linn.* S. N. i. p. 287 (1766); *Naum.* iv. p. 192; *Macg.* ii. p. 174; *Hewitson,* i. p. 179; *Yarr.* ed. 4, i. p. 625; *Dresser,* iv. p. 321.

*Alouette lulu,* French; *Baumlerche, Heidelerche,* German; *Alondra de Monte,* Spanish.

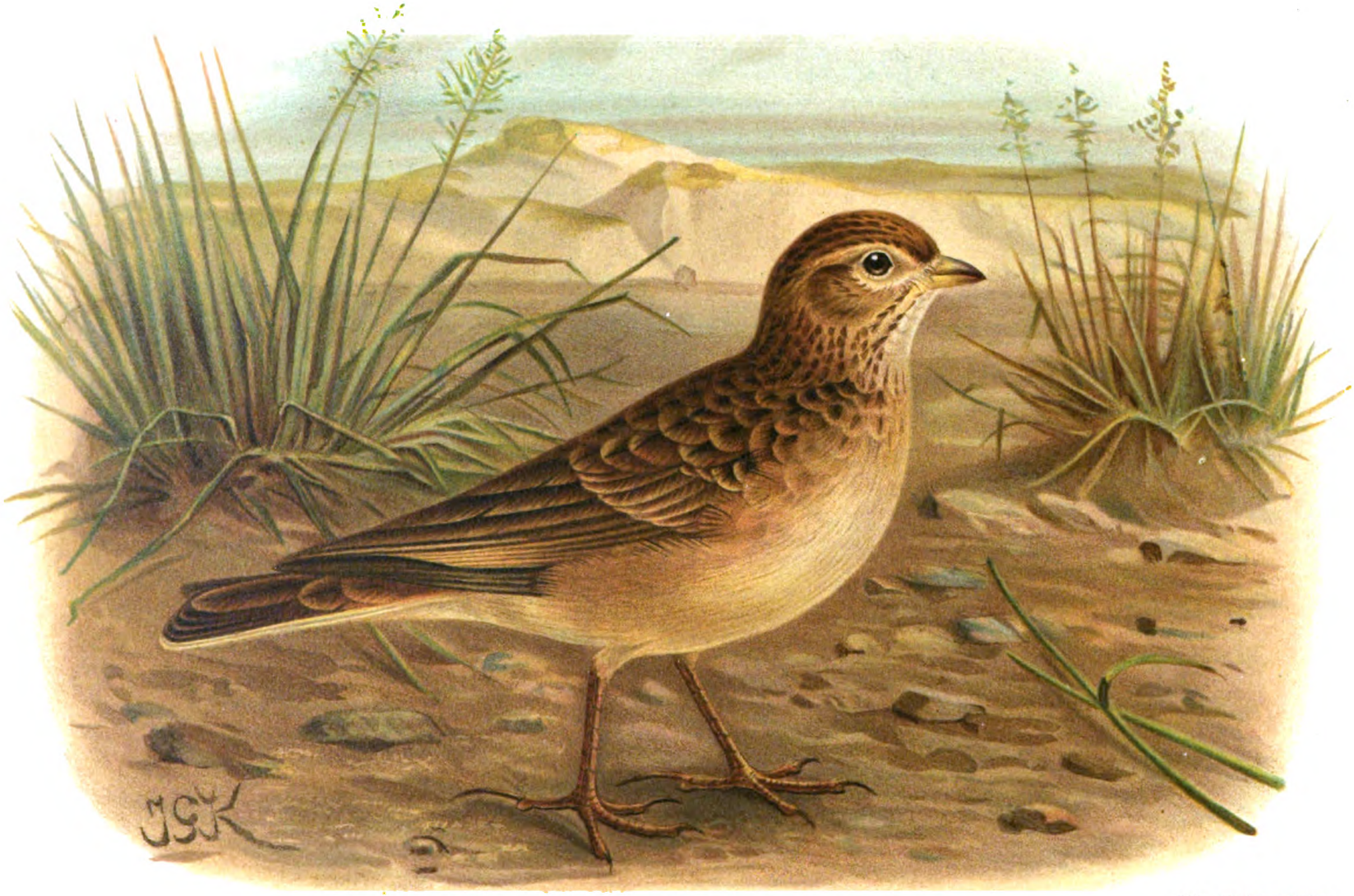
Not abundant in any part of Great Britain, resident in certain localities, migrating in others. Is recorded as only a winter visitor to Ireland.

WOOD-LARK.

Alauda arborea, *Linn.*

Hanhart Chromo-lith.

4



Litho. W. Greve, Berlin.

SHORT-TOED LARK.

Calandrella brachydactyla *(Leisler).*

# SHORT-TOED LARK.

*CALANDRELLA BRACHYDACTYLA* (*Leisler*).

---

Alauda brachydactila, *Leisler*, Ann. d. Wett. Ges. f. d. ges. Nat. iii. p. 357 (1814).
Alauda brachydactyla, *Naum.* iv. p. 188; *Hewitson*, i. p. 181.
Calandrella brachydactyla, *Yarr.* ed. 4, i. p. 637; *Dresser*, iv. p. 341.

*Calandrelle*, French; *Kurzzehige Lerche*, German; *Terrera, Terreruela Calandreta*, Spanish.

The recorded occurrences of this species in our country are very few, as may naturally be expected in the case of a bird whose habitat lies in Southern Europe and North Africa. The Short-toed Lark is extremely common, and, I believe, a permanent resident in the open country of Central and Southern Spain, and prefers the frequent expanses of sandy moorland and waste ground to the cultivated districts, although, in the autumn, winter, and early spring, it may be met with in flocks on the fallows, consorting with other species. I have always found this Lark to be one of the most confiding and fearless of birds, in fact it will hardly get out of the way of a horse, and in the summer will generally allow of a very close approach on foot;

when at length disturbed it only flies to a short distance with a low twittering note. The regular song of this bird is by no means unpleasing, though not powerful; it is uttered from the ground as well as when the bird is on wing.

In the pairing-season the Short-toed Lark soars to a considerable height, singing as it mounts, after the manner of our well-known Sky-Lark. The nests of this species that have come under my observation were all situated in depressions on very bare sandy soil, often in a hoof-print, once or twice under a clot of the dried dung of horses or cattle; the materials of the nest are scanty—a few dry bents or coarse grass-stems, with a lining of hair, and an occasional feather or two, generally those of the Pintailed Sand-Grouse (*Pterocles alchata*), seeming to satisfy the requirements of this little dweller in the waste.

The eggs, generally four in number, are white, thickly spotted with light ashy brown.

//

# WHITE-WINGED LARK.

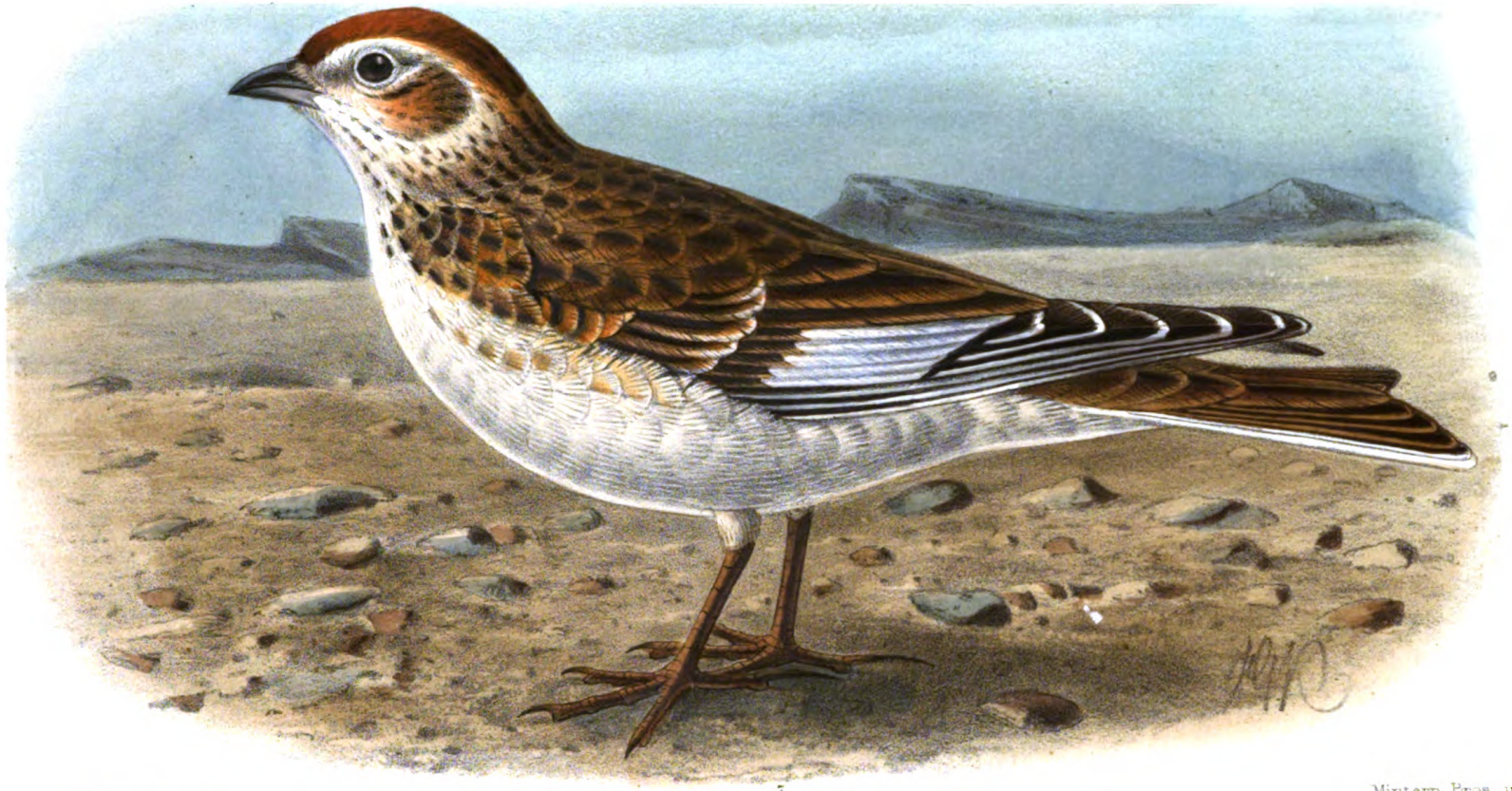
*MELANOCORYPHA LEUCOPTERA, Pallas.*

---

Melanocorypha leucoptera, *Pallas*, Zoogr. Rosso-As. i. p. 518, no. 147, pl. xxxiii. fig. 2 (1831).
Melanocorypha sibirica, *Yarr.* ed. 4, i. p. 642; *Dresser*, iv. p. 373.

Once only has the White-winged Lark been obtained in the British Isles, at Brighton on the 22nd November, 1869, where it was consorting with a flock of Snow-Buntings. It is equally accidental in Western Europe, there being only three instances on record, one of these being, of course, on Heligoland. It is one of the numerous species of desert or steppe Larks inhabiting the plateaus of Central and Northern Asia, where it is a migrant.

First discovered by Pallas on the Irtish, scarcely any further information has been added by subsequent writers to the account of the Russian pioneer of 120 years ago. In its song and flight it resembles the Sky-Lark, though with a feebler note, and, like the Crested Lark, frequents roadsides. Its nest is formed of grass, and placed in some slight depression in the ground.



J. G. Keulemans del. et lith.

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WHITE-WINGED LARK.

**Melanocorypha leucoptera *(Pallas)*.**

# SNOW-BUNTING.

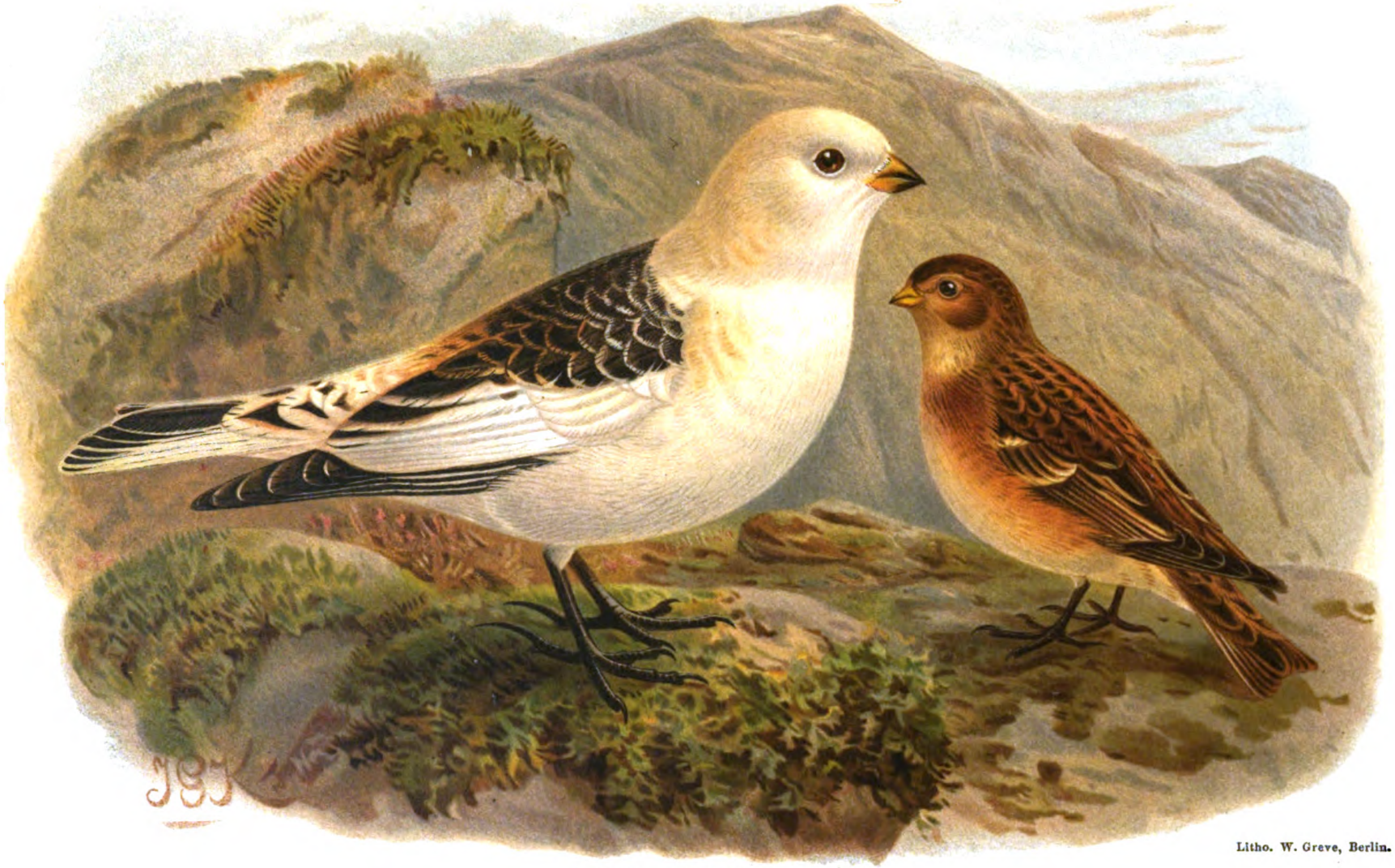
## *PLECTROPHANES NIVALIS* (*Linn.*).

---

Emberiza nivalis, *Linn.* S. N. i. p. 308 (1766); *Naum.* iv. p. 297.
Plectrophanes nivalis, *Macg.* i. p. 460; *Hewitson,* i. p. 184; *Yarr.* ed. 4, ii. p. 1; *Dresser,* iv. p. 261.

*Ortolan de neige,* French; *Schnee-Ammer,* German.

This pretty bird is best known in our islands as a winter visitor, occasionally occurring in very large numbers during that season on our eastern coasts, but the long-suspected fact of its nesting in Scotland, though no doubt no uncommon occurrence, has only been satisfactorily proved within the last few years. I must confess with sorrow that my personal acquaintance with the Snow-Bunting in a wild state being limited to an occasional meeting with a few scattered individuals in the highlands of Inverness-shire in the late autumn, I am not competent to enter into any details as to its habits. In captivity I have found this species tame, sluggish, and greedy; most of those that I have kept caged have succumbed to plethora in a few months. A very interesting account of the discovery of a nest of the Snow-Bunting in Scotland is given at pp. 138, 139 of Messrs. Harvie Brown and T. E. Buckley's 'Vertebrate Fauna of Sutherland and Caithness.'



Litho. W. Greve, Berlin.

SNOW-BUNTING, *Summer*
Plectrophanes nivalis *(Linn.)*.

4/5

Litho. W. Greve, Berlin.

**SNOW-BUNTING,** ***winter.***

**Plectrophanes nivalis** ***(Linn.).***

16

# LAPLAND BUNTING.

*EMBERIZA LAPPONICA* (*Linn.*).

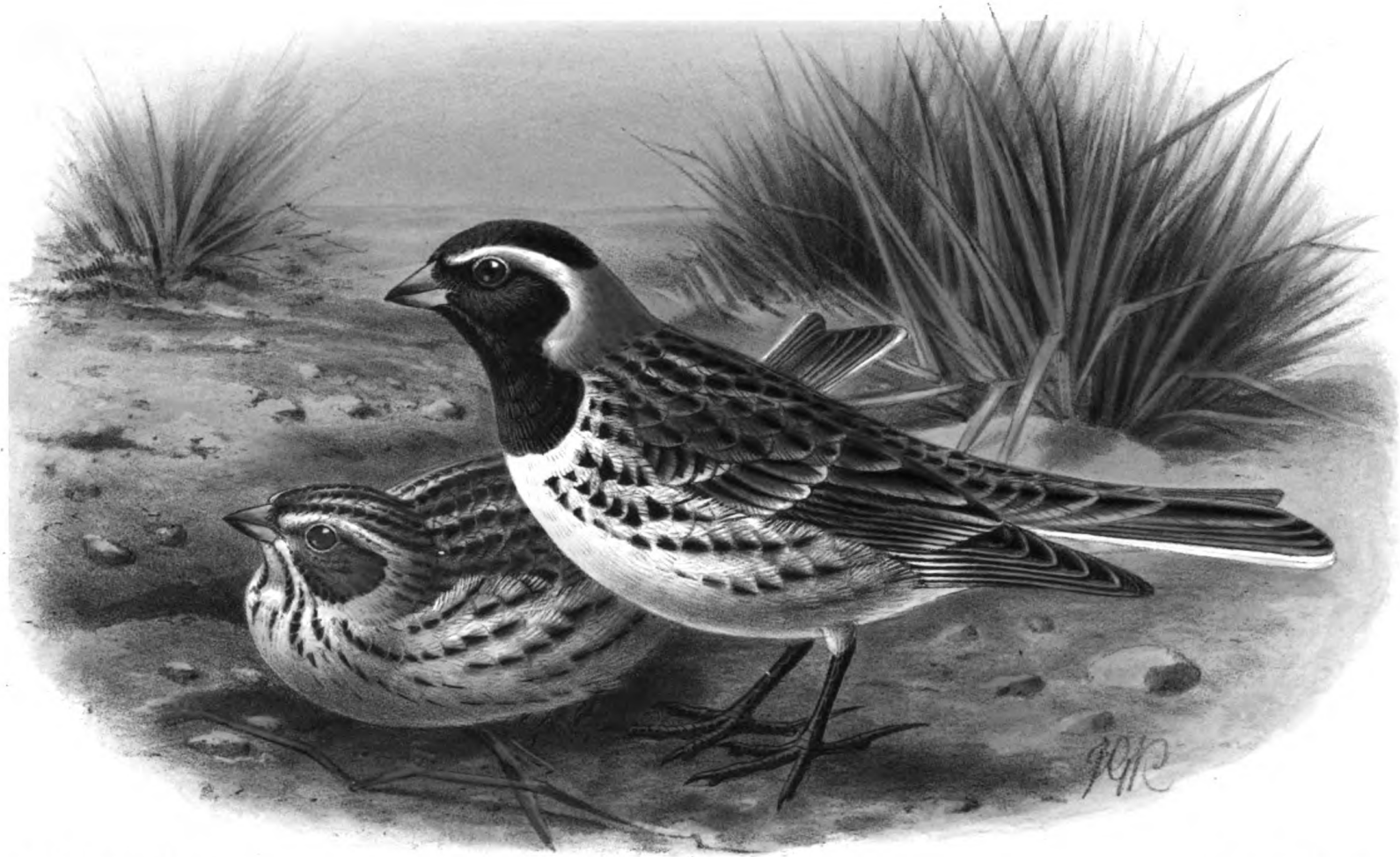
---

Fringilla lapponica, *Linn.* S. N. i. p. 317 (1766).
Emberiza lapponica, *Naum.* iv. p. 319.
Plectrophanes lapponica, *Macg.* i. p. 469; *Hewitson,* i. p. 182.
Plectrophanes lapponicus, *Yarr.* ed. 4, ii. p. 15; *Dresser,* iv. p. 253.

*Lerchen-Ammer,* German.

An uncommon autumnal visitor to our Islands from the far north; Mr. H. Saunders tells us in his 'Manual' (a work to which I cannot sufficiently express my indebtedness) that some forty specimens had been taken in England, two in Scotland, and one found dead in Ireland; but it is probable that many females or young birds may have escaped observation and record. This is one of many British Birds with whose natural habits in a wild state I have no acquaintance, and must refer my readers to the standard authorities on ornithology.

I have at this time of writing, January 1891, a male Lapland Bunting alive which was taken by a bird-catcher near Great Yarmouth and sent to me in October 1884; this bird has become quite reconciled to its cage, is very tame and in perfect health, but has never assumed the plumage of complete maturity.



J. G Keulemans del.et lith.

Mintern Bros. imp.

LAPLAND BUNTING.
Emberiza lapponica *(Linn)*.

18

# REED-BUNTING.

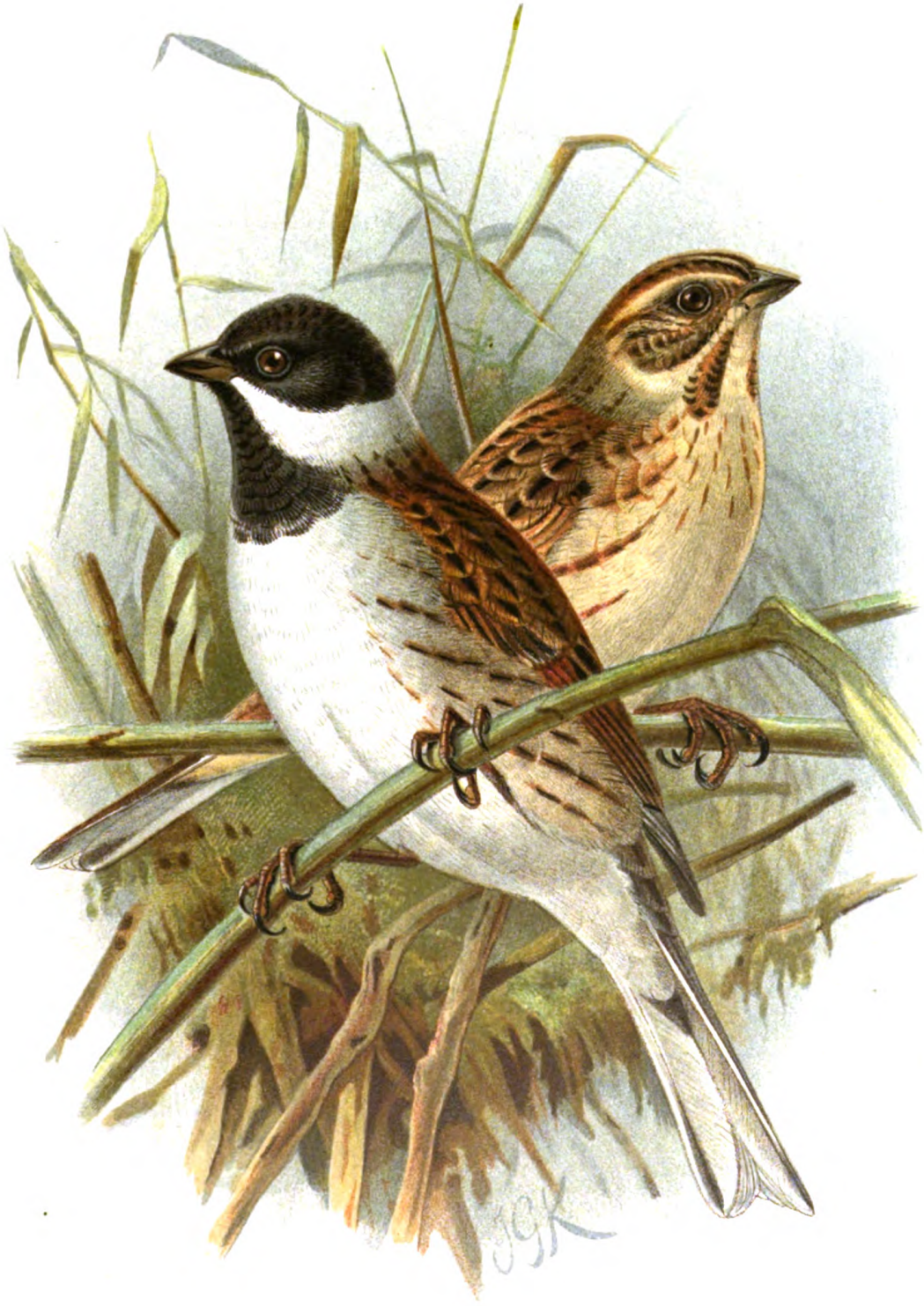
*EMBERIZA SCHŒNICLUS, Linn.*

---

Emberiza schœniclus, *Linn.* S. N. i. p. 311 (1766); *Naum.* iv. p. 280; *Hewitson,* i. p. 187; *Yarr.* ed. 4, ii. p. 23; *Dresser,* iv. p. 241.
Emberiza schœniculus, *Macg.* i. p. 453.

