

## CHESTNUT-BACKED TITMOUSE.

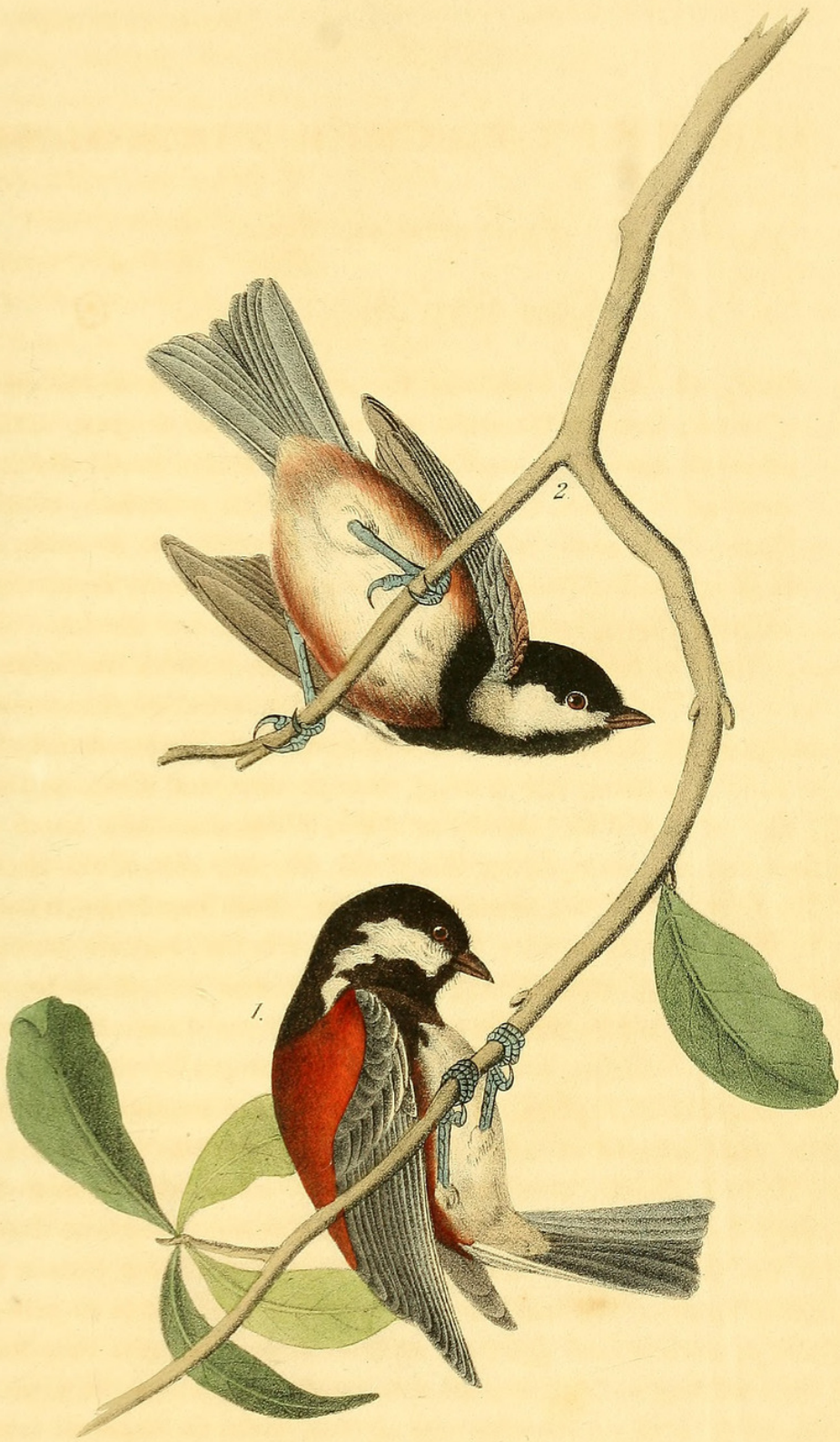
+ *PARUS RUFESCENS*, *Towns.*

PLATE CXXIX.—MALE AND FEMALE.