*Bruant des roseaux,* French; *Rohr-Ammer,* German; *Matinero,* Spanish.

Locally common and resident throughout the three kingdoms.



JUDD & Co LIMITED IMP.

REED-BUNTING.

Emberiza schœniclus, *Linn.*

20

# RUSTIC BUNTING.

*EMBERIZA RUSTICA, Pall.*

---

Emberiza rustica, *Pall.* Reise Russ. Reichs, iii. p. 698 (1776); *Naum.* xiii. p. 180; *Yarr.* ed. 4, ii. p. 29; *Dresser*, iv. p. 229; *Gould*, Ibis, 1869, p. 128; *E. Clarke*, Zoologist, 1881, p. 465; *Lilford*, Zool. 1883, p. 33.

*Bruant rustique*, French; *Feldammer*, German.

An Asiatic and N.E. European species; a rare and irregular visitor to Western, Central, and Southern Europe; is recorded as having been obtained three times in England.

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RUSTIC BUNTING.

Emberiza rustica *Pall.*

# LITTLE BUNTING.

*EMBERIZA PUSILLA, Pall.*

---

Emberiza pusilla, *Pall.* Reis. Russ. Reichs, iii. p. 697 (1776); *Naum.* xiii. p. 175; *Yarr.* ed. 4, ii. p. 34; *Dresser,* iv. p. 235; *Gould,* P. Z. S. 1864, p. 377.

*Zwerg-Ammer,* German.

An Asiatic and N.E. European species, of which one occurrence only has been recorded in England.

JUDD & Co LIMITED IMP.

LITTLE BUNTING.

Emberiza pusilla, *Pall.*

# CORN-BUNTING.

*EMBERIZA MILIARIA, Linn.*

---

Emberiza miliaria, *Linn.* S. N. i. p. 308 (1766); *Naum.* iv. p. 213; *Macg.* i. p. 440; *Hewitson,* i. p. 186; *Yarr.* ed. 4, ii. p. 38; *Dresser,* iv. p. 163.

*Le Proyer,* French; *Grau Ammer,* German; *Triguero,* Spanish.

Locally common throughout Great Britain and Ireland, as well as in many parts of Central and Southern Europe.

JUDD & Co LIMITED IMP.

CORN-BUNTING.

Emberiza miliaria, *Linn.*

# YELLOW HAMMER.

## *EMBERIZA CITRINELLA, Linn.*

---

Emberiza citrinella, *Linn.* S. N. i. p. 309 (1766); *Naum.* iv. p. 234; *Macg.* i. p. 445; *Hewitson,* i. p. 188; *Yarr.* ed. 4, ii. p. 43; *Dresser,* iv. p. 171.

*Bruant jaune,* French; *Gold-Ammer,* German.

Very abundant and resident in almost all parts of the three kingdoms.

JUDD & Co LIMITED. IMP

YELLOW HAMMER.

Emberiza citrinella, *Linn.*

# CIRL BUNTING.

*EMBERIZA CIRLUS, Linn.*

---

Emberiza cirlus, *Linn.* S. N. i. p. 311 (1766); *Naum.* iv. p. 251; *Macg.* i. p. 450; *Hewitson,* i. p. 190; *Yarr.* ed. 4, ii. p. 50; *Dresser,* iv. p. 177.

*Bruant zizi,* French; *Zaunammer,* German; *Linacero, Chilla,* Spanish.

Not uncommon, but partially migratory in England, breeding in most of the southern and some of the midland counties; rare in Scotland and Ireland.

JUDD & Co LIMITED, IMP.

CIRL BUNTING.

Emberiza cirlus, *Linn.*

# ORTOLAN BUNTING.

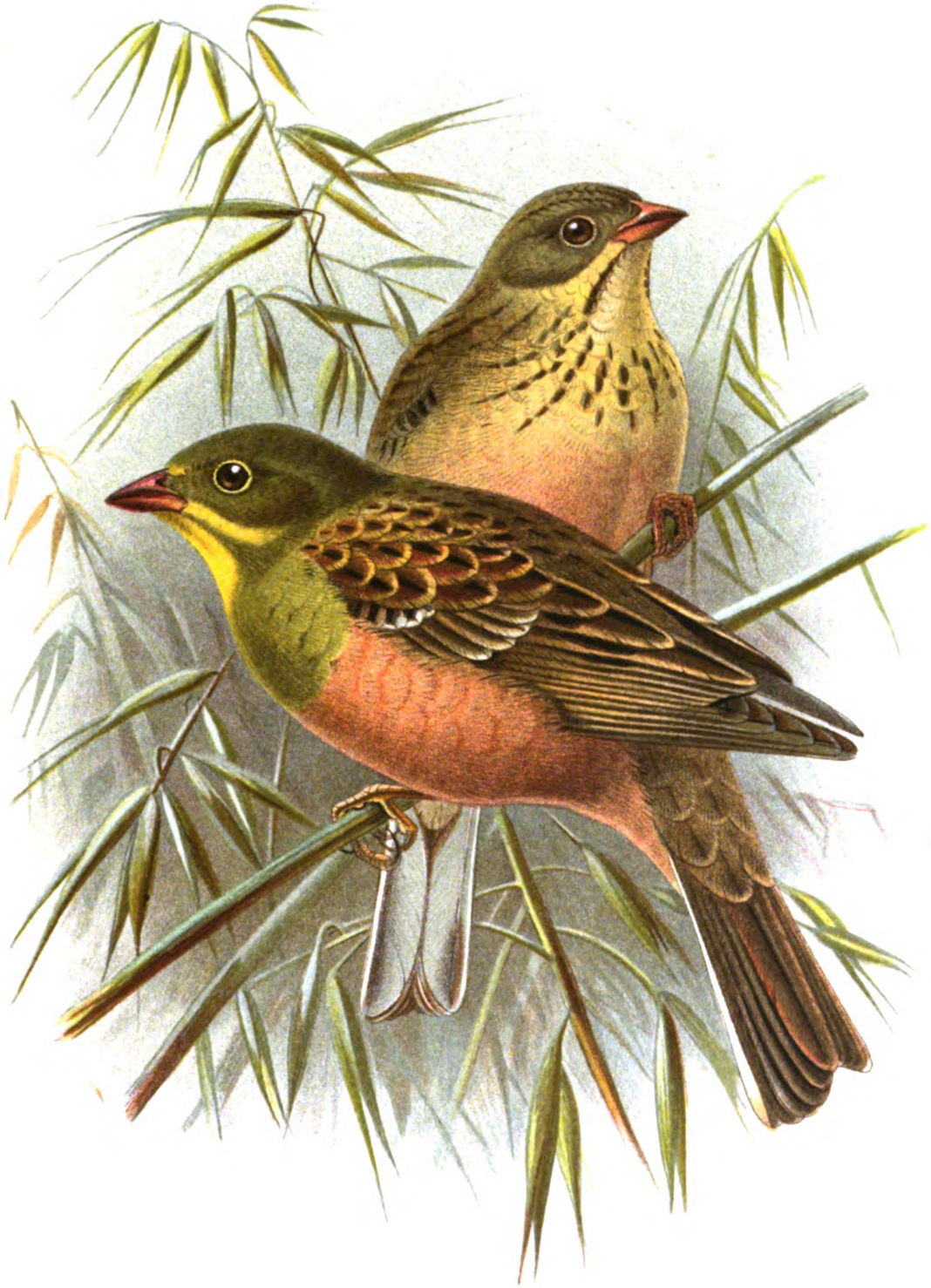
*EMBERIZA HORTULANA, Linn.*

---

Emberiza hortulana, *Linn.* S. N. i. p. 309 (1766); *Naum.* iv. p. 258; *Macg.* i. p. 457; *Hewitson,* i. p. 191; *Yarr.* ed. 4, ii. p. 57; *Dresser,* iv. p. 185.

*Bruant ortolan,* French; *Gartenammer,* German; *Hortelano,* Spanish.

An uncommon and irregular visitor to Great Britain. A summer visitor to most parts of Central, Eastern, and Western Europe.



JUDD & Co LIMITED IMP.

ORTOLAN BUNTING.

Emberiza hortulana, *Linn.*

# BRANDT'S BUNTING.

## *EMBERIZA CIOIDES, Brandt.*

---

Emberiza cioides, *Brandt*, Bull. Ac. St. Pétersb. i. p. 363; *Tristram*, Ibis, 1889, p. 293, pl. 10; *Seebohm*, Ibis, 1889, p. 295; *Dresser*, Supplement, p. 223.

One occurrence. A specimen was caught by William Gibbon, a fisherman, at Flamborough, south of the headland, in November 1886, and reported by Mr. R. W. Chase, into whose possession it came, through Canon Tristram, at a meeting of the Zoological Society held 15th January, 1889. A fuller account of the species was subsequently published by Canon Tristram in 'The Ibis' for 1889, followed by a supplementary paper by Seebohm.

*Emberiza cioides* is a bird of Siberia, chiefly in the eastern portion, where it is resident, occurring also in Corea, but not in Japan. It has also been found in China and Turkestan by several recent collectors, many of whose published notes are fully given by Mr. Dresser in the supplementary volume to his 'Birds of Europe.'

[O. S.]

Litho. W. Greve, Berlin.

$\frac{9}{10}$

BRANDT'S BUNTING.

Emberiza cioides, *Brandt.*

34

# BLACK-HEADED BUNTING.

## *EMBERIZA MELANOCEPHALA, Scop.*

---

Emberiza melanocephala, *Scop.* Ann. I. H. N. p. 142 (1769); *Naum.* iv. p. 227; *Dresser,* iv. p. 151; *Gould,* Ibis, 1869, p. 128.
Euspiza melanocephala, *Yarr.* ed. 4, ii. p. 64.

*Bruant crocote,* French; *Kappenammer,* German.

A common summer visitor to South-eastern Europe; rarely met with north of the Alps.

One instance only is recorded of the occurrence of this species in England.

JUDD & Co LIMITED, IMP

BLACK-HEADED BUNTING.

Emberiza melanocephala, *Scop.*

# CHAFFINCH.

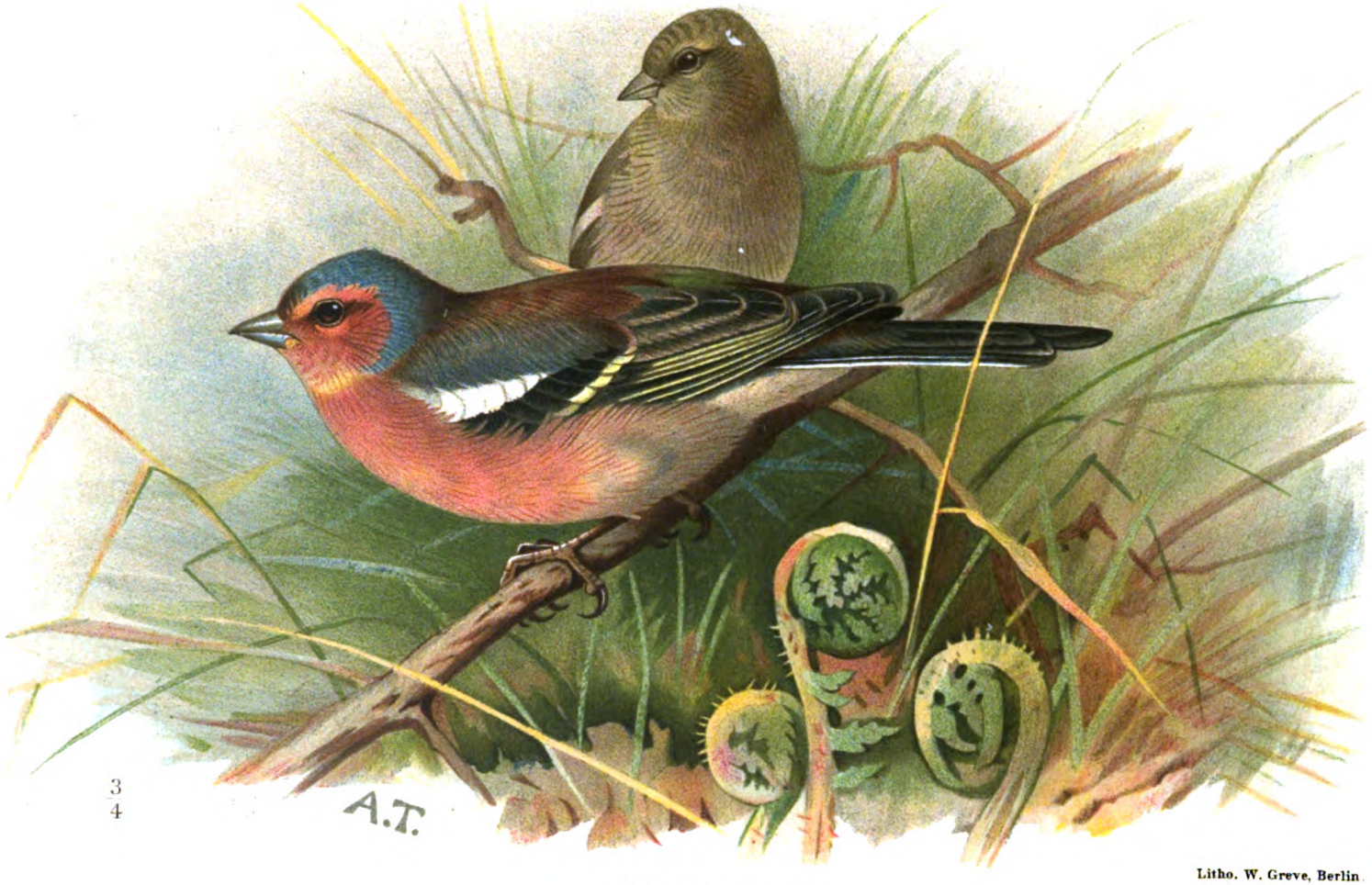
*FRINGILLA CÆLEBS, Linn.*

---

Fringilla cœlebs, *Linn.* S. N. i. p. 318 (1766); *Naum.* v. p. 13; *Macg.* i. p. 329; *Hewitson,* i. p. 192; *Yarr.* ed. 4, ii. p. 68; *Dresser,* iv. p. 3.

***Pinson,*** French; ***Buchfink,*** German; ***Pinzon,*** Spanish.

Common as a resident or partial migrant throughout Europe, the Mediterranean coasts of Algeria and Morocco, and in almost all parts of the British Islands.




Litho. W. Greve, Berlin.

CHAFFINCH.

**Fringilla caelebs,** *Linn.*

Litho. W. Greve, Berlin.

$\frac{3}{4}$

**BRAMBLING.**

Fringilla montifringilla, *Linn.*

# BRAMBLING.

*FRINGILLA MONTIFRINGILLA, Linn.*

---

Fringilla montifringilla, *Linn.* S. N. i. p. 318 (1766); *Naum.* v. p. 44; *Macg.* i. p. 335; *Hewitson,* i. p. 194; *Yarr.* ed. 4, ii. p. 75; *Dresser,* iv. p. 15.

*Pinson d'Ardennes,* French; *Berg-Finke,* German; *Montañes, Millero,* Spanish.

The Brambling is an autumnal migrant to the British Islands, and from about the end of October till March is to be met with, occasionally in vast numbers, in most parts of Scotland and England; in Ireland its visits are said to be very irregular, although large flocks have been occasionally met with in that country. Mr. H. Saunders ('Manual,' p. 177) informs us that a nest of this species was discovered by Mr. E. T. Booth in Perthshire in June 1866, but with this exception I am not aware of any other recorded instance of its breeding in the United Kingdom. My principal acquaintance with this beautiful bird has been formed in Northamptonshire amongst the old beeches in our own shrubberies and pleasure-grounds. Beech-mast is certainly the favourite food of the present species, and in

bad seasons for this fruit the Brambling seldom visits us in any considerable numbers. On the other hand, when this crop is plentiful the Bramblings flock in hundreds to regale thereon, and generally remain until they and other birds have cleared their harvest. In severe weather they betake themselves to the stack-yards, and occasionally, but in my experience rarely, to the open fields with the other Finches.

Compared with its near relation, the Chaffinch, this species is somewhat shy and wary, but in general habits it much resembles that bird. The ordinary call or alarm-note of the Brambling is a somewhat sharply uttered, sibilant monosyllable, that bears a certain affinity in sound to the "*pink, pink*" of the Chaffinch, but is much harsher. The song has a resemblance to that of the Yellow Bunting, and concludes with a long-drawn note very like the tiresome drawl of the Greenfinch. The present species breeds abundantly in Norway in the pine and birch forests. A nest sent to me from that country many years ago much resembled that of the Chaffinch, but was larger and had no lichen in its structure, being built of green moss, with small strips of birch-bark, and lined with, as I believe, human hairs, a little wool, and a few feathers,—amongst these I recognized one from the breast of the Goshawk.

The few eggs of this species that I have seen are hardly to be distinguished from those of the Chaffinch. I have kept many Bramblings in our aviaries; but although there are numerous records of their breeding in captivity, I have only known of one completed nest at

Lilford. In this instance a pair of Hedge-Sparrows took possession of the structure before any eggs were laid by its owner. I have met with this species in Switzerland and in Andalucia; it is well known as a winter visitor throughout Europe. A female Brambling came aboard of my yacht in the Bay of Biscay, about halfway between Ushant and Cape Finisterre, in November 1873.

# COMMON OR HOUSE-SPARROW.

## *PASSER DOMESTICUS* (*Linn.*).

Fringilla domestica, *Linn.* S. N. i. p. 323 (1766); *Naum.* iv. p. 453.
Passer domesticus, *Macg.* i. p. 340; *Hewitson,* i. p. 209; *Yarr.* ed. 4, ii. p. 89; *Dresser,* iii. p. 587.

*Moineau domestique,* French; *Haus-Sperling,* German; *Gorrion,* Spanish.

Abundant and resident throughout the British Islands and the continent of Europe, with the exception of Italy, Sicily, Sardinia, and Malta, in which localities it is represented by very closely allied forms, viz. *Passer italiæ* and *P. saliceti.*

Our Sparrow is seldom met with far from human habitations, except during harvest, when it extends its ravaging expeditions to great distances.

Keulemans del et lith.

Mintern Bros. imp.

COMMON OR HOUSE SPARROW.

Passer domesticus *(Linn.)*.

# TREE-SPARROW.

## *PASSER MONTANUS* (*Linn.*).

---

Fringilla montana, *Linn.* S. N. i. p. 324 (1766); *Naum.* iv. p. 480.
Passer montanus, *Macg.* i. p. 351; *Hewitson,* i. p. 207; *Yarr.* ed. 4, ii. p. 82; *Dresser,* iii. p. 597.

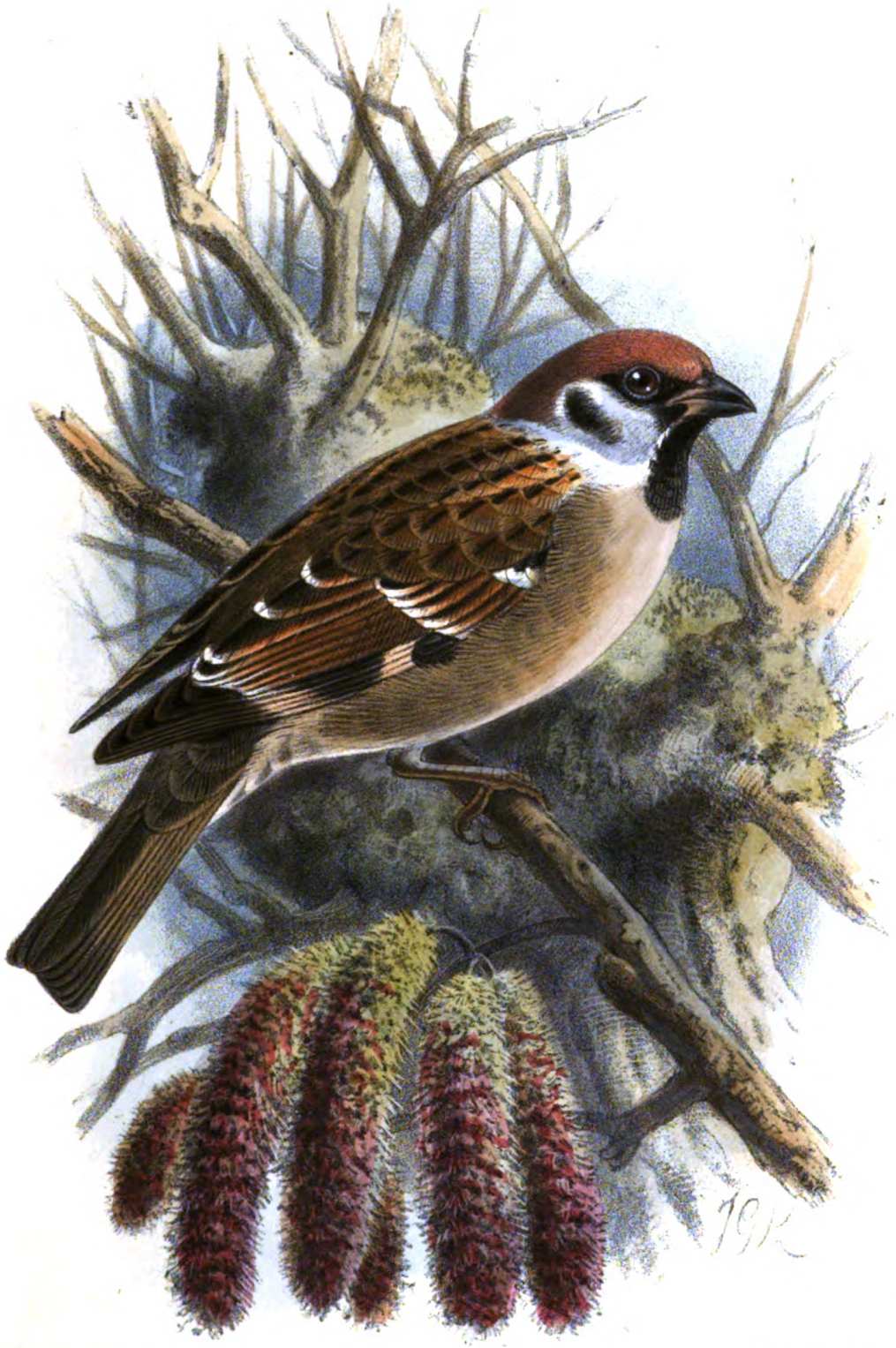
*Friquet,* French; *Feld-Sperling,* German; *Gorrión serrano, Gorrión de monte,* Spanish.

The Tree-Sparrow is a very local bird in England and Scotland, nowhere very abundant, and in certain districts entirely unknown; as a proof of this I may mention that with us, in Northamptonshire, this bird breeds, and is to be found in small numbers at all seasons of the year; whilst, on the other hand, in the neighbourhood of Bournemouth, where I am now writing, I am assured that it is, if not entirely absent, at all events exceedingly rare.

It appears, from the writings of various authors, that large numbers visit the eastern counties from the continent every autumn.

In its general habits this bird closely resembles our Common Sparrow, but differs from that well-known species in the fact that the sexes of the present bird are barely distinguishable in plumage—the note also is very different.

The Tree-Sparrow breeds indifferently in the holes of trees and buildings, and in certain parts of Germany frequents populous towns. The nest is a large accumulation of rubbish and feathers, similar to that of the House-Sparrow.



J. G. Keulemans del. et lith. Mintern Bros. imp

$\frac{1}{1}$

TREE - SPARROW.

Passer montanus *(Linn).*

4-6

# HAWFINCH.

*COCCOTHRAUSTES VULGARIS, Pallas.*

---

Coccothraustes vulgaris, *Pallas*, Zoogr. Rosso-As. ii. p. 12 (1826); *Hewitson*, i. p. 205; *Yarr.* ed. 4, ii. p. 98; *Dresser*, iii. p. 575.
Coccothraustes atrogularis, *Macg.* i. p. 356.
Fringilla coccothraustes, *Naum.* iv. p. 435.

*Gros-bec*, French; *Kernbeisser*, German; *Cascanueces*, *Piñonero*, *Pinzón real*, Spanish.

This grotesque bird is now more or less common and resident throughout the eastern, south-eastern, and central counties of England as far to the northwards as the Humber, and has of late years extended its breeding-range into Yorkshire. In the western portion of this kingdom it appears to be somewhat uncommon, although it is in some years abundant in the winter months in Ireland. In Scotland it is said to be a somewhat scarce winter visitor.

There is no doubt that many of this species visit our country annually during the late autumn and winter from the continent; and within the limits of the "four seas" it is, in common with the majority of its congeners, to some extent a local migrant. In the neighbourhood of our home in north Northamptonshire the Hawfinch was an occasional and by no means a

J. G. Keulemans del et lith. $\frac{4}{5}$ Mintern Bros. imp.

HAWFINCH.

Coccothraustes vulgaris, *Pallas.*

common winter visitor till the early spring of 1870. On April 4th of that year I noticed a small flock of this species haunting some old thorn-bushes on our lawn; and although we could not discover a nest, in spite of exhaustive and protracted search during the succeeding four or five weeks, one pair of Hawfinches at least brought off a brood not far off, as I constantly observed young and old birds in our kitchen-garden in the following months of July and August. During the very severe weather of December 1870 and January 1871, we were visited by very large flocks of Hawfinches; and since that time Hawfinches have become more or less common residents with us, a pair or two nesting annually about our pleasure-grounds and in many other neighbouring localities; in fact, the bird is now only too well known to gardeners in all parts of our county from its depredations amongst the green peas as they begin to swell in the pods.

The old Hawfinch is a shy and wary bird, with the instinct of self-preservation very fully developed; and although the nest is occasionally placed in a conspicuous position, the remarkable call-note is rarely to be heard during the nesting-season. In the autumn and winter months the food of the Hawfinch consists principally of beech-mast, the seeds of the horn-beam, and the kernels of hips, haws, yew, and other berries. I have frequently noticed that these birds as a rule reject the pulp or flesh of these fruits, and seem to care only for the seeds or kernels, few of which can withstand the formidable instrument with which nature has provided this Finch. When not engaged in the search for food,

the Hawfinch in winter generally selects the highest bare branches of a tall tree, whence its sharp "twit," "twit," is constantly to be heard; on the slightest alarm the flock darts off with a very swift, undulating flight to a place of safety. In the summer months, when not busy amongst our pea-rows, our bird frequents dense foliage, in my experience showing a marked predilection for that of the yew tree, which is also a very favourite nesting-locality. The nests, however, may roughly be said to be built almost anywhere, generally at a considerable height from the ground; I have seen them in thick hawthorns, frequently in old apple- or pear-trees, once in a young sycamore, in almost every common conifer, and more than once near the extremities of the horizontal boughs of oak, horse-chestnut, and beech. The nest is large and loosely built outside of pliable twigs, root-fibres, and lichens neatly lined with fine grass and hair. The eggs are five or six, of a pale greenish blue, spotted and streaked with dark brown.

The Hawfinch, or, as it is frequently called, the Grosbeak, thrives well in a cage, and becomes very tame if often noticed and spoken to, but I have found that in a large aviary these birds sooner or later invariably kill themselves by dashing against the wires. In the pairing-season the male Hawfinch has a low, conversational warble; but I never heard any vocal performance of our bird that could rightly be designated as a song.

# GREENFINCH.

*FRINGILLA CHLORIS, Briss.*

---

Fringilla chloris, *Briss.* Orn. iii. p. 190 (1760); *Naum.* v. p. 62.
Linaria chloris, *Macg.* i. p. 365.
Coccothraustes chloris, *Hewitson,* i. p. 204; *Yarr.* ed. 4, ii. p. 105.
Ligurinus chloris, *Dresser,* iii. p. 567.

*Verdier ordinaire,* French; *Grünfinke,* German; *Verderón, Verdón,* Spanish.

This bird, which is perhaps more generally known under the name of Green Linnet, is exceedingly common in most parts of our islands that are in any way suited to its habits. It is perhaps more specially addicted to roosting amongst evergreen shrubs than any other of our British Finches, but these shrubs are by no means essential to its welfare.

The Greenfinch is not much of a singer as far as the quality of its performance is concerned, nor can it lay claim to beauty of form or colour; but, although it commits a certain amount of damage in gardens, I am of opinion that this detriment is more than compensated for by the great amount of benefit rendered to us by these birds in destroying thousands of noxious insects in every stage of their development.

C. G. Keulemans del. et lith.

Mintern Bros. imp.

GREENFINCH.

Fringilla chloris *(Briss).*

# SERIN.

*FRINGILLA SERINUS, Linn.*

---

Fringilla serinus, *Linn.* S. N. i. p. 320 (1766); *Naum.* v. p. 114.
Serinus hortulanus, *Yarr.* ed. 4, ii. p. 111; *Dresser*, iii. p. 549.

*Serin*, French; *Girlitz*, German; *Chamariz, Verdecillo*, Spanish.

This little Finch, which is common in many parts of the continent of Europe, has been admitted into the British list on the strength of about a dozen occurrences recorded from Hants, Sussex, Middlesex, Somerset, and Norfolk. Mr. Howard Saunders, from whom I quote, considers that although the Serin is a common cage-bird abroad, and likely to be imported, the probability is in favour of the supposition that some, at all events, of these birds visited our country of their own free will; and as I share this opinion I give a figure of the species.

The Serin is exceedingly common in Southern and Central Spain, and in general habits somewhat resembles the Goldfinch; the nest, however, is composed of different materials, and the song consists of a sharp sibilant murmur, much inferior to the pleasant notes of that bird.

J. G. Keulemans del. et lith. Mintern Bros. imp.

SERIN.

Fringilla serinus, *Linn.*

GOLDFINCH.

Carduelis elegans, *Stephens.*

# GOLDFINCH.

*CARDUELIS ELEGANS, Stephens.*

---

Carduelis elegans, *Stephens*, Gen. Zool. xiv. p. 30 (1826); *Macg.* i. p. 393; *Yarr.* ed. 4, ii. p. 117; *Dresser*, iii. p. 527.
Fringilla carduelis, *Naum.* v. p. 126; *Hewitson*, i. p. 196.

*Chardonneret*, French; *Distelfink*, *Stieglitz*, German; *Jilguero*, *Gilguero*, *Colorin*, Spanish.

It would be quite superfluous for me to go into any details as to the habits of this well-known and very beautiful bird. I hear many reports from various parts of the country of the sad diminution in numbers of the Goldfinch, caused by the persistent arts and devices of the bird-catchers, who can always obtain a ready sale for these attractive little Finches; another cause of their comparative scarcity is no doubt the tillage and reclamation of many waste lands, which afforded them an abundant supply of the seeds of various wild plants, their natural and favourite food, but I am glad to say that in the part of England with which I am best acquainted, I can neither perceive or hear of any lack of Goldfinches, and at the time of present writing (June 1890), I am informed of at least four nests within two

or three hundred yards of where I am now sitting. This species is more or less abundant throughout Europe, except in the extreme north, and is certainly one of the typical birds of Spain. In Northamptonshire we have an annual autumnal passage of Goldfinches on their southward migration, but I think that our home-bred birds seldom leave us, except under an unusual stress of winter weather. About two years ago we caught two young Goldfinches, in which the rich mouse-brown colour of the normal type was replaced by a creamy buff. I merely mention this as I am informed that wild-bred varieties of this species are not often met with in this country.

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J. G. Keulemans ad. nat. et lith.

Mintern Bros. imp.

SISKIN.

Fringilla spinus, *Linn.*

# SISKIN.

*FRINGILLA SPINUS, Linn.*

---

Fringilla spinus, *Linn.* S. N. i. p. 322 (1766); *Naum.* v. p. 155; *Hewitson,* i. p. 198.
Carduelis spinus, *Macg.* i. p. 400; *Yarr.* ed. 4, ii. p. 126.
Chrysomitris spinus, *Dresser,* iii. p. 541.

*Tarin,* French; *Zeisig,* German; *Lugano,* Spanish.

This very pretty little Finch is a more or less frequent autumnal or winter visitor to most of our English counties, but has been found breeding, according to Mr. Howard Saunders, "exceptionally in Surrey, Sussex, and Durham, and regularly in some parts of Cumberland." In the Highlands of Scotland it breeds regularly and in some numbers in the old fir-woods, and, as has been lately discovered, in several localities in Ireland. The beauty, extraordinary tameness, and pleasant song of the Siskin render it a very favourite cage-bird: the London bird-catchers used, in my boyhood, generally to speak of and sell this bird under the name of "Aberdevine," which sobriquet caused considerable confusion in the minds of certain uninitiated purchasers on account of its similarity to "Aberdavat," the name given by these dealers to a small exotic Finch, which is, if I

recollect rightly, *Estrelda amandava*; at all events, I well recollect giving serious offence to a bird-loving lady who showed me what she called an "Aberdavat," by assuring her that her pet was "only a Siskin." During the winter, the only season in which I have had opportunities of observing the Siskin in freedom, it is generally to be met with in small flocks, clustering on alders or birches, and keeping up a constant musical twitter; I have also frequently noticed that these birds find food of some sort amongst the dead sedges that fringe our rivers and brooks. These birds will often nest and breed in captivity, but Professor Newton informs us that the young are not frequently reared in such circumstance. As I have never had the good fortune to see either nest or eggs *in situ*, I cannot do better than refer my readers to the very interesting article written by my above-named friend in Yarrell's 'British Birds,' ed. 4, vol. ii.

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J. G. Keulemans del et lith.

Mintern Bros imp.

MEALY REDPOLL.
Fringilla linaria, *Linn.*

# MEALY REDPOLL.

*FRINGILLA LINARIA, Linn.*

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Fringilla linaria, *Linn.* S. N. i. p. 322 (1766); *Naum.* v. p. 173.
Linaria borealis, *Macg.* i. p. 388.
Fringilla canescens, *Hewitson,* i. p. 202 *.
Linota linaria, *Yarr.* ed. 4, ii. p. 133; *Dresser,* iv. p. 37.

*Sizerin boréal,* French; *Flachs-Fink, Birken-Zeisig, Shattchen,* German.

This form of Redpoll is an autumnal visitor to Great Britain, more frequent on the north-eastern coast of Scotland than elsewhere; further southwards its visits are very irregular, and although it has frequently occurred in considerable numbers in the eastern and southern counties of England, it may be fairly considered as a very uncertain, and, on the whole, not a common migrant to the country south of the Humber.

The varying races of Redpolls have led to considerable complications; and at least three of these races, exclusive of the present bird and our common Lesser Redpoll, have been recorded as occurring in our country; but from my small acquaintance with the subject I am disposed to look upon the present bird

and that just mentioned as the best typical representatives of the European races of Redpoll, and certainly the best known in England; and am therefore contented to figure them only, without quoting from authors better informed than I am on the subject of the variation of races.

To any friendly critics who may be disposed to find fault with me for "lumping" my subject, I will only say that my original intention in undertaking this work was simply to give coloured figures, and that I have been induced to add these notes solely by the request of many friends.

The Mealy Redpoll breeds abundantly in certain parts of Scandinavia; and from the accounts given by various authors, much resembles our Lesser Redpoll in general habits. I have, however, no personal acquaintance with the present bird except in captivity, and can only say that the principal difference that I have noticed between the two species or races is in their notes, that of the present bird being much sharper and more powerful than that of the smaller bird.

Litho. W. Greve, Berlin.

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MEALY REDPOLL *(Arctic race).*

Linota hornemanni, *Holböll.*

# MEALY REDPOLL. (*ARCTIC RACE.*)

*LINOTA HORNEMANNI, Holböll.*

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Linota hornemanni, *Holböll,* Naturh. Tidssk. iv. p. 398 (1843); *Yarr.* ed. 4, ii. pp. 141, 143; *Dresser,* iv. p. 55.

At the time of the publication of Mr. H. Saunders's article on the Mealy Redpoll in the 'Manual of British Birds' only one specimen of the race here represented had been recorded as having occurred in Great Britain; this individual was knocked down on the sea-banks near Whitburn, and was in the collection of the late John Hancock, of Newcastle-on-Tyne, who described and figured it in his 'Catalogue of the Birds of Northumberland and Durham' (p. 54, pl. 5), and there states that it was killed on April 24th, 1855. I am indebted to the courtesy of Doctor H. Bendelack Hewetson for the loan of two skins of this form, obtained in October 1883 and October 1893, at Easington, Yorkshire; from the former of these the accompanying Plate was taken.

This race of Redpoll is said to be resident in Greenland, and there are records of its occasional occurrence

on the continent of Europe. John Hancock was in possession of a specimen from Iceland; and Mr. Eaton in 1873 found it breeding at Wide Bay in Spitsbergen, where he obtained a specimen which is now in the Museum of the University of Cambridge. Professor A. Newton, from whose article on the Mealy Redpoll in 4th ed. of 'Yarrell' I have quoted the latter particulars, says that this race differs from the ordinary European form in its larger size and paler tints, its somewhat longer and more deeply-forked tail and rather longer claws. Even in full summer plumage none of its colours seem even to be so dark as in the commoner bird.

# LESSER REDPOLL.

*FRINGILLA RUFESCENS* (*Vieill.*).

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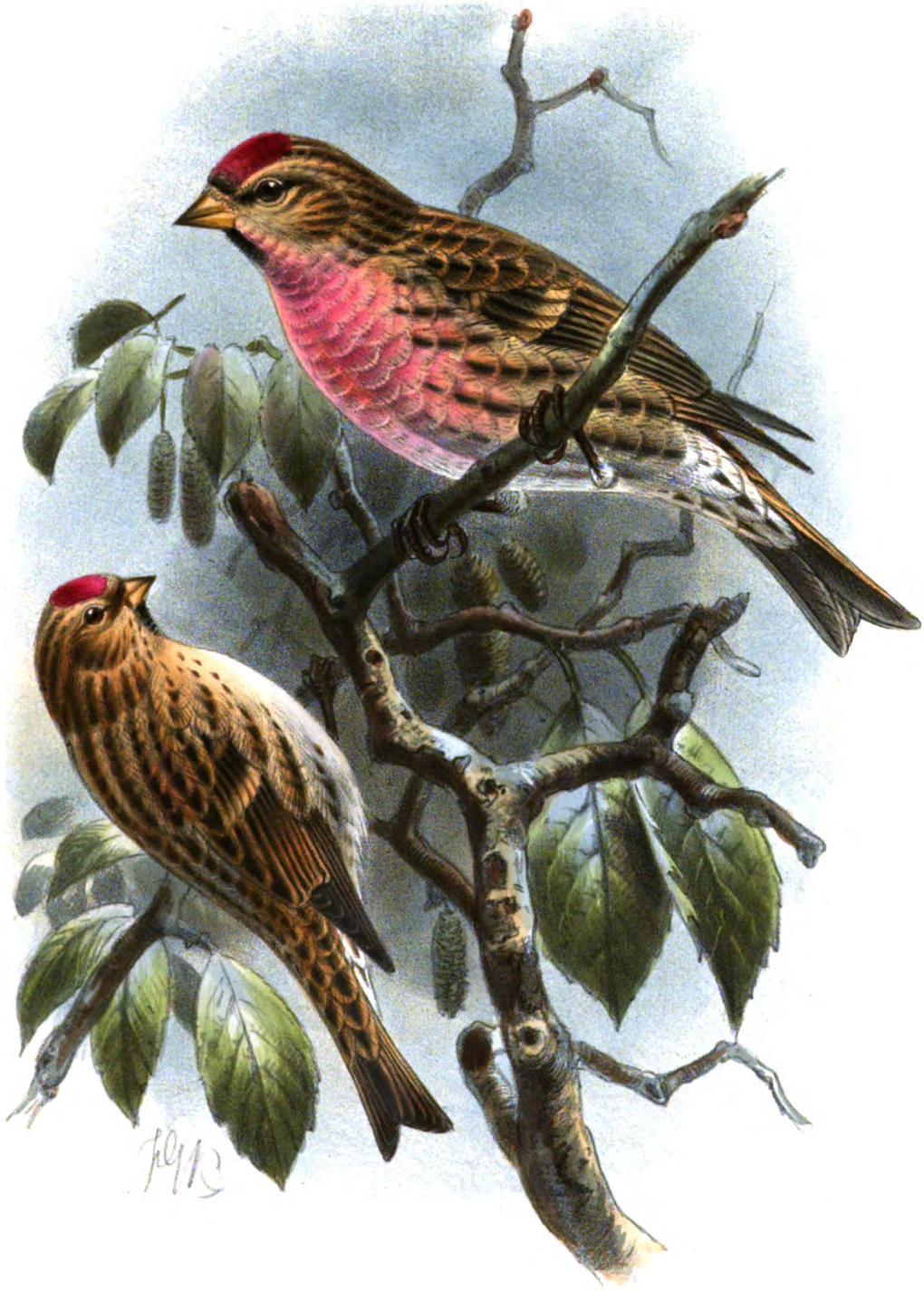
Linaria rufescens, *Vieill.* Mem. R. Ac. Sc. Tor. xxiii. p. 202 (1816).
Linaria minor, *Macg.* i. p. 383.
Fringilla linaria, *Hewitson,* i. p. 201.
Linota rufescens, *Yarr.* ed. 4, ii. p. 146; *Dresser,* iv. p. 47.

*Sizerin cabaret,* French; *Kleiner Flachs-fink,* German; *Volicelo,* Spanish.

This well-known bird, although it breeds more or less commonly and regularly in many, if not most, of our English counties, as well as in Ireland and Scotland, is, I think, generally looked upon as an autumnal visitor in Central and Southern England, from the fact that at the commencement of autumn it congregates in large flocks, whose wavering flight, incessant twittering notes and habit of clustering upon alders and birches in the same fashion as the Siskin, can hardly escape the attention of many who would perhaps hardly notice any small bird that occurred singly or in pairs. I have never had the good fortune to find a "*wild*" nest of this bird, whose choice of nesting-sites seems to be very promiscuous.

The Lesser Redpoll breeds freely in captivity, and we have had several nests in the aviaries at Lilford, but for some unknown reason, hardly any young birds have been reared therein by their parents.



J. G. Keulemans del et lith.

Mintern Bros. imp.

LESSER REDPOLL.

Fringilla rufescens *(Vieill.)*.

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# COMMON OR BROWN LINNET.

*LINOTA CANNABINA* (*Linn.*).

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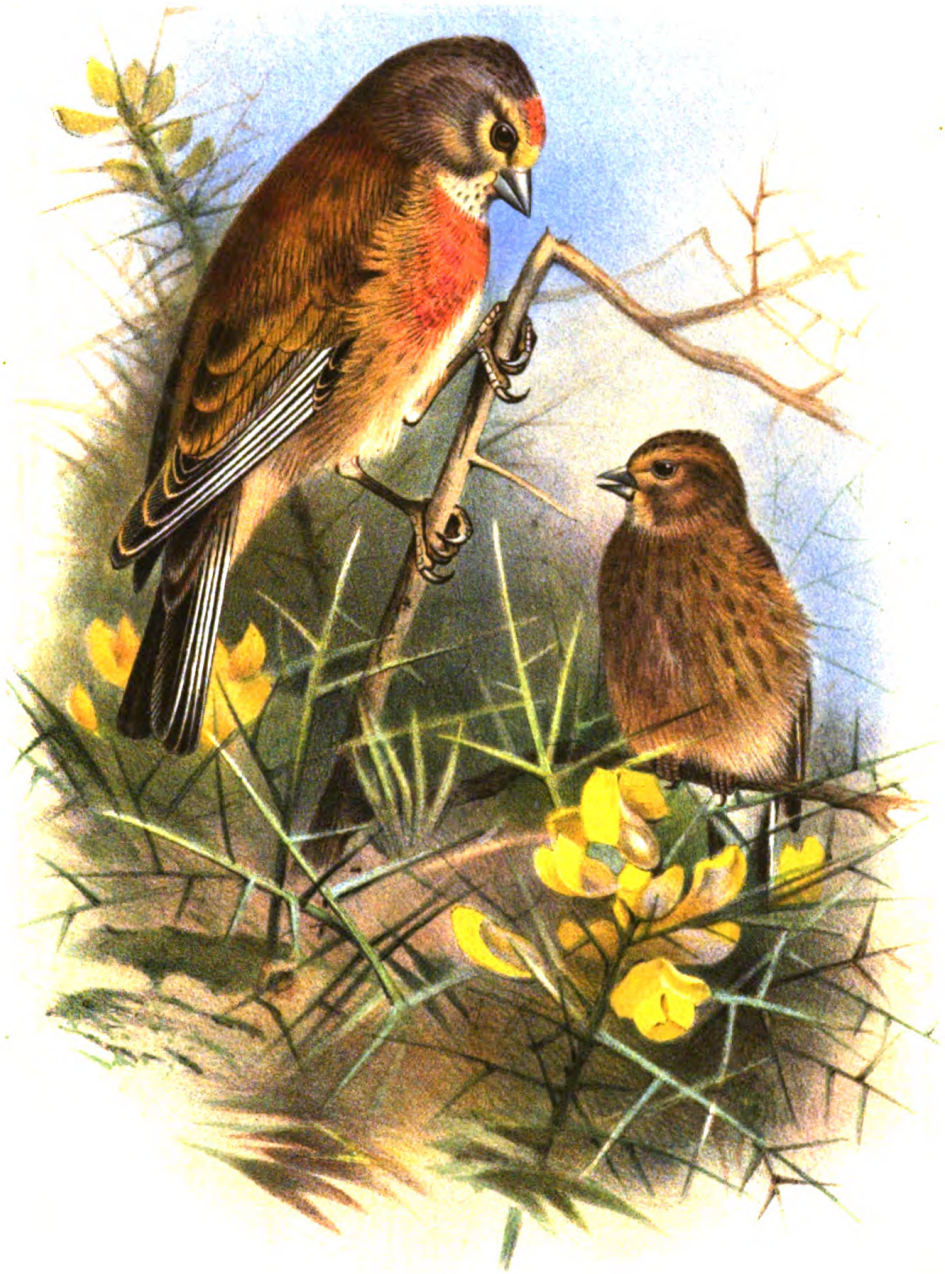
Fringilla cannabina, *Linn.* S. N. i. p. 322 (1766); *Naum.* v. p. 80; *Hewitson,* i. p. 200.
Linaria cannabina, *Macg.* i. p. 371; *Dresser,* iv. p. 31.
Linota cannabina, *Yarr.* ed. 4, ii. p. 153.

*Linotte,* French; *Blutfink,* German; *Camacho, Pardillo,* Spanish.

Abundant and resident in almost all parts of the three kingdoms, especially frequenting and nesting in districts in which the common furze is prevalent.



A Thorburn del. J. Smit lith. Mintern Bros. Chromo lith.

¾

COMMON OR BROWN LINNET.

Linota cannabina *(Linn.)*.

# TWITE OR MOUNTAIN-LINNET.

## *FRINGILLA FLAVIROSTRIS, Linn.*

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Fringilla flavirostris, *Linn.* S. N. i. p. 322 (1766).
Fringilla montium, *Naum.* v. p. 103; *Hewitson,* i. p. 203.
Linaria flavirostris, *Macg.* i. p. 379.
Linota flavirostris, *Yarr.* ed. 4, ii. p. 160; *Dresser,* iv. p. 59.

*Linotte à bec jaune,* French; *Berg-Hänfling,* German; *Pajarel,* Murcia.

The "Lintie," as this species is commonly called in Scotland, breeds more or less commonly on the moorlands of that kingdom, as well as on those of Northern England and Ireland; in the central and southern counties of our country it is an irregular autumnal visitor, far more abundant at that period in the eastern than the western districts.

The Twite generally nests upon or close to the ground, amongst high heather or long grass. In habits this bird seems to me to assimilate more closely to the Common Linnet than to the Redpolls; it has no particular merit as a songster, and is naturally a somewhat shy bird. The few Twites that I have met with in Northamptonshire in the autumn and winter were found upon our stubbles and rough fallows, gleaning in company with other Finches.