Mr. NUTTALL's notice respecting the present species is as follows:—

"The Chestnut-backed Titmouse is seen throughout the year in the forests of the Columbia, and as far south as Upper California, in all which tract it breeds, forming, as I have some reason to believe, a pendulous, or at least an exposed nest, like some of the European species. It is made of large quantities of hypna and lichens, and copiously and coarsely lined with deer's hair and large feathers, such as those of the Grouse and the Jay. They are commonly seen in small flocks of all ages in the autumn and winter, when they move about briskly, and emit a number of feeble querulous notes, after the manner of the Chickadee, or common species, *Parus atricapillus*, but seldom utter any thing like a song, though now and then, as they glean about, they utter a *t'she, de, de*, or *t'dee, t'dee, dee*, their more common querulous call, however, being like *t'she, dé, de, vait, t'she, de, de, vait*, sometimes also a confused warbling chatter. The busy troop, accompanied often by the common species, the *Regulus tricolor*, and the small yellow-bellied *Parus*, are seen flitting through bushes and thickets, carefully gleaning insects and larvæ for an instant, and are then off to some other place around, proceeding with restless activity to gratify the calls of hunger and the stimulus of caprice. Thus they are seen to rove along for miles together, until satisfied or fatigued, when they retire to rest in the recesses of the darkest forests, situations which they eventually choose for their temporary domicile, where in solitude and retirement they rear their young, and for the whole of the succeeding autumn and winter remain probably together in families. When the gun thins their ranks, it is surprising to see the courage, anxiety, and solicitude of these little creatures: they follow you with their wailing scold, and entreat for their companions in a manner that impresses you with a favourable idea of their social feelings and sympathy."

Mr. TOWNSEND says, that "the Chinook Indians call this species *a kul*. It inhabits the forests of the Columbia river, where it breeds and goes in flocks in the autumn, more or less gregarious through the season. The legs and feet are light blue."



*N.S.*

*Chestnut-backed Titmouse.*

*1. Male. 2. Female.*



PARUS RUFESCENS, CHESTNUT-BACKED TITMOUSE, Towns. Journ. Acad. Nat. Sc. Philadelphia, vol. vii. p. 190.

CHESTNUT-BACKED TITMOUSE, *Parus rufescens*, Aud. Orn. Biog., vol. iv. p. 371.

#### Adult Male.

Bill very short, straight, strong, compressed, rather acute; both mandibles with the dorsal line slightly convex, the sides sloping and convex, the edges sharp, the tip of the upper scarcely longer. Nostrils basal, roundish, concealed by the recumbent feathers. Head large, ovate; neck short; body rather robust. Feet of ordinary length, robust; tarsus compressed, with seven anterior scutella, and two lateral plates meeting behind so as to form a thin edge; toes large, the three anterior united as far as the second joint, the hind one much stronger, and with its claw as long as the third. Claws large, arched, much compressed, acute.

Plumage blended, tufty, unglossed. Wings of moderate length, the fourth and fifth quills equal and longest, the sixth scarcely shorter, the third and seventh equal, the second and eighth equal, the first very short, being only half the length of the second. Tail long, slender, arched, very slightly emarginate, or with its tip divaricate, of twelve rather narrow feathers.

Bill brownish-black, with the edges and tip paler. Feet greyish-blue; claws paler. Head and neck, and fore part of the sides, dark brown, with a broad longitudinal band of white on each side, from the bill under the eye, curving up on the shoulder, and almost meeting on the back; which, including the rump, is bright chestnut, as are the sides under the wings; the middle of the breast and abdomen greyish-white, the lower tail-coverts tinged with chestnut. Wings and tail brownish-grey, the smaller coverts tinged with chestnut, the secondary coverts margined and tipped with greyish-white, of which colour also are the outer edges of the quills, except the first; tail-feathers faintly margined with bluish-grey.

Length to end of tail  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches; wing from flexure  $2\frac{3}{8}$ ; tail  $1\frac{1}{2}$ ; bill along the ridge  $\frac{4\frac{1}{2}}{12}$ ; tarsus  $\frac{7\frac{1}{2}}{12}$ ; hind toe  $\frac{3\frac{1}{2}}{12}$ , its claw  $\frac{4}{12}$ ; middle toe  $\frac{4\frac{1}{2}}{12}$ , its claw  $\frac{2\frac{7}{8}}{12}$ .

#### Adult Female.

The Female is similar to the male.



N.S.

*Chestnut-backed Titmouse.*

1. Male. 2. Female.



Audubon, John James. 1841. "Chestnut-Backed Titmouse, *Parus rufescens*, Towns. [Pl. 129]." *The birds of America : from drawings made in the United States and their territories* 2, 158–159. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.319242>.

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