J G Keulemans del et lith

Mintern Bros. imp.

TWITE OR MOUNTAIN LINNET.

Fringilla flavirostris, *Linn.*

# BULLFINCH.

*PYRRHULA VULGARIS, Temm.*

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Pyrrhula vulgaris, *Temm.* Man. d'Orn. i. p. 338 (1820).
Pyrrhula europæa, *Vieillot,* Nouv. Dict. d'Hist. Nat. iv. p. 286 (1816).
Loxia pyrrhula, *Linn.* S. N. i. p. 300 (1766).
Pyrrhula vulgaris, *Naum.* iv. p. 383; *Hewitson,* i. p. 211.
Pyrrhula pileata, *Macg.* i. p. 407.
Pyrrhula europæa, *Yarr.* ed. 4, ii. p. 166; *Dresser,* iv. p. 101.

*Bouvreuil,* French; *Rothgimpel,* German; *Monaguin, Pinzon real,* Spanish.

More or less common and resident throughout Great Britain; not abundant, but well known, in Ireland. Rarely found in S. Europe.

2/3

Litho. W. Greve, Berlin.

BULLFINCH.

Pyrrhula vulgaris. *Temm.*

# NORTHERN BULLFINCH.

*PYRRHULA MAJOR, C. L. Brehm.*

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Loxia pyrrhula, *Linn.* S. N. i. p. 300 (pt. ?).
Pyrrhula major, *C. L. Brehm,* Vög. Deutschl. p. 252; *Dresser,* iv. p. 97.

*Dompap,* Norwegian and Danish; *Domherre,* Swedish; *Snigir,* Russian.

Two occurrences were recorded by Lt.-Col. Irby in the 'Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London' for 1895, page 691, of birds killed on the coast of Yorkshire about 1st November, 1893.

This large form of Bullfinch, the *Loxia pyrrhula* of Linnæus, sometimes takes the place of the common smaller bird of Western, Central, and Southern Europe in Northern Europe, especially in Central Sweden and Siberia. It is declared that in one year, in districts of the northern countries named, the large bird may be found, and in another year the small one; but that the two never occur simultaneously.

It is said to have quite a different note from that of *P. vulgaris.* [O. S.]

4/5

NORTHERN BULLFINCH.

**Phyrrhula major,** *C. L. Brehm.*

Litho. W. Greve, Berlin.

72

# SCARLET GROSBEAK.

*PYRRHULA ERYTHRINA, Pallas.*

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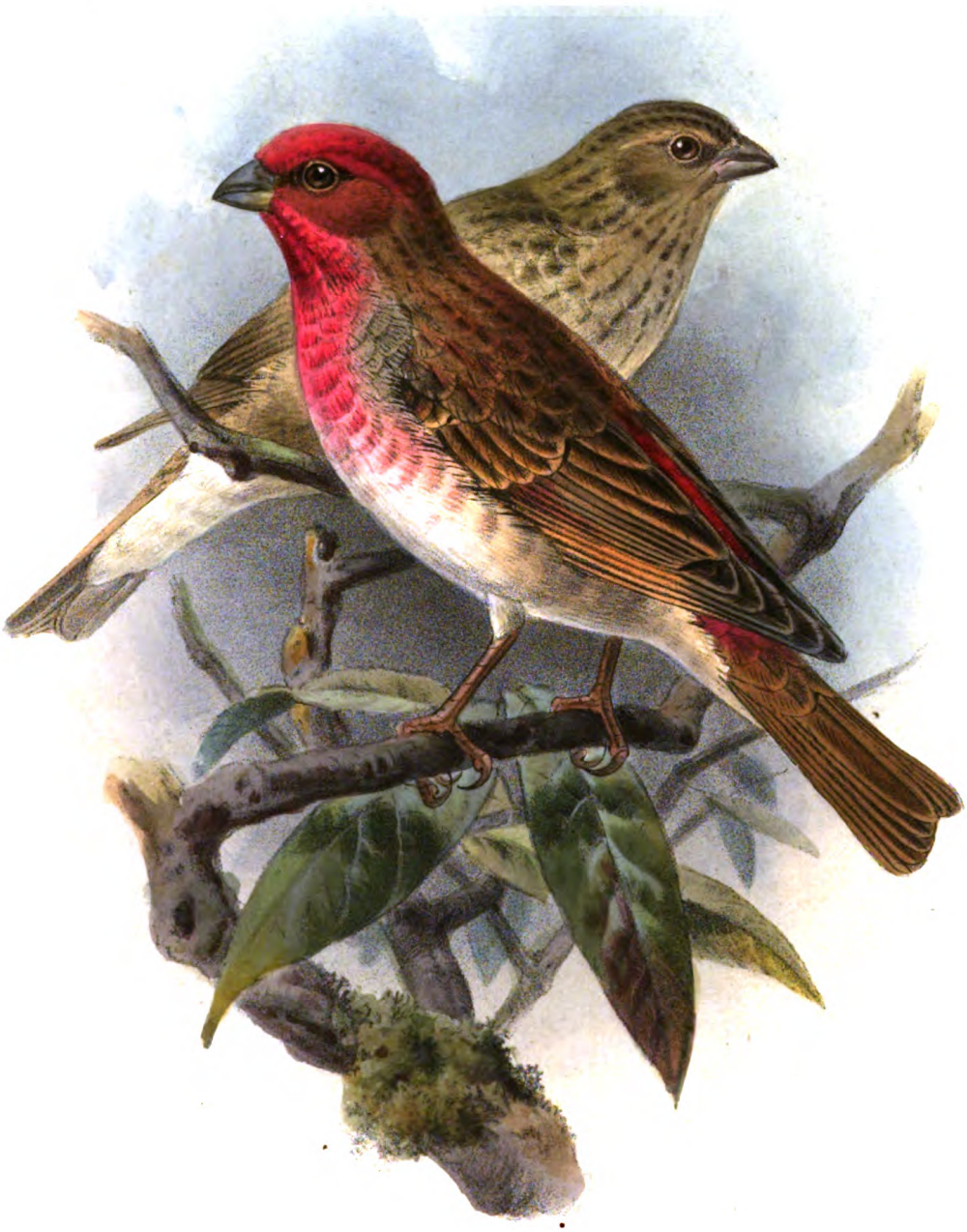
Pyrrhula erythrina, *Pallas*, N. Comm. Ac. Sci. Imp. Petr. xiv. p. 587 (1770); *Naum.* iv. p. 418; *Yarr.* ed. 4, ii. p. 172.
Carpodacus erythrinus, *Dresser*, iv. p. 75.

*Karmin-Gimpel*, German.

Two instances only of the occurrence of this species in England are on record—one near Brighton in September 1869, the other near Hampstead in October 1870. As this is a bird that I have never met with in a wild state, I must refer my readers to our standard authorities for an account of its habits and natural haunts. In captivity I have found the Scarlet Grosbeak a singularly dull and stupid bird, voracious, and tame enough; its note, however, is not unpleasing; but my caged specimens seldom favoured us with a vocal performance of any sort.



J. G. Keulemans del. et lith. Mintern Bros. imp.

SCARLET GROSBEAK.

Pyrrhula erythrina, *Pallas*.

Litho. W. Greve, Berlin.

PINE-GROSBEAK.

Pyrrhula enucleator *(Linn.)*.

# PINE-GROSBEAK.

## *PYRRHULA ENUCLEATOR* (*Linn.*).

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Loxia enucleator, *Linn.* S. N. i. p. 299 (1766).
Pyrrhula enucleator, *Naum.* iv. p. 403; *Macg.* i. p. 411; *Hewitson,* i. p. 210*; *Yarr.* ed. 4, ii. p. 177.
Pinicola enucleator, *Dresser,* iv. p. 111.

*Dur-bec vulgaire,* French; *Fichten-Gimpel,* German.

Although this species has been recorded as having occurred on more than twenty occasions in our country, I find that Professor Newton (Yarrell's 'British Birds,' 4th ed. vol. ii. p. 177) and Mr. J. H. Gurney ('Zoologist,' 1877) are agreed that not more than five of these records at most are worthy of serious attention. Mr. H. Saunders ('Manual,' p. 191) considers that few even of these sifted records are entitled to acceptance, but does not feel justified in summarily rejecting a bird that has for so long occupied a place in our list. I entirely agree with the last-named author, but go rather further than he does, in looking upon all occurrences of the Pine-Grosbeak in the United Kingdom as "escapes" from captivity. To me the matter of the admission to, or exclusion from, the "British" list of any bird that

has been undoubtedly captured "a-field" within our boundaries, is a matter of infinitesimally small importance, and in such cases as that of the present species we can only argue from probability. On this ground I hold the Pine-Grosbeak as a very unlikely *bona fide* visitor to this country, whilst I am well aware that many are imported, chiefly, as I believe, from Russia. I only know this bird in captivity, and have found it as a rule extraordinarily tame. The male has a clear and pleasant warble, and the female also sings sweetly; I have noticed that whilst the male generally sings from the top of a bush in our aviary, the female usually sits upon the ground, or close to it on the brickwork, within a few feet of her human visitors, especially in the hottest sunlight that she can find, to regale us with her music. The home of the Pine-Grosbeak in Europe is in the pine-forests of the north, its favourite food the seeds of various conifers, occasionally varied, according to authors who are personally acquainted with it in these districts, by insects. In captivity few seeds come amiss to these charming birds. The Pine-Grosbeak is said to inhabit the conifer-zone of the northern parts of both the Old and the New World; for details with regard to habits, nest, and eggs, I must refer my readers to the account given in the 4th ed. of 'Yarrell,' to which I have above referred.

$\frac{2}{3}$

Litho. W. Greve, Berlin.

**CROSSBILL.**

**Loxia curvirostra,** *Linn.*

# CROSSBILL.

## *LOXIA CURVIROSTRA, Linn.*

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Loxia curvirostra, *Linn.* S. N. i. p. 299 (1766); *Naum.* iv. p. 356; *Hewitson,* i. p. 212; *Yarr.* ed. 4, ii. p. 187; *Dresser,* iv. p. 127.
Loxia europæa, *Macg.* i. p. 417.

*Bec-croisé,* French; *Kreuzschnabel,* German; *Pico tuerto,* Spanish.

As I can add nothing from personal experience to the elaborate accounts of the erratic habits, the various phases of plumage, and the nesting of this singular and interesting species given by the editor of the 4th edition of Yarrell's 'British Birds' and other authorities, I will content myself (and I trust my readers) by saying that of late years the Crossbill has been found nesting in various parts of the three kingdoms in which it was previously regarded merely as a bird of casual and irregular passage; this is doubtlessly due to the fact that the nest is often placed high in groves or woods of coniferous trees, and that the eggs are generally laid early in March, a season when few people would think of going a-nesting. I have reason to believe also that the Crossbill, though sufficiently vociferous when travelling in flocks, maintains a discreet

silence during the breeding-season, and may therefore easily escape observation amongst the dark-green foliage of the pines and firs in which it specially delights and finds its favourite food—the seeds of various cones or fir-apples.

A nest of this species, taken in the immediate neighbourhood of Bournemouth from a tall Scotch fir, and containing four nestlings of a few days old, was brought to me on April 5, 1890, having been taken on 3rd inst.; the brood could not have been hatched more than a week at the outside, I doubt if it had even attained that age, and I had great fears about the possibility of rearing the youngsters; however, their captor assured me that he had great experience in rearing young birds, and had no doubt of success in this instance; so I confided them to his care, with the most happy result, as the four birds are still alive and well at this time of writing, January 10, 1891.

I have kept a good many of this species in captivity, their tameness and quaint habits render them most interesting as pets; but I have generally found them restless and ceaselessly nibbling and working at the woodwork of their cages, and could never keep them alive for any great length of time. I must, however, say that before receiving the four birds above mentioned, all my captives of this species were wild-caught birds, and would therefore in all probability be more impatient of confinement than these youths who have never known the delights of freedom.

On the vexed question of the plumage of the Crossbill, I can only say that every *red* bird that I ever

possessed lost that brilliant colour at the first moult, and never regained it; I am by no means certain that this red phase is not occasionally assumed by old hen-birds in the wild state, still less that it is a proof of complete maturity in the males, but on this complicated subject I do not pretend to speak with any authority.

With reference to the migrations of the Crossbill I think that the following free translation of part of a letter addressed to me in September 1889 by H.R.H. the Duke of Bragança, now King Carlos of Portugal, may not be without interest to my readers; it was written from the Palace of Belem, but is not dated:—

"Five days ago we went to some extensive pine-woods on the coast to wait for the customary passage of Turtle Doves; I had killed about forty of these, when one of my companions called my attention to a great flight of little birds that uttered a call-note to which we were not accustomed; this flight was out of shot-range, but was succeeded by a second which flew lower, and my companion and I managed to shoot four of them; to our great surprise they were *Loxiæ*, Crossbills I think they are called in English. Both species of *Loxia* are rare in Portugal, being only found on the high mountains, and even there in small numbers, and here on a plain on the sea-coast, and evidently on passage, in three successive days we killed more than 150, and did *not* kill three or four thousand simply because we had no wish to do so; the air on all sides was dark with them. For nine years I have annually attended this passage of the Doves, but never before saw a

single Crossbill. I showed some of our birds to the country people, to whom they were quite unknown. Yesterday I arrived at home here, where I have an extensive pleasure-ground, and my chasseur brought to me fourteen *Loxiæ* killed in this demesne on the previous evening. This is most remarkable, because in all the country-side in which I now am the bird was absolutely unknown."

In this connection I may mention that during the late summer of 1889 I received information of the very unusual abundance of Crossbills in the neighbourhood of Seville, Gibraltar, and Malaga.

# TWO-BARRED CROSSBILL.

*LOXIA BIFASCIATA* (*C. L. Brehm*).

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Crucirostra bifasciata, *C. L. Brehm*, Ornis, iii. p. 85 (1827).
Loxia bifasciata, *Yarr.* ed. 4, ii. p. 211; *Dresser*, iv. p. 141.

*Bec-croisé bifascié*, French.

This is a rare straggler to our islands from the pine-forests of Northern Russia and Siberia. In general habits it is said to resemble the Common Crossbill, but as I have no personal acquaintance with it, I must refer my readers to other authors for details. At p. 195 of Mr. Howard Saunders's 'Manual of British Birds' excellent reasons may be found for not including the so-called White-winged Crossbill (*Loxia leucoptera*) in the British list. I have good reason to believe, though I have not positive proof, that a few of the present species haunted the comparatively few pine-groves still left in the detached portions of Bournemouth during the winter of 1889–90.

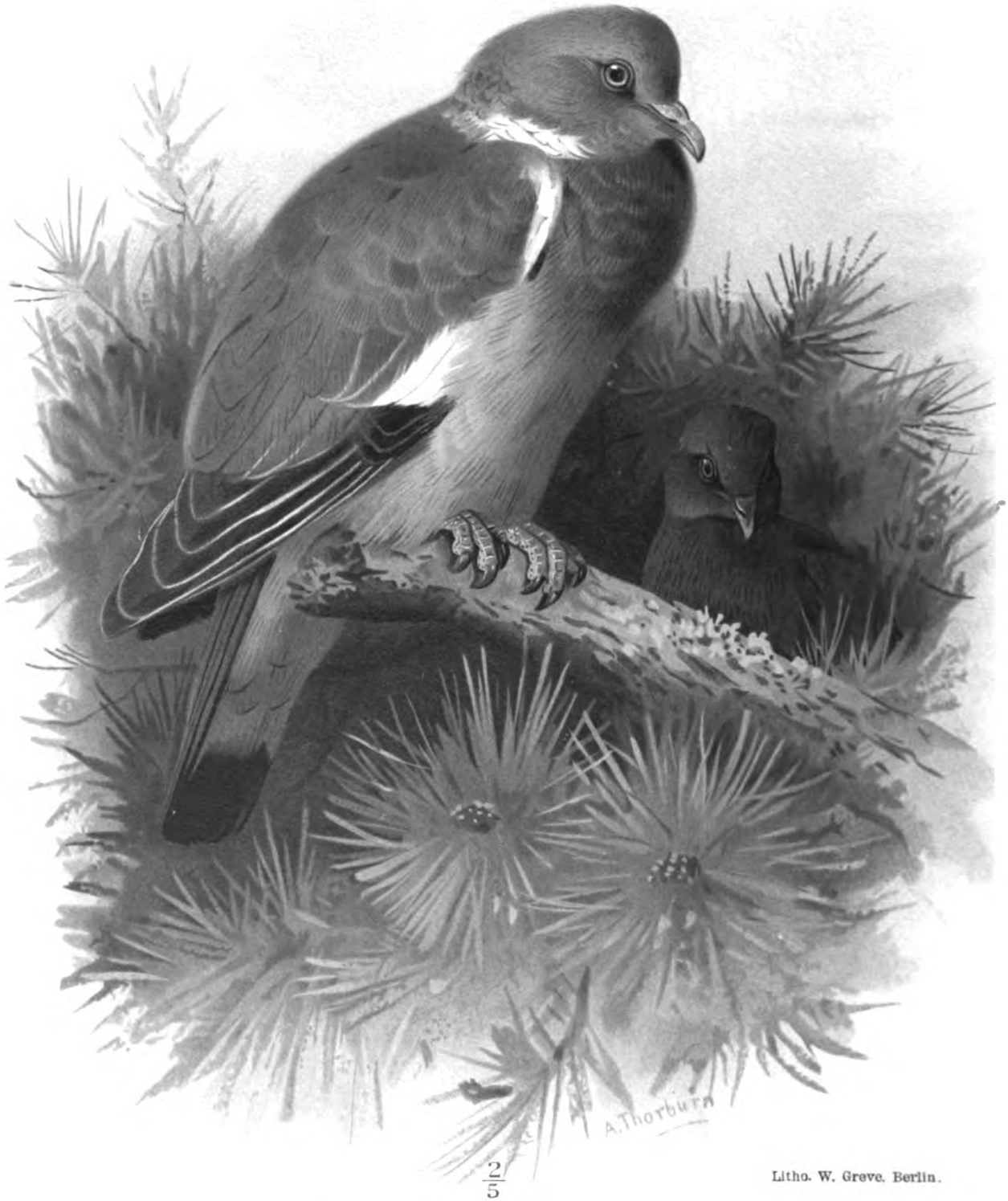
The principal figure in the accompanying Plate was drawn from a stuffed specimen lent for the purpose through the obliging kindness of Mr. John Cordeaux, who informs me that it was killed in September 1889 in a marsh near Louth in Lincolnshire.

CHROMO-LITHO ART STUDIO, LONDON.

$\frac{3}{4}$

TWO-BARRED CROSSBILL

Loxia bifasciata, *C.L. Brehm.*




2/5

Litho. W. Greve, Berlin.

WOOD-PIGEON, OR RING-DOVE.

Columba palumbus, *Linn.*

# WOOD-PIGEON OR RING-DOVE.

*COLUMBA PALUMBUS, Linn.*

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Columba palumbus, *Linn.* S. N. i. p. 282 (1766); *Naum.* vi. p. 168; *Macg.* i. p. 259; *Hewitson,* i. p. 271; *Yarr.* ed. 4, iii. p. 1; *Dresser,* vii. p. 3.

*Colombe ramier,* French; *Ringel-Taube,* German; *Palóma torcáz,* Spanish.

This fine Pigeon is so abundant throughout the United Kingdom that it is difficult to write anything as to its habits that is not generally known. I am, and have been for more than ten years, unable to visit London, but it is pleasant to hear that the Wood-Pigeon has become common, and now breeds regularly every year, in many of the metropolitan parks and other public resorts. This has long been the case in Paris and many other continental cities, and to lovers of birds it is gratifying that the present species has become tame from the protection afforded to it by "Londoners," and seems to be free from the assaults of all enemies, except the unnecessary domestic cat, in the busiest haunt of men. Except during the nesting-season the Wood-Pigeon is by nature one of the most wary of our birds,

but at that period appears rather to court than to avoid the neighbourhood of human habitations, although, to use a common expression, its nest may be met with "everywhere." I cannot remember any sort of tree common to Northamptonshire in which I have not found or seen nests of this Pigeon, and it frequently breeds in ivy and various evergreens that hardly attain to the dignity of trees. This bird is perhaps specially addicted to nesting in confers, especially spruce-firs, but even where there is an abundance of these, with convenient horizontal boughs as substantial support for the slight platforms of sticks that constitute the Pigeons' nurseries, many other trees are often selected. Although I have met with this Pigeon in almost every part of Europe that I have visited, my remarks apply principally to the district of Northamptonshire with which I am best acquainted. A great many Wood-Pigeons breed with us, but in most years we are visited in the autumn by large flocks of "strangers," smaller, darker in colour, and somewhat differing in their manner of flight from our home-bred birds. After clearing off all the fallen acorns and beech-mast that they can find, these visitors pass on to the southward, generally, if the weather is severe, taking with them the bulk of our native birds of their species. In such cases the said "natives" reappear in small detachments as soon as the weather is open and mild, and I think that all the survivors of this class are back with us by the beginning of March. The strangers, however, as a rule, do not put in an appearance before April is well advanced, occasionally not until May, and rarely remain for more

than a few days. In the severe weather of 1870–71 we had more Wood-Pigeons in our oak-woods than I ever saw anywhere before or since, but a neighbouring gamekeeper, who had frequently assisted in our pursuit of them at that time, sent me word, about the middle of December 1893, that the number of Wood-Pigeons that frequented these same woods was "as five to one of those that were there at the French war-time." This implied many hundreds of thousands, and from the evidence of many trustworthy witnesses was by no means an unwarrantable computation. I have known of a Wood-Pigeon sitting on her eggs in the second week of March, and have often found freshly laid eggs in October. I believe that three broods are the rule, but I feel little doubt that four are frequently reared during the season. In covert-shooting in November I have often seen young Pigeons that could only just fly from one tree to another. A pair of Wood-Pigeons reared three young in one season in the aviary at Lilford, one bird from each separate sitting of two eggs. I have examined the contents of the "crops" of the Wood-Pigeon in every month of the year, and from my investigations have come to the conclusion that the lesser celandine is about the only "weed" that they consume in any considerable quantity. How far this particular taste may be beneficial to the agriculturist I cannot say, but there is no doubt that these Pigeons consume an enormous amount of corn of all sorts, besides a quantity of "green stuffs," and are, on the whole, detrimental to the farmer. The voracity and stowage capacity of the Wood-Pigeon are marvellous: I know of an instance

in which 72 full-sized acorns were taken from the crop of one of this species, and I have myself taken 87 horse-beans and some fragments of turnip-tops from another. My views about this bird are that it should be strictly protected between March and August, but shot down to the utmost during the rest of the year. No better sport can be found in England than shooting Wood-Pigeons in a breeze of wind, as they career over a small opening in a wood or thick plantation, and their flesh, if properly treated, is, in my opinion, excellent.

Litho. W. Greve Berlin.

2/5

STOCK-DOVE.

Columba œnas, *Linn.*

# STOCK-DOVE.

*COLUMBA ŒNAS, Linn.*

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Columba œnas, *Linn.* (partim) S. N. i. p. 279 (1766); *Naum.* vi. p. 215; *Macg.* i. p. 287; *Hewitson,* i. p. 273; *Yarr.* ed. 4, iii. p. 8; *Dresser,* vii. p. 23.

*Colombe, Colombin,* French; *Hohl-Taube,* German; *Paloma brava, Paloma de campo,* Spanish.

This is one of several species that within the last forty years have greatly extended their range in our country. In Northamptonshire, or that part of the county with which I am best acquainted, it has always been common from as far back as I can remember, breeding in hollow trees, church-towers, masses of ivy, and occasionally in dense conifers, and rearing three or four broods of two each between March and November. The great majority of our home-bred Stock-Doves leave us in the "dead" of winter; but they generally return in force in February, and soon commence nesting operations. I have found a nest containing hard-set eggs in the second week of March; and, on the other hand, have several times found unfledged young birds

in the nest late in October, and at least once in November.

In general habits and food this bird closely resembles the Wood-Pigeon, or, to speak more correctly, the Ring-Dove; but its love-song differs considerably from that of its larger congener, consisting of a series of disconnected, though rapidly repeated guttural notes in the same key, without the modulations of the well-known "Coo $\overline{oo}$ coo coo-coo" of the Cushat. I consider the Stock-Dove as the most quick-sighted and wary of our common birds, the Mallard and Curlew not excepted; any one who has waited for Pigeons coming in to roost on a winter evening will, I think, confirm this opinion. On the open heaths and commons of our eastern counties the Stock-Dove usually nests in rabbit-burrows and under closely cropped furze-bushes, and I have more than once in those districts seen a bird of this species plunge into a hole when closely pressed by a Falcon; the latter bird, however, must be at a rarely high pitch, and an exceptional flyer, to put any real pressure upon the Dove, whose speed and turning powers are marvellous.

On the south coast of Devon I found many pairs of this species frequenting the cliffs between Berry Head and Dartmouth Harbour, but always in places thickly overgrown with ivy, furze, and brambles, never in any of the small caves in which we sought in vain for Rock-Doves. Even in the well-wooded district of England in which our home is situated I have met with two nests of the Stock-Dove on the ground, in one instance the nest being placed close to the entrance of an old

rabbit-burrow under high ash-trees, and in the second between two of the main roots of an elm, without concealment of any kind. The name of "Stock" was, as mentioned in 'Yarrell,' no doubt originally applied to the bird on account of its predilection for the hollows, stocks, or stumps of trees for nesting-purposes. A male Stock-Dove in the aviary at Lilford declined to make any amorous advances to various female congeners from the Canaries, but paired at once with an Antwerp Carrier Pigeon: the result was two eggs, from which one bird, exactly resembling its male parent (except in the possession of a somewhat stouter beak), was hatched, but only lived for about three weeks; the remains of this youngster are now at S. Kensington.

3/7

Litho. W Greve, Berlin.

ROCK-DOVE.

Columba livia, *J. F. Gmelin.*

# ROCK-DOVE.

*COLUMBA LIVIA, J. F. Gmelin.*

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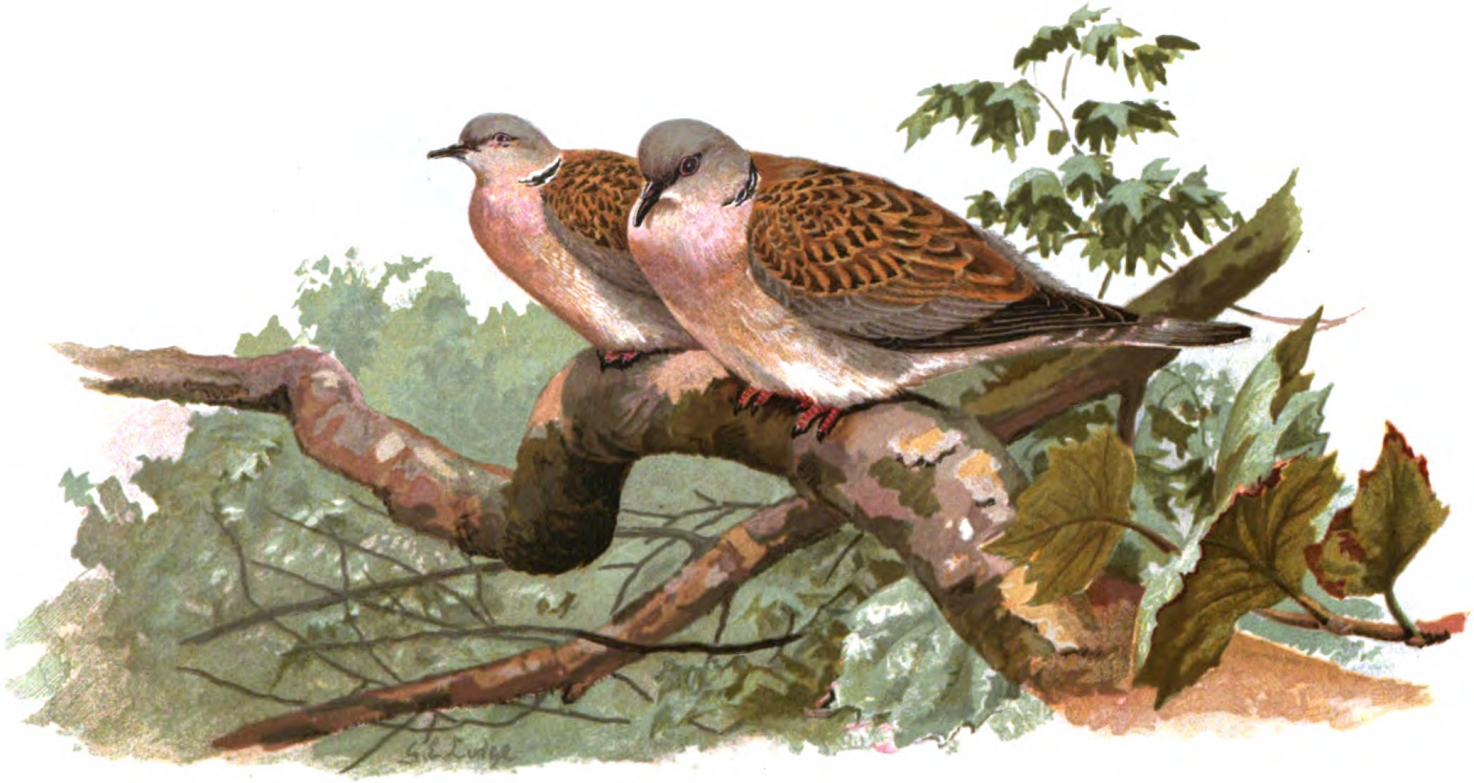
Columba livia, *J. F. Gmelin*, S. N. i. p. 769 (1788), ex Brisson; *Naum.* vi. p. 186; *Macg.* i. p. 268; *Hewitson*, i. p. 274; *Yarr.* ed. 4, iii. p. 13; *Dresser*, vii. p. 11.

*Colombe biset*, French; *Feld-Taube*, German; *Zurita, Paloma brava*, Spanish.

In England this species is exceedingly rare in its pure unadulterated form, although many of the denizens of our dove-cots very closely resemble their more or less remote progenitors. I may here state that it is generally admitted by naturalists that all the domestic races of Pigeon owe their origin to the present species. On certain parts of the coast of Wales the Rock-Dove exists in small colonies; it is abundant in suitable localities on the western coast and islands of Scotland, in the Orkneys and Shetlands, and on the east coast as far south as the Bass Rock. In Ireland, wherever sea-caves exist, the Rock-Dove is to be met with in numbers. I noticed a few in the north of the Isle of Man. My acquaintance with this species has been formed chiefly on the islands of the Mediterranean, but is by no means

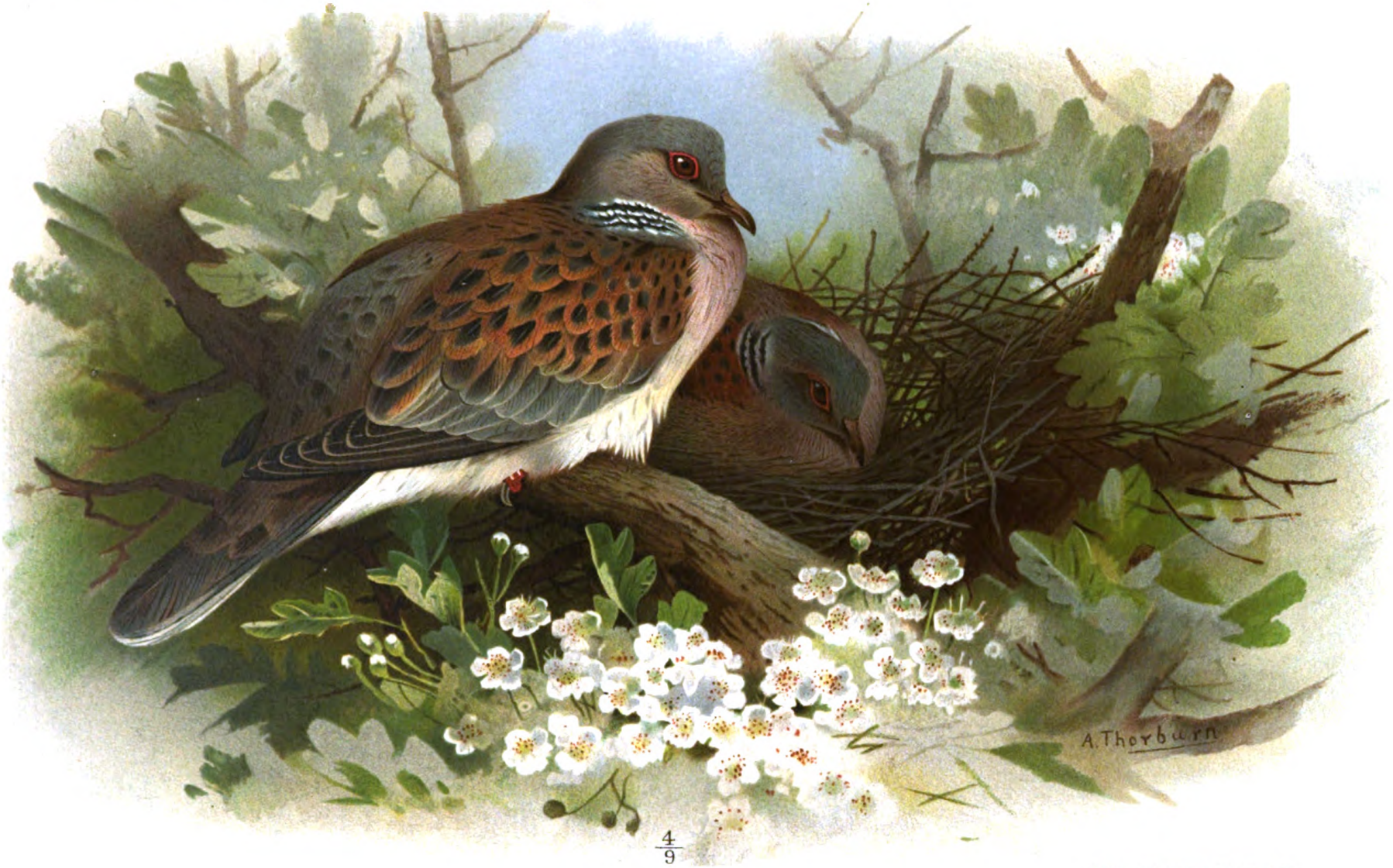
confined to these localities, as I have found it in all suitable places on the shores of that sea, from the eastern face of the Rock of Gibraltar to the promontory of Akroteri in Cyprus. On the coast of Sardinia and its adjacent islets the Rock-Dove is especially abundant, and affords very pretty shooting from a boat. The so-called "Blue Rock" of the dealers in Pigeons at home is, if full-winged and vigorous, not, as I am informed, "everybody's money" when liberated from the traps at a fair distance. I cannot write on this subject from personal knowledge, as the idea of shooting at a bird that has been in captivity has always been repugnant to me, but I can assure my readers that the killing of wild Rock-Doves from a boat rocking on a heaving sea, as they dart out of their caves, often almost into the gunner's face, is by no means a contemptible exercise of the art of shooting. From many of these Mediterranean sea-caves, at the first shout, or rattle of the oars, a cloud of Shags will dash out or drop like stones from the rock-ledges into the sea, a pair of Blue Rock-Thrushes will set up notes of very musical defiance, a few White-bellied and Common Swifts, and perhaps a Kestrel or two, will rush out with the Doves, and keep screaming around, and occasionally a Seal will glide from its resting-place and, passing under the boat, show its head at a respectful distance out at sea. On the only occasion on which I visited a cave on the English coast in the hope of finding some Rock-Doves, we discovered nothing more interesting than a few males of our own species in a state of nature, a bundle of marine fern, and an empty beer-bottle. Mr. H. Saunders states

that he met with immense flocks of this Dove in the neighbourhood of the Sierra Nevada, but I cannot recall an instance of having noticed it at more than the distance of a mile or two from the sea. In all the localities in which I have met with this species it is resident, and, so far as I have observed, it generally feeds within a short distance of its accustomed haunts. Although the Rock-Dove generally nests on the ledges of caves, I have found the eggs more than once laid upon the ground, with very scanty bedding, amongst large stones, and we found several nests amongst the extraordinary chaos of rocks that lie scattered in masses in the Straits of Bonifacio, in situations easily reached without leaving our boat. In one or two instances I found fragments of samphire, sorrel, and wild cabbage in the crops of this bird, but their usual food appears to consist mainly of the seeds of various weeds and, when they can get it, of corn. The only birds with which the Rock-Dove seems habitually to consort, when searching for food, are Starlings and Choughs. I never saw a Rock-Dove perch on tree or bush, in fact, in my experience it seldom frequents any but the most treeless districts. From the fact of having shot well-fledged young Rock-Doves in the beginning of May, and found incubated eggs in August, I presume that these birds breed several times in the year, as is the case with all the European species of the Pigeon-family.



TURTLE–DOVE.

Turtur communis, *Selby.*

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TURTLE DOVE.

Turtur communis, *Selby*.

Litho. W. Greve, Berlin S.W.

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# TURTLE DOVE.

*TURTUR COMMUNIS, Selby.*

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Turtur communis, *Selby*, Nat. Libr., Ornith. v. pp. 153, 171 (1835); *Yarr.* ed. 4, iii. p. 21.
Columba turtur, *Naum.* vi. p. 233; *Macg.* i. p. 291; *Hewitson*, i. p. 275.
Turtur vulgaris, *Dresser*, vii. p. 39.

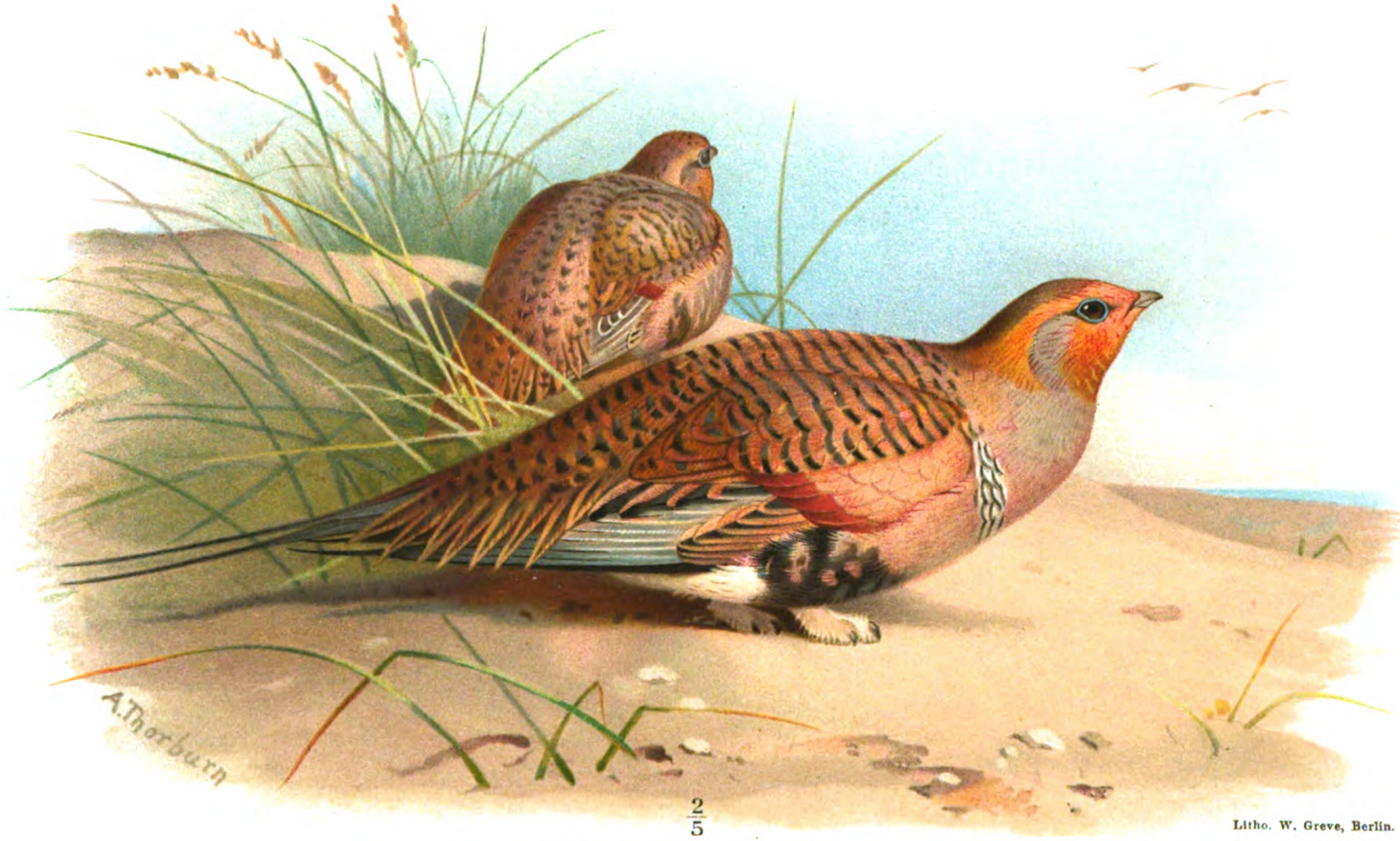
*Tourterelle*, French; *Turtel-taube*, German; *Tortola*, Spanish.

This species has for many years been extending its range to the northward in our Islands, and is now a well-known and common summer visitor to many English districts in which it was virtually unknown before the middle of the present century. I have met with it in all of the counties south of the Thames that I have visited, and, so far as my recollection serves me, in nearly all of those between that river and the Trent, but I have very little acquaintance with the western midlands. With us in Northamptonshire the Turtle Dove generally arrives in considerable numbers during the first ten days of May, and soon makes its presence known by its peculiar guttural note, very distinct from that of the other British members of the Dove family. The nest is

a simple platform of a few twigs, and is, to my knowledge, frequently completed in two days: the favourite sites in the locality with which I am best acquainted are our old whitethorn trees and willows, but the nest may be often found in fir-plantations, hazel-copse, and other places, generally well concealed, and at no great height from the ground, though there are occasional exceptions to both of these rules. The flight of this bird is rapid and extremely graceful, and in "twisting" when pursued by a bird of prey, the Turtle Dove is at least equal to what Dove-slayers call the "Blue-Rock." The food of this Dove consists of seeds of many kinds and the leaves of clover and vetches; turnip-seed is, I think, its favourite diet, it will also devour the berries of the mountain-ash.

These birds generally leave us before the middle of September, and sometimes congregate to a certain extent before their departure. In all parts of the Mediterranean coasts with which I am acquainted the Turtle Dove is a very common summer migrant, but I never met with it anywhere in such abundance as in Cyprus, during the month of May. A great many of this species have come aboard of my yacht in the Mediterranean in stiff breezes at various times during their vernal migrations, and I have seen more than one fall exhausted into the sea, after flying about us for some time, apparently afraid to alight. In Spain the passage of the Turtle Dove is awaited and attended upon by native sportsmen with nearly as much eagerness as that of the Quail, and in the neighbourhood of Seville a very great number are annually killed in spring by persons

clad in green, and ambushed amongst the willows that fringe the watercourses. The flesh of this bird is good, and, in my opinion, superior to that of the travelling Quails during the Spring migration. In captivity I have found the Turtle Dove restless, pugnacious with other species, and promiscuously amorous and troublesome, but in his natural state I hold him as eminently charming and worthy of all possible protection.

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Litho. W. Greve, Berlin.

PALLAS'S SAND-GROUSE.

Syrrhaptes paradoxus *(Pall.)*.

# PALLAS'S SAND-GROUSE.

*SYRRHAPTES PARADOXUS* (*Pall.*).

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Tetrao paradoxa, *Pall.*, Reise Russ. Reichs, ii. App. p. 712 (1773).
Syrrhaptes paradoxus, *Yarr.* ed. 4, iii. p. 31; *Dresser*, vii. p. 75.

*Syrrhapte paradoxal*, French; *Steppen-Huhn*, German.

I must preface my remarks upon this beautiful wanderer from Asia by confessing that I have no personal acquaintance whatever with it in a wild state, and will therefore endeavour to the best of my ability to summarize in a few lines the mass of records relating to its appearances in the United Kingdom, and beg my readers to understand that, where not otherwise specified, I quote from my friend Professor Newton's article in the 'Ibis' of 1864, from which it appears that the earliest recorded occurrence of this species in England took place early in July 1859, at Walpole, St. Peter's, Norfolk; two more were seen, and one of them shot near Tremadoc, Carnarvonshire, on the 9th of the same month; and another was killed at New Romney, Kent, in November of the same year. In 1863 the earliest record of appearance is that of a flock of fourteen, out of which three were secured, near

Thropton on the coast of Northumberland on May 21; after this date the records come thick and fast from England, Scotland, and Ireland till about midsummer, and continue through the following months till November 28, when a specimen was killed near Warrington.

I do not refer to the vast number of continental occurrences recorded by Professor Newton, but may state with regard to the British Islands that the Sand-Grouse in 1863 reached Unst, in Shetland, to the north, Eastbourne, Slapton, and Scilly to the south, and Navan, co. Donegal, to the west. The editor of the 4th edition of Yarrell's 'British Birds,' vol. iii. p. 35, states that a few individuals lingered in the Wild West through the autumn and winter; but that even there, by February 1864 the last of the invaders of 1863 had succumbed.

We do not hear of this species in our country again till 1872, when, according to the authority last quoted, a few were reported from Northumberland and Ayrshire in May and June, and in October 1876 two were shot near Kilcock, co Wexford. Of the great invasion of 1888 my readers are no doubt well aware, and as we are hoping for full details concerning it from the same able pen that described that of 1863, I will only say that it far exceeded the first in numbers, and that in at least two well-authenticated instances young birds were hatched out by their parents under natural conditions in Scotland (*cf.* 'Ibis,' April 1890, pp. 207–214, pl. vii.).

For details of the habits of this singular bird in its

native haunts in the steppes of Asia, and the spread of its invasions on the continent of Europe, I must refer my readers to the authors from whom I have so freely quoted above; from the accounts given me by friends who had the good fortune to meet with these Sand-Grouse in 1888 and 1889, it would appear that although generally shy and wary, they were in certain instances remarkably tame, and permitted a close approach, that they are very swift in flight, that they were often mistaken for Golden Plovers, and that their food consists of various small seeds.

The eggs are said to be three in number, laid on scratchings in the sand in April or May, elliptical in shape, and stone-buff blotched with purple-brown in colour. I received seven of these birds alive in 1888, but only one of them was an *authentic British* specimen; I am not certain as to whence the others were originally obtained, but have some reason to believe that they were taken in nets on the north coast of France; they thrive well in the open air during the summer, except during a continuance of wet weather, but we found it necessary to house them in the winter. They are peaceable birds and agree well with the two species of European Sand-Grouse (*Pterocles arenarius* and *P. alchata*), whose habits exactly resemble their own; they are continually uttering a sort of crooning chuckle, and are very fond of scratching and dusting in sand or ashes. From the peculiar formation of their feet they naturally prefer a flat surface; their movements, even on clipped turf, are very awkward. My birds, although by no means exceedingly wild, have not

become really tame, but this is very probably owing to their having a good range and means of concealment; in hot weather they scratch little cavities in the gravel in their aviary and bask in them, often lying over on one side, with the free wing more or less elevated, to allow the heat to reach their flanks.

The Act by which the Sand-Grouse are now protected in this country, although it came into force too late to be of much avail in putting a stop to the wanton and useless massacre of these birds, was humane and well intentioned as far as it goes. But a vast amount of nonsense has been written about the Sand-Grouse as a valuable addition to our British *game*-birds; I imagine that this has arisen from the application of the word "Grouse" to this species, as it has none of the qualities of a game-bird, and it is most improbable that in the most favourable circumstance and under the most strict protection it would ever become really naturalized in a country so eminently unsuited to its habits as our own; but why, may I ask in the name of common sense, should a special Act be required for the protection of a harmless and very beautiful bird? There can only be one answer—that the greed of bird-dealers and bird-collectors renders an enactment of this sort absolutely necessary; and the only fault that I have to find with this one is that its operation is so limited as to time that in all probability the next visitors of this most interesting species to Great Britain will be more ruthlessly destroyed than their predecessors.

CAPERCAILLIE.

Tetrao urogallus, *Linn.*

# CAPERCAILLIE.

## *TETRAO UROGALLUS, Linn.*

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Tetrao urogallus, *Linn.* S. N. i. p. 273 (1766) ; *Naum.* vi. p. 277 ; *Macg.* i. p. 138 ; *Yarr.* ed. 4, iii. p. 45 ; *Dresser,* vii. p. 223.
Wood Grouse, *Hewitson,* i. p. 277.

*Coq de bruyère* et *Poule de bruyère,* French ; *Auer-hahn,* German ; *Gallo de bosque, Faisan,* Spanish.

My personal acquaintance with this fine game-bird is so very slight that I feel hardly justified in referring to it. I only once stayed for a few days in a Scottish locality inhabited by the Capercaillie, and as those days were chiefly spent in pursuit of Red Grouse on the open moors, I only obtained casual glimpses of two or three of the present species as we passed through the fir-woods. I had, however, pursued the Capercaillie with very meagre success on the Swiss side of the Jura range before I ever saw one in Scotland, and in later years saw and heard a few in the mountain forests of the province of Santander, on the frontier of Asturias.

Although the Capercaillie has increased and multiplied greatly in the first locality above mentioned, as in

many other districts in Scotland, I am given to understand that it is now exceedingly scarce in the Jura, whilst in the north of Spain I do not think that it ever was really abundant. With regard to the existence of this species as an indigenous bird in Great Britain and Ireland, I must refer my readers to the 4th edition of 'Yarrell.' I gather from that work that the Capercaillie was virtually extinct in our Islands at the end of the last century, and that it was not till 1837 that it was successfully re-established in Scotland by importations from Sweden. In 1863 the head gamekeeper at Taymouth estimated the number of these birds on the Breadalbane estate under his supervision at 2000.

To enumerate the localities in Scotland in which our bird now exists and thrives would be tiresome, and quite out of place in this work. The whole subject has been most ably treated of by Mr. Harvie-Brown in his work 'On the Capercaillie in Scotland' (1879); and it is more than probable that many of my readers know a great deal more of this bird in Scotland and abroad than I can tell them without plunder from better informed writers than myself. Although fir-woods are undoubtedly the favourite and usual haunts of this species, we found it in Northern Spain in a region where coniferous trees are, if they exist at all, exceedingly scarce, and where the food of the "Faisan," as the present species is there called, consists of various berries, ants, beech-mast, acorns, and the buds and young shoots of birch, alder, and hazel. In Scotland during the winter months this species seems to prefer the leaves or "needles" of the Scotch fir to any other

diet. The distended crop of a fine male, sent to me from Perthshire, contained a tightly compressed mass of these needles, that on being liberated, well-nigh filled an average-sized "chimney-pot" hat. From the standard authorities I learn that the "Great Cock" is more abundant in Scandinavia and Northern Russia than elsewhere; but it is to be met with, in numbers probably varying with the amount of human protection afforded, throughout the coniferous forests of Northern and Central Germany, Switzerland, Austria, North Italy, and both sides of the Pyrenees. In the Cantabrian range, as I have already stated, it is not confined to the fir-growing districts. It occurs in the Carpathians, but I cannot obtain any authentic evidence of its existence in any part of European Turkey, and am disposed to think that the many rumours that have reached me of the existence of "Wild Turkeys" in that country must, in spite of solemn asseverations to the contrary, really have reference to the Great Bustard. The various methods of shooting Capercaillie in Scotland and on the Continent have been so fully treated of by practised hands that a repetition concerning this subject would be quite superfluous in a picture-book.

Many hundreds of this species are annually sent from the ports of Northern Europe to our markets during the winter in a frozen condition. The flesh of the young birds is, in my opinion, superior to that of Blackgame, and I have found that even the old cocks may, by judicious culinary treatment, be rendered into very palatable food.

The drawing, from which my plate was taken, was

excellently copied by Mr. Thorburn from a beautiful oil-picture by Mr. Wolf, now in my possession, and represents the male bird during the performance of his love-antics. These much resemble those of a domestic Turkey of the same sex, but are accompanied by a very remarkable love-song, quite impossible to describe, but never to be forgotten by those who have once heard it. When this frenzy possesses the bird, it is possible, by choosing the right moment, to approach within easy gun-shot and bring him down from his perch, but the previous "stalk" has to be carried on with extreme caution, as the old male Capercaillie is an exceedingly wary and wideawake bird when in full command of his senses. This bird is, in my experience, easy to rear, but not easy to keep alive in an ordinary aviary, as it requires an extensive range, and during the summer a variety of food that is by no means always easy to procure. The Capercaillie frequently interbreeds with the Blackgame; the male hybrids are most beautiful birds, but, as is the case with the majority of cross-bred birds, are sterile. A good figure of one of these hybrids is given in the article on the Capercaillie in the 4th edition of 'Yarrell.'

# BLACK GROUSE.

*TETRAO TETRIX, Linn.*

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Tetrao tetrix, *Linn.* S. N. i. p. 274 (1766) ; *Naum.* vi. p. 324 ; *Macg.* i. p. 145 ; *Hewitson,* i. p. 278 ; *Yarr.* ed. 4, iii. p. 60 ; *Dresser,* vii. p. 205.

*Coq de bruyère, Faisan,* French ; *Birkhahn,* German ; *Cua furcada,* Catalan.

This fine and well-known species is resident and more or less common in most of the Scottish and many of our English counties, but from all accounts is gradually decreasing in numbers in all localities. It is not found in Ireland, and it appears that the many attempts made to establish Black-game in that country have hitherto resulted in failure. On the continent of Europe this bird has a wide range, extending, according to the 4th edition of Yarrell's 'British Birds,' from 69° N. lat. to the Apennines, and from South Holland to the Volga. I never met with it in Spain, but have good reason to believe that it is found on the Spanish side of the Pyrenees in Catalonia. I could hear nothing of it in the Cantabrian mountains, where the Capercaillie is well known.

1/3

E. Neale del. J. Smit lith.

Mintern Bros. imp.

BLACK GROUSE.

Tetrao Tetrix, *Linn.*

1/3

Litho. W. Greve, Berlin.

## RED GROUSE.

Lagopus scoticus *(Lath.)*.

# RED GROUSE.

*LAGOPUS SCOTICUS* (*Lath.*).

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Tetrao scoticus, *Lath.* Ind. Orn. ii. p. 641 (1790); *Hewitson,* i. p. 279.
Lagopus scoticus, *Macg.* i. p. 169; *Yarr.* ed. 4, iii. p. 73; *Dresser,* vii. p. 165.

Although I have had my full share of days on the heather in pursuit of Grouse in Scotland, England, and Ireland, I should find it very difficult to add, from my personal acquaintance with the bird, anything worthy of record to the innumerable articles already published with regard to it from every possible point of view,—ornithologic, poetic, politico-economic, sporting, and culinary. To most of my readers the fact that the Red Grouse is the only bird that we can claim as exclusively British, is probably well known; all sportsmen are well aware of the fact that its principal food consists of the shoots of the common ling and heath, with various moor-berries, and that, although many Grouse come down to glean on the oat-stubbles in autumn, they seldom voluntarily leave their native moors for any considerable distance, except in extraordinary stress of weather. It is quite unnecessary here to dilate upon

the enormous sums paid as rent for Grouse-shootings, the vast increase in the numbers of this bird under strict preservation, the ravages of the Grouse-disease, and the attractions of shooting over dogs, or "driving;" but as a lover of birds in general, I would put in a word of protest against the destruction, I may say the extermination, of many of our most interesting native birds in favour of the Grouse; I allude specially to the Golden Eagle, the Peregrine Falcon, the Merlin, and the Buzzard. I am well aware of the futility of attempting to protect these and many other birds from the greed of collectors, and it cannot be denied that the Falcon levies its tribute from the moorlands, but I do not like to believe that there are many who deserve the name of sportsmen who would deliberately connive at the death of either Falcon or Eagle for the sake of a few more Grouse or pounds sterling. I know that some few enlightened proprietors and lessees of Deer-forests and Grouse-moors protect the Golden Eagle, but I fear that my favourite Peregrine for the most part meets with scant mercy, and in season and out of season I will not cease to plead for her, and maintain her hereditary natural rights to her quarry. In my opinion half of the intense enjoyment of a day on the moors would be gone were it not for the chance at least of seeing other birds than the objects of pursuit, and the opportunities of observing their habits; but I fear that, even amongst those who understand "sport" in its true sense, I shall meet with but few who can sympathize with me, and to those who have no real appreciation of the term, it is useless to appeal.

The most pernicious natural enemy of the Grouse in Scotland and Ireland is the Grey Crow, but I should be sorry to preach a crusade of *extermination* even against this notorious egg-stealer, whose operations on a Grouse-moor would be very considerably curtailed by the presence of a pair or two of resident Peregrines. The plumage of Grouse from different localities varies so greatly that to attempt to figure even a few of them would exceed any reasonable limits, and I think that my readers will allow that the Plate represents a fairly typical male bird.

# PTARMIGAN.

## *LAGOPUS MUTUS* (*Montin*).

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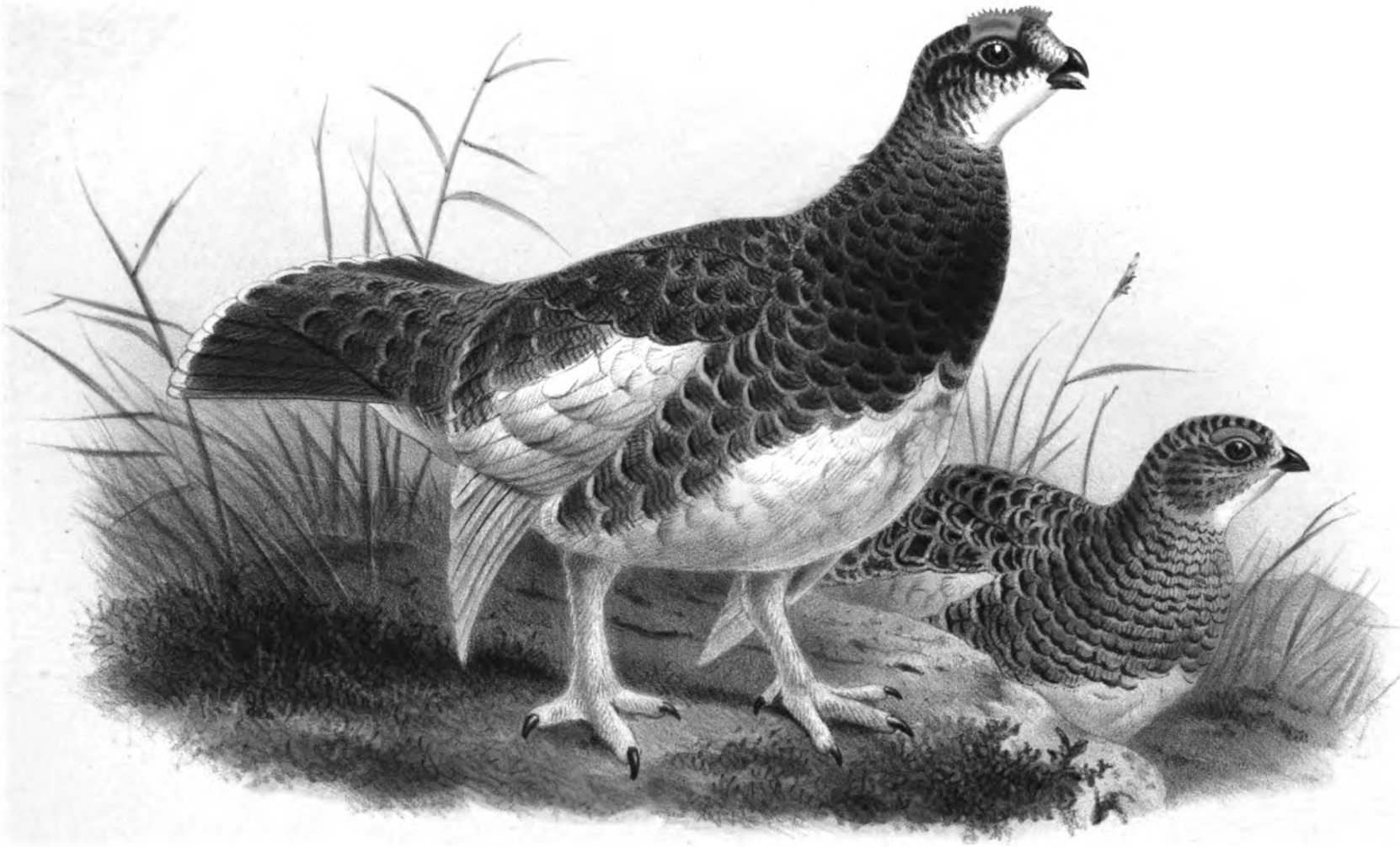
Tetrao mutus, *Montin*, Phys. Sälsk. Handl. p. 155 (1770).
Tetrao lagopus, *Linn.* S. N. i. p. 274 (1776); *Naum.* vi. p. 401; *Hewitson*, i. p. 280.
Lagopus cinereus, *Macg.* i. p. 187.
Lagopus mutus, *Yarr.* ed. 4, iii. p. 83; *Dresser*, vii. p. 157.

*Perdrix blanche, Gélinotte blanche*, French; *Alpen-Schneehuhn*, German; *Perdiz blanca*, Spanish.

This species is now only to be met with in Great Britain amongst the summits of the highest mountain-ranges in Scotland; the change from the breeding-plumage depicted on Plate 10 into the grey dress of Plate 11 is effected by a complete moult or change of feathers, whilst the pure white of the winter is acquired by change of colour in the old feathers.

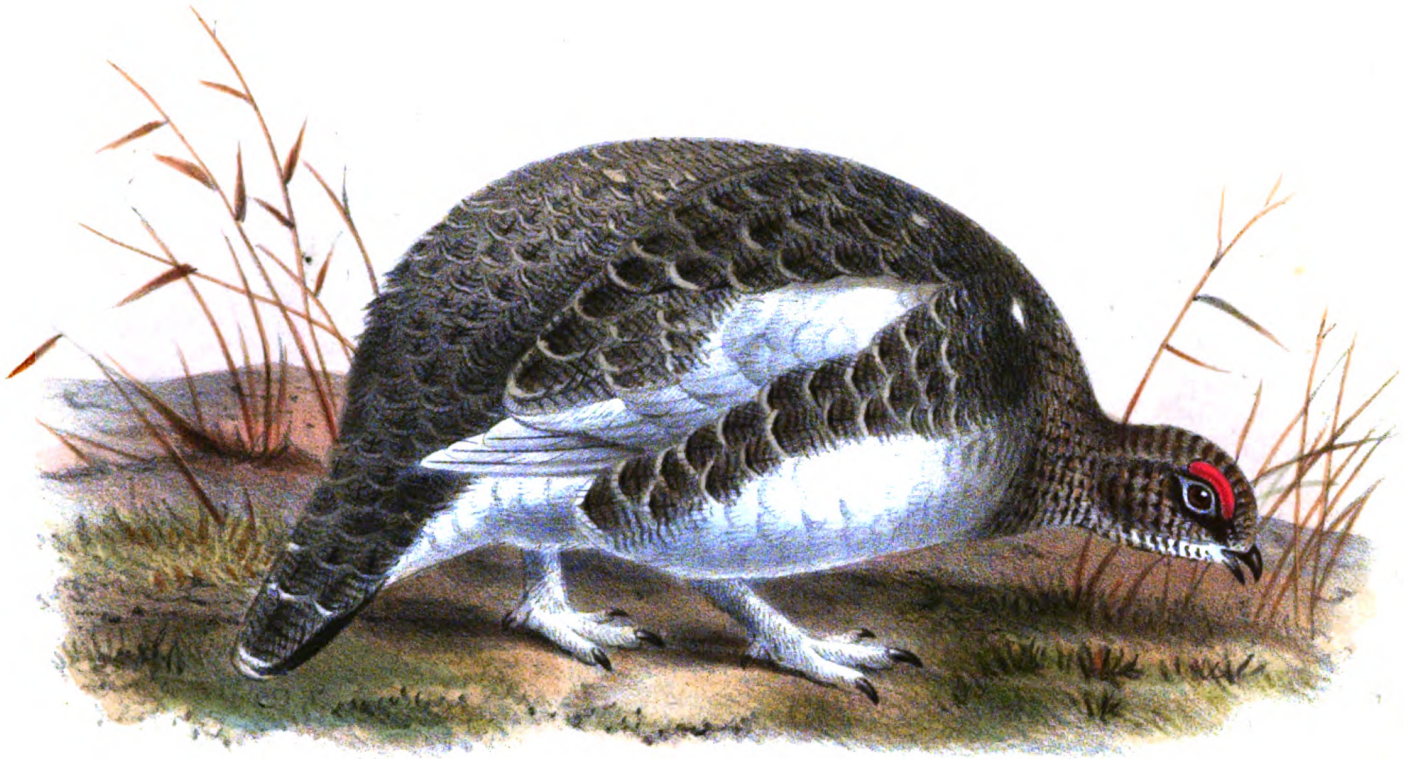
The Ptarmigan appears to brave the most severe stress of winter weather in its alpine haunts, rarely coming down into the heather below them; its food consists of mountain-berries of different species, and the shoots of various alpine plants. The alarm-note of the old male is a very remarkable guttural croak. As a rule these birds are not difficult of approach, and merely attempt to escape observation by crouching amongst the lichen-covered fragments of rock which form their favourite resort.



F. Neale del. J. Smit. lith.

Minter Bros. imp.

PTARMIGAN, (SUMMER).
Lagopus mutus (*Montin*).



E. Neale del. J. Smit lith.

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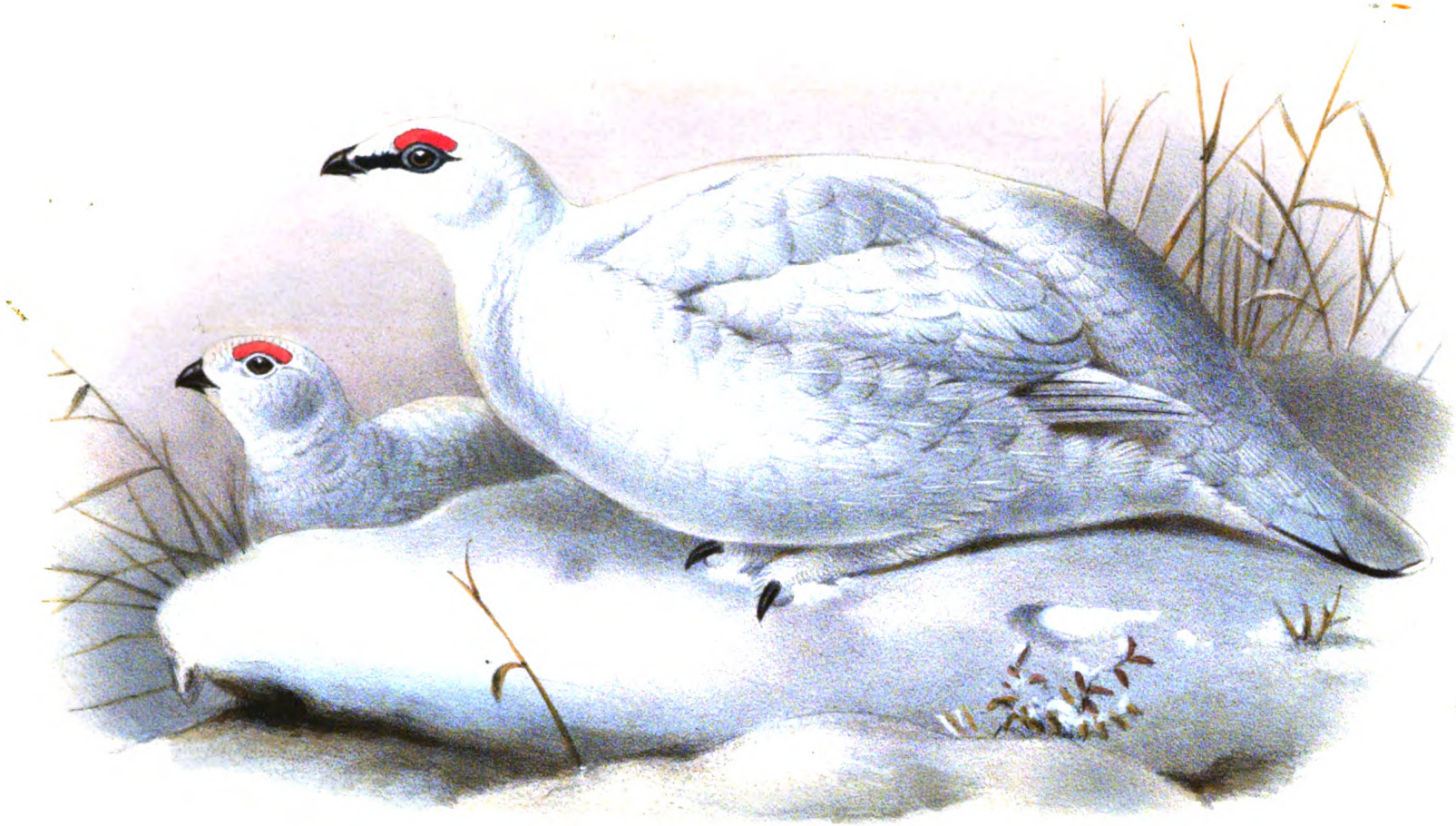
Mintern Bros. imp.

PTARMIGAN, (AUTUMN).

Lagopus mutus (*Montin*).



E Neale del. J Smit lith.

PTARMIGAN, (WINTER).

Lagopus mutus (*Montin*).

Millcan Press imp.

# PHEASANT.

## *PHASIANUS COLCHICUS, Linn.*

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Phasianus colchicus, *Linn.* S. N. i. p. 271; *Naum.* vi. p. 433; *Macg.* i. p. 114; *Hewitson,* i. p. 276; *Yarr.* ed. 4, iii. p. 91; *Dresser,* vii. p. 85.

*Fasan,* French; *Edelfasan,* German.

A naturalized species, having been introduced most likely by the Romans, and certainly known in England before the Norman Conquest. In its pure form, as represented on the Plate, unmixed with any other race, it remained until the close of the last century, since which time it has become so completely blended with the Chinese Pheasant (*P. torquatus*) then introduced, that, except in a few places, pure-bred birds are now hardly ever seen.

*P. colchicus* has also crossed freely with the Japanese *P. versicolor*, and even with the very distinct *P. reevesi* of China, and with other recently introduced species.

The true home of the Pheasant appears to have been the eastern shore of the Black Sea, whence, since classical times, it has spread westwards. [O. S.]

Litho. W. Greve, Berlin.

**PHEASANT.**

**Phasianus colchicus** *(Linn.).*

# CHINESE RING-NECKED PHEASANT.

*PHASIANUS TORQUATUS, J. F. Gmelin.*

---

Phasianus torquatus, *J. F. Gmelin*, S. N. i. p. 742.

Introduced into this country from China about the end of the last century, and now so mixed with *P. colchicus* that hardly any birds are found that do not show some evidence of the cross.

The Plate represents the true *P. torquatus*.

[O. S.]

1/4

Litho. W. Greve, Berlin.

CHINESE RING-NECKED PHEASANT.

Phasianus torquatus, *J. F. Gmelin.*

# COMMON OR GREY PARTRIDGE.

## *PERDIX CINEREA, Lath.*

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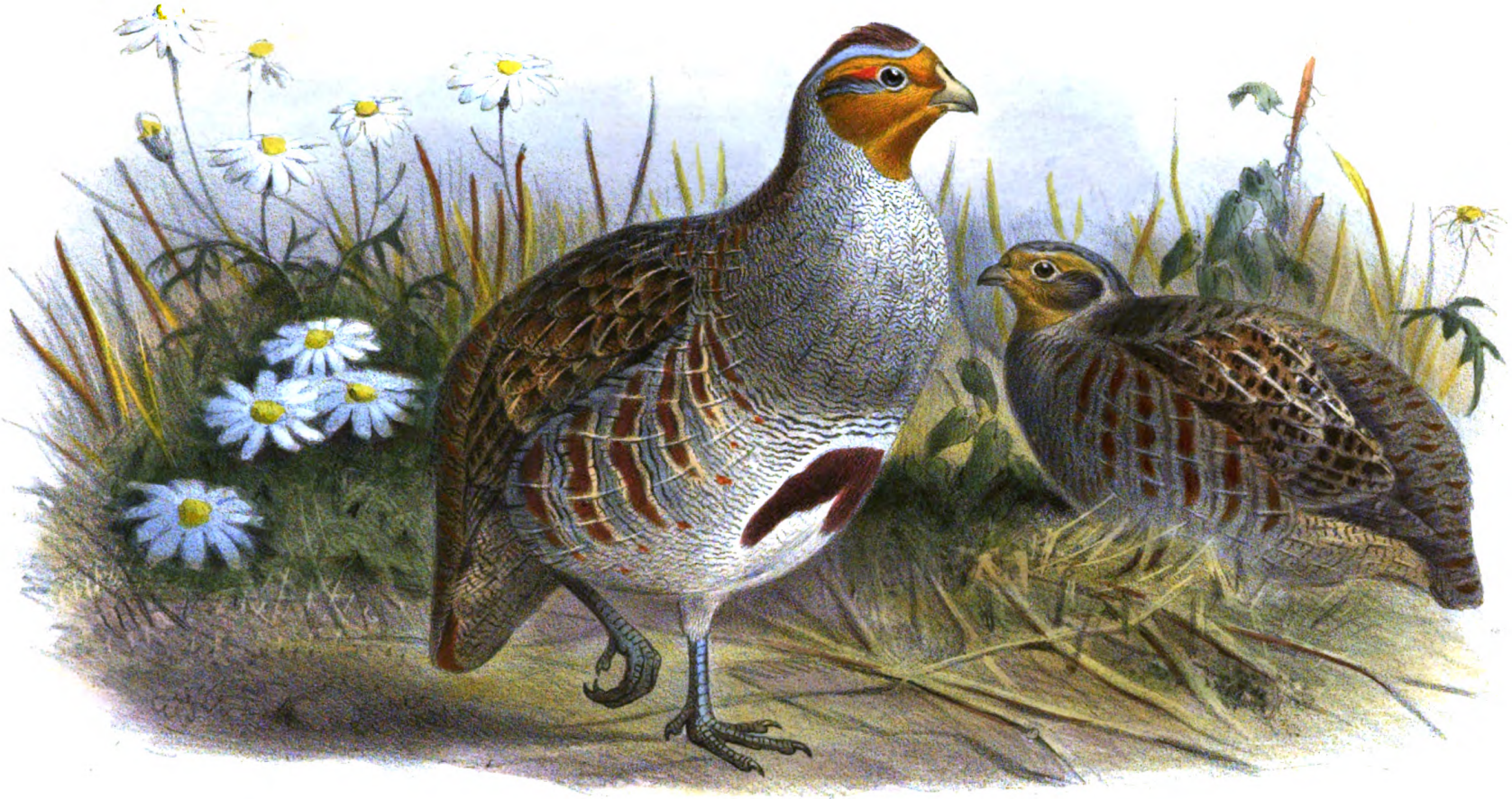
Tetrao perdix, *Linn.* S. N. i. p. 276 (1766).
Perdix cinerea, *Lath.* Gen. Syn. Suppl. pt. 1, p. 290 (1787); *Naum.* vi. p. 477; *Macg.* i. p. 218; *Hewitson,* i. p. 281; *Yarr.* ed. 4, iii. p. 105; *Dresser,* vii. p. 131.

*Perdrix grise,* French; *Reb-Feldhuhn,* German; *Perdiz gris, Pardilla, Fresana,* Spanish.

This well-known bird is to be met with more or less frequently in all parts of Great Britain, except the more remote groups of islands, such as the Shetlands and Outer Hebrides; and is also indigenous, although comparatively scarce, in Ireland. Draining and careful cultivation are very favourable to the increase of this species, and under these conditions and with strict preservation Partridges have, in some of our English counties, become extraordinarily abundant.

The largest bag of these birds, of which I have any record, was made by seven guns on a large estate in Hampshire in four consecutive days of October 1887, and amounted to 4079, of which number 1337 were killed in one day; I need hardly say that these results were obtained by driving.

Our Partridge is found throughout Europe, with the exception of the extreme north-east and south and the islands of the Mediterranean. The plumage and size of this species vary greatly according to locality, and I may say that the subjects of the accompanying Plate were unusually light-coloured specimens.



E Neale del. J. Smut lith.

Mintern Bros. imp.

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COMMON OR GREY PARTRIDGE.

Perdix cinerea, *Lath.*

3-2

# RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE.

*CACCABIS RUFA* (*Linn.*).

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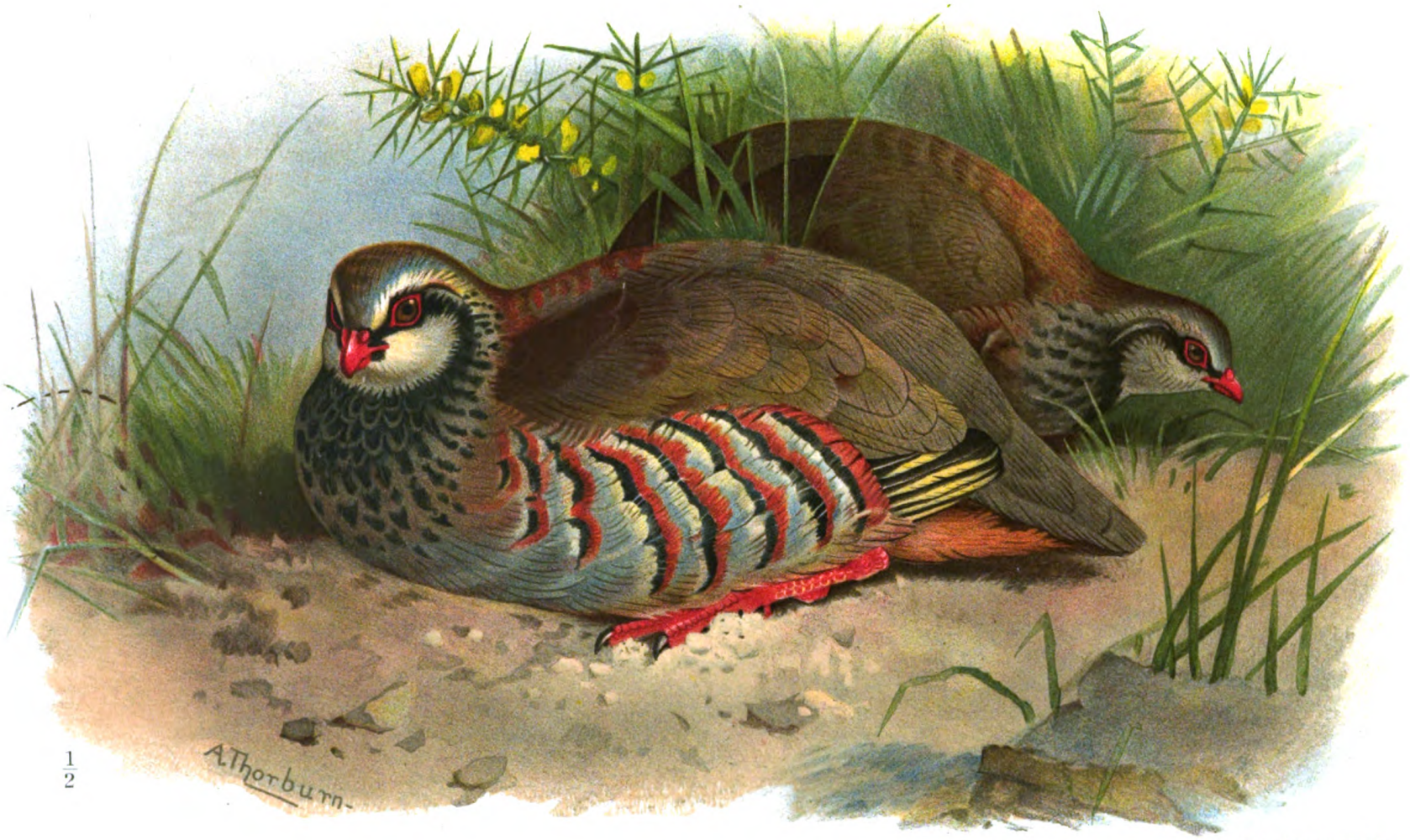
Tetrao rufus, *Linn.* S. N. i. p. 276 (1766).
Perdix rubra, *Naum.* vi. p. 563; *Macg.* i. p. 215.
Perdix rufa, *Hewitson*, i. p. 282.
Caccabis rufa, *Yarr.* ed. 4, iii. p. 115; *Dresser*, vii. p. 103.

*Perdrix rouge*, French; *Roth-Feldhuhn*, German; *Perdiz*, Spanish.

The Red-legged Partridge was introduced into our eastern counties towards the end of the last century, and finding suitable conditions of soil and climate, soon became well established there, and has now spread into many of our English counties. In Spain this species is very abundant; it is found in most parts of France, but is not common in the northern provinces; it is to be met with in Northern Italy, Corsica, Elba, and other islands of the Tuscan Archipelago, not in Sardinia or Sicily, and has not been recorded as occurring out of Europe.

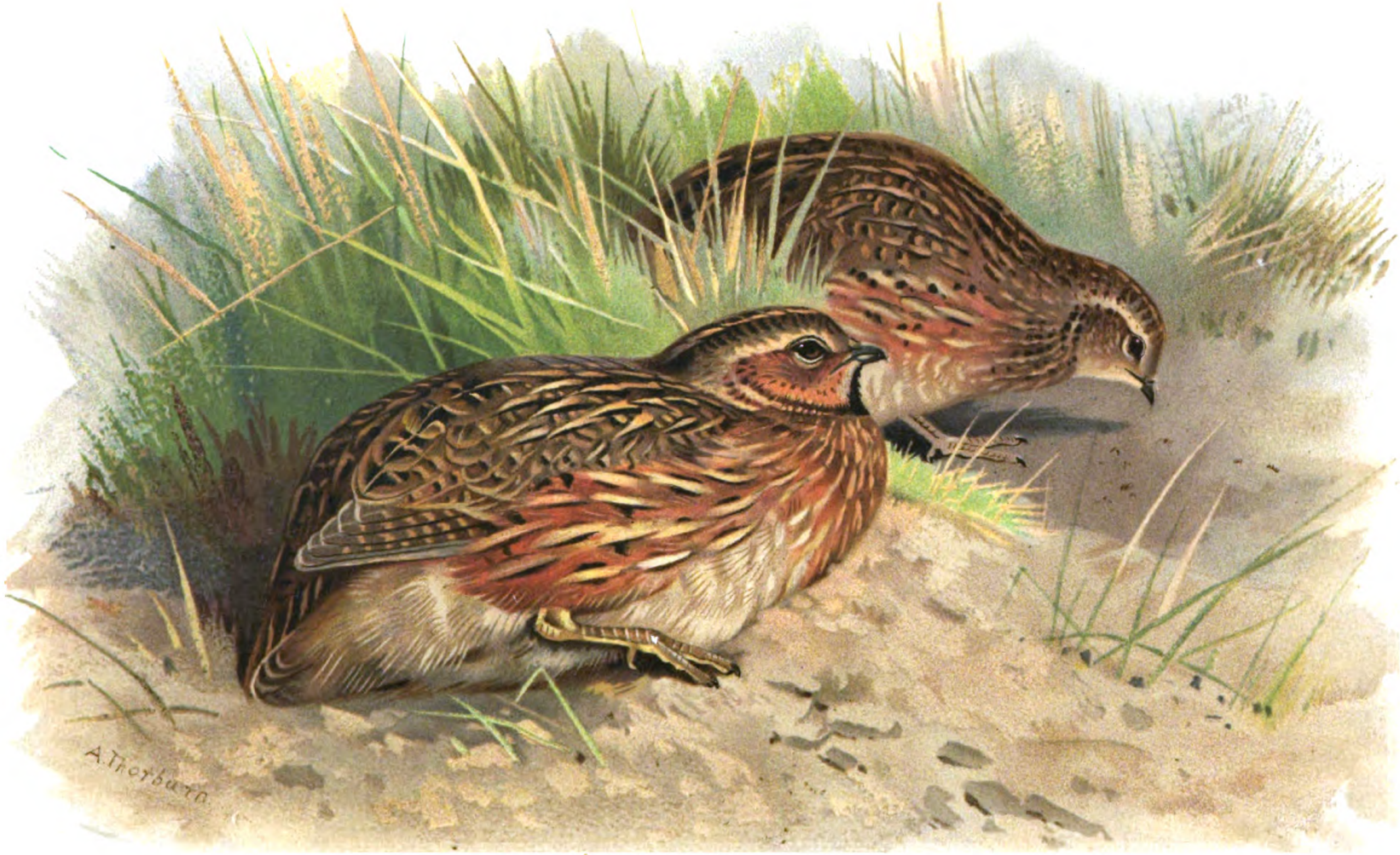



1/2

Litho. W. Greve, Berlin.

# RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE.

Caccabis rufa *(Linn.)*




$\frac{2}{3}$

Litho. W. Greve, Berlin.

# QUAIL.

Coturnix communis *Bonnaterre.*

# QUAIL.

*COTURNIX COMMUNIS, Bonnaterre.*

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Tetrao coturnix, *Linn.* S. N. i. p. 278 (1766).
Coturnix communis, *Bonnaterre,* Encycl. Méth. i. p. 217 (1790); *Yarr.* ed. 4, iii. p. 123; *Dresser,* vii. p. 143.
Perdix coturnix, *Naum.* vi. p. 575.
Coturnix dactylisonans, *Macg.* i. p. 233.
Coturnix vulgaris, *Hewitson,* i. p. 284.

*Caille,* French; *Wachtel,* German; *Codorniz,* Spanish.

Although I am very intimately acquainted with this charming little bird, in its natural state, in captivity, and on the table, it is, I fear, unlikely that I can add much to the knowledge already in possession of those of my readers who have either carried guns on the Mediterranean shores, or read up our standard works on ornithology. In our own country the Quail has been steadily decreasing in numbers for many years past, although it cannot be considered as very rare, and occasionally, as in the present year 1893, we hear of unusual numbers of Quails from all parts of the British Islands. This bird specially loves open country and badly cultivated weed-covered lands. I know of

several districts in England and Ireland where thirty or forty years ago the Quail was comparatively abundant, but is now virtually extinct as a breeding species. I attribute this disappearance in a considerable measure to improvement in cleaning the land for tillage, and also to enclosure; but the main cause of decrease throughout Northern Europe is without doubt the capture of thousands of Quails on the shores of the Mediterranean during their vernal migration. To give some idea of the extent of the destruction of Quails caused by netting in these districts, I quote from Yarrell to the effect that 160,000 have been taken on the little island of Capri, in the Bay of Naples, in a single season; and in May 1874 I was informed by one of the officers of a steamer then in the harbour of Messina that they had 12,000 Quails on board alive, all consigned for the London markets. These birds are conveyed, very closely packed, in long flat cages, with only just room for the prisoners to get to the feeding-troughs. It is certainly remarkable what a small percentage of deaths occur on the voyage and subsequent journey across France by railroad. The birds when first caught are thin, and fatten very quickly on millet and other grain; but, in my opinion, a cage-fattened spring Quail at its best is not to be compared for delicacy of flavour to those killed in August and September in their native haunts, and I consider that the sale of this species alive or dead should be prohibited throughout Europe between May 1st and August 20th. I have frequently observed notices of the occurrence of Quails during the winter months in this country, in the

'Field' and other publications, with expressions of surprise on the part of the writer; but, in my experience, wherever this species breeds, a few always remain through the cold weather; I have found this to be the case in Ireland, S.W. Lancashire, the Cambridgeshire fens, Northamptonshire, Spain, Sardinia, Sicily, Tunis, and Epirus. In Lancashire, where I have seen more Quails than in any other part of England, I observed that they especially affected oat-stubbles on land that had been reclaimed from its original condition of peat-bog or "moss" by deep drainage, but as the land became dryer and the weeds decreased the Quails gradually disappeared, and, as regards the locality to which I am specially referring, I have not heard of the occurrence of a Quail during the last ten years. So much has been written about the abundance of this bird on the spring-passage throughout the countries bordered by the Mediterranean that it would be quite superfluous to go into details on the subject; I will only, then, state that in the Ionian Islands the spring flights of Quails are often perfectly marvellous, whilst in some years very few take that route of northward migration. The nest of this bird is a simple scratching of the ground with a few dried bents as lining, and in my experience is generally situated in grass, lucerne, or common clover, very often in Spain on the grassy borders of a vast wheat-field, but seldom actually amongst growing corn of that kind. I have, however, found several nests in patches of barley and rye. I never found more than ten eggs in a nest, but am well aware that larger numbers are frequently to be met with. I consider Quail-

shooting at the legitimate time of year as very good sport, as the birds fly very fast, generally lie closely, and in August, September, and October are well worth powder and shot. I must confess that in my younger days I have eagerly pursued and shot many Quails on their spring-passage, but I repent of this, as every bird killed at that time of year entails the loss of a bevy, and, in my opinion, they are hardly worth the trouble of cooking. In Spain the Quail is a very favourite cage-bird, and every town and village resounds with its call, of which the best rendering in English words is, I think, "wet my lips," for the male, and "phu wee" for the female. In captivity these birds thrive well, if plentifully supplied with fresh water and sand or fine gravel; they become exceedingly tame, but the males are proverbially pugnacious, hot-blooded, and amorous to a very extraordinary degree. Common chickweed is the favourite food of the Quail, but no small grain comes amiss to it and many "green stuffs" are eagerly devoured.

# CORN-CRAKE OR LAND-RAIL.

*CREX PRATENSIS, Bechst.*

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Crex pratensis, *Bechstein*, Ornith. Taschenb. p. 337 (1803); *Naum.* ix. p. 496; *Macg.* iv. p. 527; *Hewitson*, ii. p. 372; *Yarr.* ed. 4, iii. p. 137; *Dresser*, vii. p. 291.

*Râle des prés*, French; *Wiesen-Ralle, Wachtel-König*, German; *Rey de las Codornices*, Spanish.

I have advisedly put the name by which this bird is best known at the head of this article, as I have no doubt that many who are perfectly well acquainted with it as the Corn-Crake are not aware that it has another name; whilst to many the word Corn-Crake simply conveys a curious sound produced on summer evenings by an unseen and mysterious creature that seems to be possessed of the power of being in different places at the same time.

This bird arrives in England generally about the third week of April, and, from that season, is to be heard in all suitable localities for the following three months; in most of our English arable and meadow lands the Corn-Crake is seldom to be seen unless specially searched for with dogs; but in the west of

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## CORN-CRAKE, OR LAND-RAIL.

Crex pratensis, *Bechst.*

Ireland I have more than once seen one or two of these birds running about unconcernedly on the highroads, and frequently noticed them perched or running on the tops of stone walls. The favourite summer haunts of the Corn-Crake are water-meadows, where they find an abundance of their favourite diet—slugs, small snails, and worms and insects, and good concealment for their nests, which are very simple constructions of dry grasses. The eggs, of which I consider nine as the average complement, are of a creamy white, thickly spotted and blotched with rust-colour and grey. As soon as the meadow-grass is mown the Corn-Crakes resort to overgrown ditch-sides and fields of standing corn or clover; this last-named crop is at all times a usual resort, and the ease and rapidity with which these birds glide and double amongst the stems of a dense second crop of clover must be seen to be believed. Although when forced to take wing the Corn-Crake flies slowly with hanging legs and soon drops again, the bird is capable of swift and long-sustained flight; it is also possessed of considerable climbing power.

In Northamptonshire, although our meadows are generally alive with these birds in the summer, it is very seldom that our total bag of them in the Partridge shooting-season reaches to more than ten or twelve, though they usually remain with us throughout September, and not uncommonly till the middle of October. In our neighbourhood occurrences after the end of the latter month are very exceptional, but very many instances of their stay well into the winter are on record from various parts of the three kingdoms, especially in

Ireland, where the Corn-Crake is extremely abundant. The harsh cry of this bird is difficult to render orthographically, but is easily imitated by a sharp turn of the handle of a stiff fishing-reel, or by passing a sharp-edged piece of wood across the teeth of a hair-comb.

This bird, if captured alive, will feign death in a manner unrivalled by any bird of my acquaintance, except the Wryneck. Roughly speaking the Corn-Crake may be said to occur in summer throughout Europe; its principal winter-quarters are said to be in South Africa. No better bird-meat exists than the breast of a fat Corn-Crake in September.

# SPOTTED CRAKE.

*CREX PORZANA* (*Linn.*).

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Rallus porzana, *Linn.* S. N. i. p. 262 (1766).
Crex porzana, *Naum.* ix. p. 523; *Macg.* iv. p. 535; *Hewitson,* ii. p. 375.
Porzana maruetta, *Yarr.* ed. 4, iii. p. 143; *Dresser,* vii. p. 267.

*Poule d'eau-marouette,* French; *Gefleckte Rohr-Huhn,* German; *Polluela,* Spanish.

This bird is a tolerably common spring visitor to many of the marshy districts of the three kingdoms, arriving in March and migrating southwards in September and October; many remain in our south-western counties throughout the winter, and when that season is tolerably mild a few linger in their breeding-localities in other parts of the country. From my own experience I consider that in general habits this bird closely resembles the Corn-Crake, but is more strictly aquatic than that species, though much less so than the smaller European Crakes and the Water-Rail. I have generally met with this Crake in England in October, haunting open marshy meadow-land on the sedgy banks of streams and ditches, rarely amongst reeds in the

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## SPOTTED CRAKE.

Crex porzana *(Linn.)*.

autumn, although in the breeding-season it frequents the reed-beds.

The late Mr. John Hancock, of Newcastle-on-Tyne, informed me that, in an egg-collecting expedition to Whittlesea and Yaxley fens in 1843, he and his companion met with the nests and eggs of this species on the reed-grown shores of the mere, in numbers almost equal to those of the Water-Rail, which was then a very abundant resident in the locality. I need hardly tell my ornithological readers that the celebrated Whittlesea Mere has been drained for more than forty years, and its site is now not more interesting, except for old association's sake to the lover of birds, than any other "reclaimed" district; but it is a remarkable fact that of late years the Spotted Crake has visited the valley of the Nene in the neighbourhood of our home in Northamptonshire very much more frequently than was the case before the draining of our nearest fen-lands, in fact we now look upon this bird as an almost regular annual visitor in August, September, and October. I have not hitherto been able, however, to discover that it has ever bred in our district. From the nature of its autumnal haunts this bird is more easily flushed than the Corn-Crake, but it is, in common with that and all the other species of the Crake family, very averse to taking wing unless hard pressed, although that it certainly does travel on wing without any absolute need for so doing is proved by the fact that several Spotted Crakes have been picked up under telegraph-wires and brought to me more or less mutilated by contact with these obstructions. This bird is a good swimmer, and can dive well

when forced to do so; its flight is comparatively quick and well sustained when it really means travelling to a distance; it is a very noisy bird, and has a variety of cries, of which one, that I take to be the pairing-call, much resembles the single "twit" of the Pied Woodpecker, but is not so loud or harsh. A sudden loud noise, such as a clap of thunder or a gunshot, will often set off all the Crakes in a marsh screaming, twittering, and whistling for some minutes, but this habit is not by any means confined to this species, or indeed to its genus. As I have never myself seen the nest of this bird *in situ*, I must refer my readers for precise details to other writers, and will merely say that the eggs in colour and markings resemble those of the Water-Hen much more than those of the Corn-Crake.

In most of the marshes that border the Mediterranean, at least in the not inconsiderable number of these districts that I have personally visited, this Crake is very abundant on the double passage, and more or less common at other seasons, but I never met with it anywhere in such numbers as in the great swamps of Eastern Sicily, where, no doubt, many are permanently resident.

# LITTLE CRAKE.

*CREX PUSILLA* (*Bechst.*).

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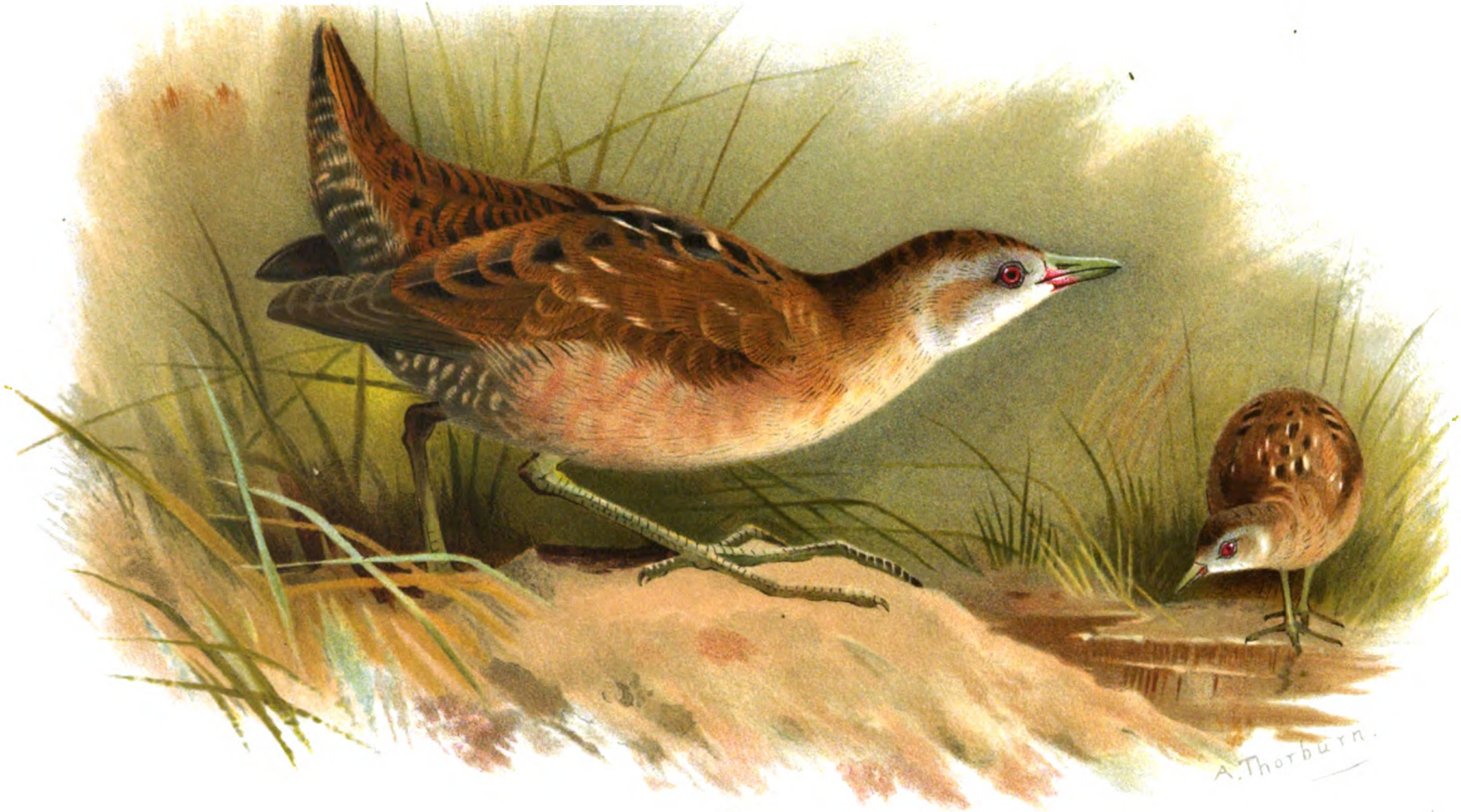
Gallinula pusillus, *Bechst.* Orn. Taschenb. ii. p. 340 (1803).
Crex pusilla, *Naum.* ix. p. 547; *Macg.* iv. p. 541.
Porzana parva, *Yarr.* ed. 4, iii. p. 148; *Dresser,* vii. p. 283.

*Poule d'eau poussin,* French; *Kleines Sumpfhuhn,* German; *Polluela chica,* Spanish.

This Crake is a rare visitor to our country, and, although it appears to have been more frequently met with than Baillon's Crake, I find no record of its having nested in England, as that species undoubtedly has. I have no acquaintance with this bird, whose habits in all probability closely resemble those of its congeners; but it is said to be more strictly aquatic than any other of the true Crake-family.

The figures in the Plate are taken from an adult and an immature bird sent to me from the great marshes in the neighbourhood of Valencia, where this Crake is abundant.

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LITTLE CRAKE.

**Crex pusilla** (*Bechst.*).

CHROMO-LITHO ART STUDIO, LONDON.

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CHROMO-LITHO ART STUDIO, LONDON.

LITTLE CRAKE.

Crex pusilla (*Bechst.*).

A.Thorburn

3/4

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BAILLON'S CRAKE.

Crex bailloni *(Vieillot).*

# BAILLON'S CRAKE.

*CREX BAILLONI* (*Vieill.*).

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Rallus bailloni, *Vieill.* Nouv. Dict. d'Hist. Nat. xxviii. p. 548 (1819).
Crex pygmæa, *Naum.* ix. p. 567.
Crex baillonii, *Macg.* iv. p. 539; *Hewitson,* ii. p. 377.
Porzana bailloni, *Yarr.* ed. 4, iii. p. 154; *Dresser,* vii. p. 275.

*Poule d'eau Baillon,* French; *Zwerg-Sumpfhuhn,* German; *Polluela chica,* Spanish.

This is a rare and irregular visitor to our country, but has been known to breed on more than one occasion in our eastern counties, and it was within my recollection by no means uncommon in many parts of the Netherlands. I have met with Baillon's Crake in the great marshes of Eastern Sicily, where it is common and breeds, and I also obtained it in Cyprus; but my principal acquaintance with this species was formed in the marshes of the lower Guadalquivir, where we found it breeding in great abundance in May 1883. In general habits this Crake much resembles the better known Spotted Crake; but it is decidedly more aquatic and less often to be met with in open marsh-lands than

that bird. The nests that we found were always well concealed amongst the dense masses of reeds and sedge that fringe and often conceal the runs of fresh water that meander through the vast open "marisma,"—a district that in rainy seasons or very high tides is frequently entirely submerged. The nests that I examined were exact miniature copies of those of the common Water-Hen, being loosely composed of reed-leaves, flags, and sedge. The usual full complement of eggs was seven; but we occasionally met with five or six partially "set," and, in once instance, with eight. These eggs vary in colour from a very pale green to a dark olive ground, but are always very closely streaked and spotted with brown. The young birds on leaving the egg are entirely clad with thick jet-black down. Towards evening these birds come out for a short distance from the thick covert that they love so well, and, as far as I could make out, feed largely upon mosquitos and other small insects; but on the slightest alarm they glide back at marvellous speed to the safety of the jungle.

I do not know any bird that is so difficult to flush as this; the most close hunting-dogs are frequently entirely baffled, and this species pre-eminently merits the nickname of "Mataperros," = Kill-dogs, applied to it and the other species of the family by the Spanish marsh-men. The only remains of food that I could find in these Crakes by post-mortem examination consisted of small insects and fragments of minute shells; but I must admit that I never examined them under a microscope. This species swims easily and readily,

but, as far as my own experience goes, seldom ventures upon the open water. If taken alive and unhurt this Crake, after a few savage pecks at the fingers of its captor, and one or two struggles to escape, will feign death, dropping its head, closing its eyes, and becoming perfectly "limp;" but keeping a sharp look out, and stealing off at the first opportunity.

3/4

**WATER-RAIL.**

Rallus aquaticus, *Linn.*

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# WATER-RAIL.

*RALLUS AQUATICUS, Linn.*

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Rallus aquaticus, *Linn.* S. N. i. p. 262 (1766); *Naum.* ix. p. 472; *Macg.* iv. p. 521; *Hewitson,* ii. p. 373; *Yarr.* ed. 4, iii. p. 159; *Dresser,* vii. p. 257.

*Râle d'eau,* French; *Wasser-Ralle,* German; *Rascón, Polla de agua,* Spanish.

To those of my readers who have pursued Snipes or Ducks in any of the marshes of Europe, it would, I think, be superfluous to go into details as to the habits of this well-known bird, which is more or less common in soft places throughout the Continent and our own Islands. In localities where the Water-Rail does not breed it is best known as an autumnal migrant, and is probably considered as much less common than it really is, owing to its skulking habits and aversion to take wing. The nest of this bird is a well-arranged mass of dead flags, sedge, and reed-leaves, generally placed amongst thick aquatic vegetation, very often in dense beds of reed. The eggs are generally from eight to ten in number, and in colour and markings somewhat resemble those of the Corn-Crake, but are rounder in shape; the first broods generally leave the nest before

May, and there is good evidence that the bird rears two or more broods in the season.

I have frequently, especially during the prevalence of floods, seen Water-Rails perched at a considerable height from the ground in bushes and old thorn-fences; but, as a rule, they keep to the ground and water. They are good swimmers, and can dive well when pressed by a dog. In common with most birds of this family, these Rails are much excited by a sudden noise, such as the report of a gun or a clap of thunder, and, in places where they abound, set up a screeching "skirl" that lasts for some minutes. The usual note is a single twit, and conveys but a faint idea of the vocal powers possessed by the Water-Rail. These birds thrive well in captivity, and, if kept in a small cage, become very tame and impudent; in an aviary, however, where they have means of concealment, they generally avail themselves of it to the fullest extent. The flesh of the breast is fairly good eating; but I consider the bird as barely worth a charge of powder and shot.

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**WATER-HEN or MOOR-HEN.**

Gallinula chloropus *(Linn.)*.

# WATER-HEN OR MOOR-HEN.

*GALLINULA CHLOROPUS* (*Linn.*).

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Fulica chloropus, *Linn.* S. N. i. p. 258 (1766).
Gallinula chloropus, *Naum.* ix. p. 587; *Macg.* iv. p. 547; *Hewitson,* ii. p. 378; *Yarr.* ed. 4, iii. p. 164; *Dresser,* vii. p. 313.

*Poule d'eau,* French; *Teich-huhn, Grünfüssiges Wasserhuhn,* German; *Polla de Agua, Gallineta de laguna,* Spanish.

This bird, perhaps more generally known as Moor-Hen, is so common throughout our country that very little description can be required at my hands by those sufficiently interested in British Birds to do my artist the justice of examining his pictures. It is hardly too much to say that the Water-Hen may be found almost wherever there are water and aquatic plants of sufficient growth to afford concealment and shelter, for it is naturally of a skulking and wary disposition, although, when unmolested, it soon acquires confidence, and often becomes exceedingly tame and fearless. These birds build large nests of dry flags and sedge amongst river- or lake-side vegetation, on rushy islands, ditch-banks, and by no means uncommonly in bushes at a consider-

able height from the ground or water-level; seven or eight eggs is about an average complement in my experience, but I have often met with nine, and occasionally with ten. Three broods are generally reared, and I have repeatedly observed the young birds of the early broods busily at work with (as I suppose) their parents, in repairing an old nest or building a new one. The young birds of the year have a habit also of making sham nests or platforms of bent-flags and bulrushes as resting- or roosting-places for their own use. The old Water-Hens are extremely pugnacious, and are very dangerous neighbours to young Game-birds and Wild-fowl, which they not only kill, but will greedily devour. In spite of these crimes I personally take great delight in observing the habits of this species, and look upon it as a great ornament to our waters. As long as it can find any open waters the Water-Hen will cling to its favourite haunts, in spite of severe frosts; in fact, so long did they linger on the Nene in the neighbourhood of Lilford during the terrible winter of 1890 and 1891, that a very great number were found dead and dying of starvation, and at this time of writing (June 1891) there are certainly not two for every twenty that might be seen on our river at this season last year. I do not intend to imply that this loss is solely due to actual starvation, but the severity of the weather and the ice-bound river and ponds rendered the poor birds a more than ever easy prey to their many enemies—the merciless human loafer and his dog, the fox, the otter, the Sparrow-Hawk, and the Crow family in general; no doubt I may safely add the rat and *his* enemies, the stoat and weasel,

to the list. Although not web-footed, the Water-Hen is a rapid and graceful swimmer and an excellent diver; its flesh is by no means bad, and its eggs very good; its cries, though not musical, especially when the bird is engaged in a hostile encounter, are somewhat cheery, and its chuckling note when conducting its brood on a foraging excursion is anything but unpleasent. Besides the enemies above mentioned, our poor bird is a very favourite morsel for the omnivorous pike; we took a full-grown freshly caught young Water-Hen from the stomach of one of these fishes of about 6 lbs. weight, who, in spite of this very recent meal, came ravenously at our bait—a fair-sized perch.

# PURPLE GALLINULE.

*PORPHYRIO CÆRULEUS* (*Vandelli*).

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Fulica cærulea, *Vandelli*, Flor. et Faun. Lusit. i. p. 37 (1780).
Porphyrio veterum, *Dresser*, vii. p. 299.

This species is accorded a place by Lord Lilford in his 'Birds of Northamptonshire' (vol. i. p. 328), from the fact of a living bird having been brought to him in June 1890, which was caught on the London and North-Western Railway near Wellingborough, and lived for seven or eight years in the aviaries at Lilford. Lord Lilford gives his reasons for considering that the bird was not likely to have escaped from captivity.

The home of this species is in the countries bordering the shores of the western part of the Mediterranean.

[O. S.]

Litho. W. Greve, Berlin

PURPLE GALLINULE.

Porphyrio cæruleus *(Vandelli)*.

$\frac{2}{5}$

Litho. W. Greve. Berlin.

COOT.

# COOT.

*FULICA ATRA, Linn.*

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Fulica atra, *Linn.* S. N. i. p. 257 (1766); *Naum.* ix. p. 635; *Macg.* iv. p. 560; *Hewitson,* ii. p. 380; *Yarr.* ed. 4, iii. p. 171; *Dresser,* vii. p. 327.

*Foulque noire, Macroule,* French; *Wasserhuhn, Mohrenhuhn, Blässhuhn,* German; *Mancón, Gallareta,* Spanish.

This bird is more or less common on all large sheets of fresh water whose banks or islands afford good covert of reeds and other aquatic vegetation during the summer months. It is also frequently to be met with on our deep and sluggish rivers, and in severe weather the Coots crowd to the open estuaries and mud-flats on our coasts. On our main river, the Nen, in Northamptonshire, the Coot is not abundant, but some years ago, being anxious to establish some of these birds near Lilford as an attraction to wild fowl, I obtained some eggs from the "Broads" of Norfolk, and put them into the nests of Water-Hens. Every egg thus located was hatched out, and for many years we had a small but flourishing "Cootery" within sight of the house; but I regret to say that the Coots have now left us for some

time past, owing, no doubt, to the unfortunate fact that our river is more or less navigable, and open to the depredations of trippers and loafers upon anything that will float. Besides this, foxes, otters, stoats, cur-dogs, pike, rats, and severe weather have all, in varying degrees, contributed to the extinction of the Coots. At present I only know of one locality in our immediate neighbourhood in which a pair of these birds occasionally nest, and we now seldom see more than two or three together on the unfrozen spots in the river during severe frosts. Our Coot loves broad open expanses of still water at all times of the year, and breeds, or used to breed, in great numbers in the "Broad" district of Norfolk to which I have above alluded. This bird is virtually omnivorous, but feeds principally upon water-weeds, and mollusca obtained by diving. When left unmolested, the Coot becomes very tame and confiding, but it is by nature an exceedingly wary bird, and I have noticed that Ducks of all kinds like its company, probably finding it a most efficient sentinel, although I suspect that, in common with the other members of this class, the Coot is a dangerous neighbour to the fledgings of other species. It is a very active bird on land and water, running lightly and rapidly over the soft muds, swimming buoyantly, diving vigorously, and a good flyer, although when compelled to rise from the water it does so heavily, and scratches the surface with its toes for some distance. Coots often climb to a considerable height in thick bushes and occasionally roost therein. The nest is a large mass of broken reeds, flags, and sedges, and is generally built near the edge of a thick

reed-bed; it is often moored to the reeds, to allow of its rising or falling with the water. In the lagoons of the Mediterranean countries Coots congregate in enormous numbers in the winter, and in Provence, Corsica, and Sardinia regular battues are organized for their destruction on days fixed upon by the local authorities. On these occasions many hundreds are killed from boats and from the shores of these brackish lakes, the excitement is intense, and fatal accidents by no means uncommon. Until I took a part in one of these battues I had no idea of the speed of a driven Coot, or the height at which they frequently come over the boats "down wind"; a rocketting Coot in my opinion presents quite as sporting a shot as a Pheasant in the same circumstance, in fact as a test of skill in shooting, I am inclined to give the preference to the wild, rather than to the semi-domestic, bird. The flesh of this bird is highly esteemed in the south of Europe, and is, I believe, by no means despised in certain British localities, but in my opinion it is barely edible, even when dressed by an expert. In Epirus, where the Coot is exceedingly abundant, I several times witnessed the curious manner in which these birds defend themselves from the assaults of feathered enemies by gathering together in a compact mass and simultaneously throwing up a sheet of water with their feet when the *raptor* made its stoop. On one occasion of this sort, the assailant, an adult White-tailed Eagle, was so thoroughly drenched by this device that it had great difficulty in flapping along to a tree at not more than a hundred yards from the point of attack. The cry of the Coot is

a loud and peculiar whistle that I have frequently heard after dark, apparently proceeding from a considerable height in the air. Some confusion has arisen from the fact that in the south of France the name of "Macreuse" —the rightful designation of the Scoter—is applied to the present species.

1/8

G. P. Lodge del. J. Smit lith. Mintern Bros. imp

COMMON CRANE.

Grus communis, *Bechst.*

# COMMON CRANE.

## *GRUS COMMUNIS, Bechst.*

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Grus communis, *Bechstein*, Vög. Deutschl. iii. p. 60 (1793); *Yarr.* ed. 4, iii. p. 178; *Dresser*, vii. p. 337.
Ardea grus, *Linn.* S. N. i. p. 234 (1766).
Grus cinerea, *Naum.* ix. p. 345; *Macg.* iv. p. 20; *Hewitson*, ii. p. 308.

*Grue cendrée*, French; *Kranich*, German; *Grulla*, Spanish.

This fine species, which, from many ancient records, appears to have bred pretty commonly in the marshy districts of the three kingdoms well into the seventeenth century, is now only an uncommon and irregular visitor to our islands, generally appearing singly or in small numbers in the autumn months. I have a most distinct recollection of having, when a child, seen two immense birds flying over Hyde Park corner, which filled me with astonishment and curiosity; and it was not till some fifteen years later, when in Spain, I saw Cranes on the wing, that I was able to identify, without the slightest doubt, the birds that had so much excited my youthful mind. Throughout the south of Europe at the seasons of migration long strings of Cranes may be often seen, and still more often heard, passing high in air, and in February and March the great plains to the south of Seville may generally be correctly called full of

them. A few pairs remain to breed in Andalucia, but the principal breeding-quarters of the Crane in Europe are the great morasses of the far north; for a most fascinating account of the haunts and nesting-habits of our bird in Lapland, I must refer my readers to the 'Ibis' of 1859, in which the late Mr. John Wolley gave us the result of his researches in an article that must remain "a joy for ever" to all ornithologists. The only Crane's nest that I ever saw was empty, situated in a half-dry overgrown watercourse in the open marisma of the Guadalquivir, composed of a mass of freshwater plants, and conspicuous to every passer-by. The eggs, generally two in number, are of a dull olive colour, with blotches and spots of rusty brown. The favourite food of the Crane consists of the roots of corn and various grasses, but almost any grain is also eagerly devoured. In Spain it seemed to me that these birds frequented the cultivated lands during the daytime, and resorted to the marshes at night; they are very wary and difficult of approach by day, but many may be obtained at "flighting time" as they change their quarters. In my opinion the flesh of a young Crane is most excellent, and an old one may be made into very good provend by skilled culinary treatment. In captivity our bird is delightful from its tameness and the quaint antics and attitudes that it assumes, and its loud trumpet-like cries are by no means unpleasant. If one of a captive pair of Cranes dies, the distress of the survivor is most touching to witness, and from my own experience of many birds in confinement I am inclined to attribute the palm of affectionate social instinct to the present species.

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G. E. Lodge del. J. Smit lith.

Mintern Bros. imp.

DEMOISELLE CRANE.

Grus virgo *(Linn.)*.

# DEMOISELLE CRANE.

*GRUS VIRGO* (*Linn.*).

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Ardea virgo, *Linn.* S. N. i. p. 234 (1766).
Grus virgo, *Yarr.* ed. 4, iii. p. 192; *Dresser*, vii. p. 353.

*Demoiselle de Numidie*, French; *Jungfern Kranich*, German; *Grulla moruna*, Spanish.

This very beautiful bird is an exceedingly rare visitor to our country—in fact, one of the only two recorded instances of its occurrence is said to rest upon very unsatisfactory evidence. I quote from the 4th edition of Yarrell's 'British Birds' as to the other:—"A male example of the Numidian or Demoiselle Crane was shot at Deerness, East Mainland, Orkney, on May 14th, 1863, and a companion bird was pursued, but not obtained ('Zoologist,' 1863, p. 8692). The above specimen subsequently became the property of Mr. W. Christy Horsfall, of Horsforth-Low Hall, near Leeds." I must add that the editor seems to be of opinion that these birds may probably have escaped from captivity, a contingency which is of course possible, but to my mind most improbable.

This Crane breeds in the great marshes of Morocco

and Algeria, and is well known in Andalucia, though we have no positive evidence of its breeding in that province; it is, in fact, a rare visitor to all parts of Europe except the steppes of Southern Russia and the lower Danubian provinces, where it breeds regularly. As my personal acquaintance with the Demoiselle in a wild state is limited to the distant sight on several occasions of a small flock in Cyprus during the spring of 1875, I am unable to give details as to its habits and food; its cry to a certain extent resembles that of the Common Crane, but is more shrill and not so prolonged on one note. On wing the flock to which I have referred generally adopted a formation similar to that of the commoner species. In captivity this species has all the attractions of its congener, with superior grace and beauty, but it is very detrimental to turf, from its habit of pulling up short grasses by their roots.

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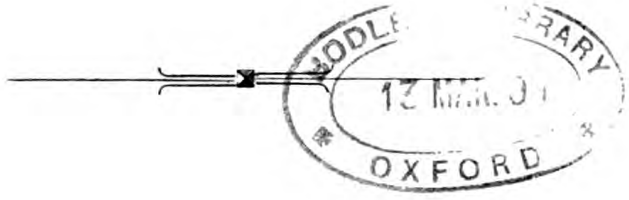


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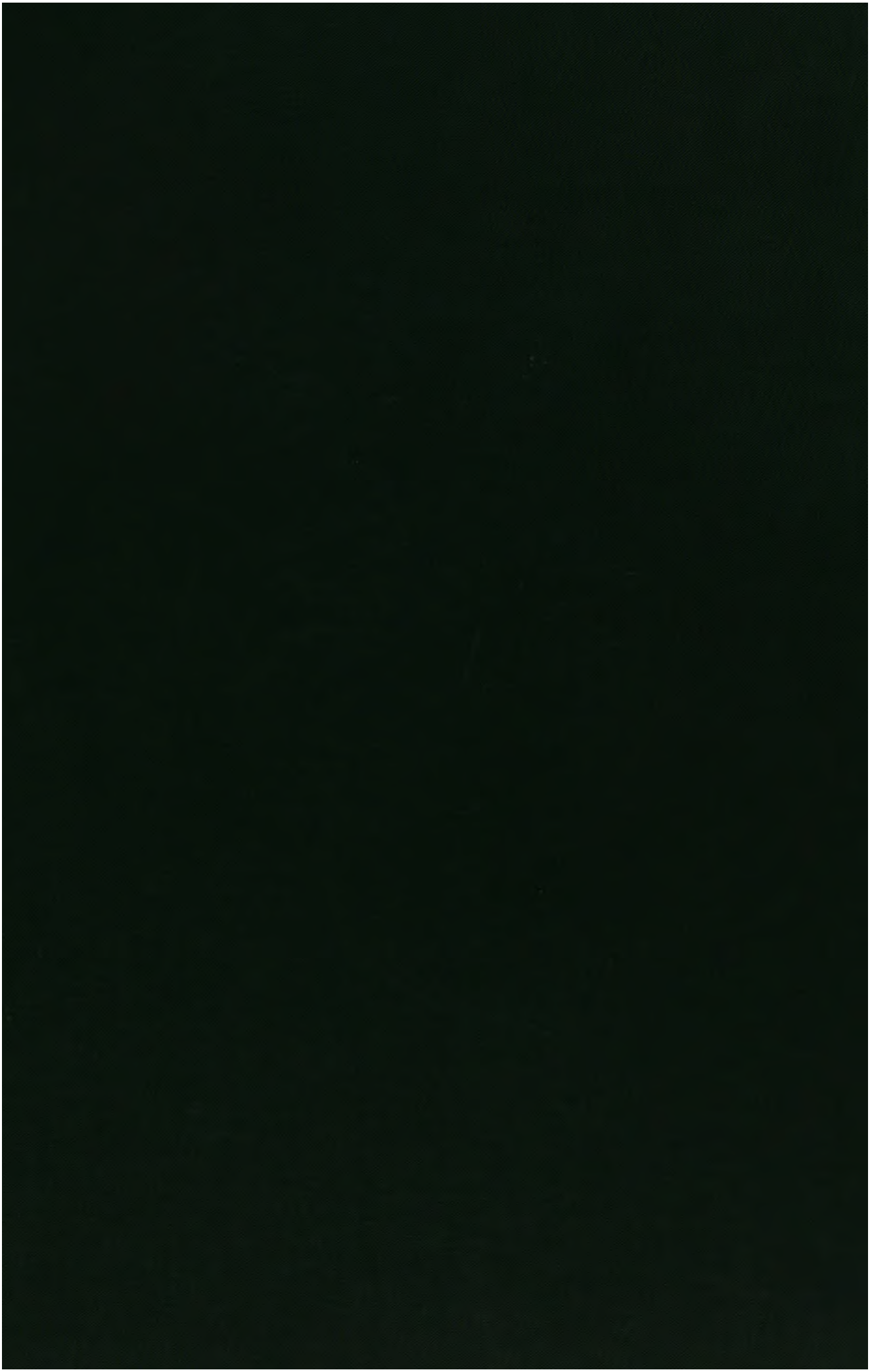
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