AMERICAN PIPIT OR TITLARK.

†ANTHUS LUDOVICIANUS, *Lichtenstein*.

PLATE CL.—MALE AND FEMALE.

This species is met with in every portion of the United States which I have visited. It is one of the birds that I should call gifted with a double set of habits, for, like a very few others that are strictly named land birds, it occurs not only in the fields in the interior of the country, but also on the borders of rivers, and even on the shores of the Atlantic.

Its flight is extremely easy, and what I would call of a beautiful and delicate nature. In other words, these birds pass and repass through the air, performing numberless evolutions, as if it did not cost them the least labour to fly. When in the interior of the country, they resort to the old fields, and the vast prairies, as well as the ploughed lands, seldom in flocks of less than ten or a dozen, and not unfrequently by hundreds. Now, they are seen high, loosely moving in short reiterated undulations, inspecting the ground below; now, they come sweeping over and close to it, and seem about to alight, when, on the contrary, their ranks close in an instant, they wheel about, and rise again into the air. These feats are often repeated six or seven times, when at last, satisfied as to their safety, or the abundance of food in the spot, they alight, and immediately run about in quest of food. They run briskly, and as lightly as birds usually called Larks are wont to do, but with this difference, that they suffer their tails to vibrate whenever they stop running. Again, instead of squatting partially down, as true Larks do, to pick up their food, they move their body upon the upper joints of the legs, in the manner of Thrushes and other birds. Another habit seldom found in the Lark genus is that of settling on fences and trees, and walking along them with apparent ease.

Whilst residing among the meadows and ploughed fields, these birds feed on insects and small seeds, picking up some gravel at the same time. Along the rivers, or on the sea-shores, they are fond of running as near the edge of the water as possible, and searching among the drifted leaves and weeds for such insects as are usually found there. The vibratory motion of their tail is now more perceptible, being quicker. Their feeble notes are also frequently uttered. When shot along the shores, their stomachs have been found filled with fragments of minute shells, as well as small shrimps, and

Ammodramus leucotis, Titmouse.
Male 1. Female 2.

other garbage. When raised by the report of a gun, they rise high, and sometimes fly to a considerable distance; but you may expect their return to the same spot, if you keep yourself concealed for a few minutes. They are expert fly-catchers, inasmuch as they leap from the ground, and follow insects on the wing for several feet with avidity. The company of cattle is agreeable to them, so much so, that they walk almost under them in quest of insects.

The species now under consideration reaches Louisiana about the middle of October, and leaves it in the beginning of March. I caught some of these birds on my passage from France to the United States, on the Great Newfoundland Banks. They came on board wearied, and so hungry that the crumbs of biscuit thrown to them were picked up with the greatest activity.

This bird extends its migrations to the Missouri and Columbia river, where it was met with by Mr. TOWNSEND. I found it in April in the Texas, and Dr. RICHARDSON observed it in small flocks on the plains of the Saskatchewan in the spring of 1827, feeding on the larvæ of small insects, particularly of a species of ant. I found it breeding very abundantly on the coast of Labrador, on the moss-covered rocks, as well as in the deep valleys, but never at any great distance from the sea. The nests were usually placed at the foot of a wall of the rocks, buried in the dark mould, and beautifully formed of fine bent grass, arranged in a circular manner, without any hair or other lining. Both birds incubate, sitting so closely, that on several occasions I almost put my foot upon them before they flew. The first that I found was on the 29th of June, when the thermometer ranged from 51° to 54° . The eggs were six in number, five-eighths of an inch long, six and a quarter twelfths in breadth, being rather elongated, though rounded at both ends; their ground-colour of a deep reddish-chestnut or reddish-brown, considerably darkened by numerous dots of a deeper reddish-brown and lines of various sizes, especially toward the large end. The drawing of an egg supposed to be of this species, sent me by Dr. THOMAS M. BREWER of Boston, measures seven-eighths of an inch in length, five-eighths in breadth, and is more pointed at the small end than any of those found in Labrador; its ground-colour is whitish, faintly marked all over with dull reddish-brown dots. It was found in Coventry, in the State of Vermont.

These Titlarks vary much in colour, having the upper parts in spring almost of a leaden grey, the cheeks and a line over the eye whitish, the lower parts of a beautiful light buff. The claws of those shot in Labrador were shorter than usual, having probably been worn in scratching the mosses and soil in forming a place for the nest. During the breeding-time the male

often rises on wing to the height of eight or ten yards, and emits a few clear and mellow notes, but returns to its consort or alights on the rock with a suddenness in keeping with the short duration of its song, which is rarely heard after the eggs are hatched. These birds leave Labrador and Newfoundland as soon as their young are able to fly, which is usually the case about the middle of August. On the 6th of July 1833, in Labrador, I heard this bird singing both on wing and on the ground. When on wing, it sings while flying very irregularly in zigzags up and down; when on the rocks, it stands erect, and I think produces a louder and clearer song.

When returning northward in spring, their movements correspond with the advancement of the season, and we found them to increase in number as we proceeded, and to settle in all the favourable places. In the vicinity of Charleston, as well as in that of New Orleans, where this species is very abundant during winter, it is frequently seen seeking for food among the castings of filth of all sorts, in company with the Turkey Buzzards and Carrion Crows, and when disturbed, will alight on the roof of the nearest building, on stakes or fences, as well as walls, and occasionally on the branches of trees.

BROWN LARK, *Alauda rufa*, Wils. Amer. Orn., vol. v. p. 89.

ANTHUS SPINOLETTA, Bonap. Syn., p. 90.

BROWN TITLARK, Aud. Orn. Biog., vol. i. p. 49. Adult.

PRAIRIE TITLARK, *Anthus pipiens*, Aud. Orn. Biog., vol. i. p. 408, Young. BROWN TITLARK and PRAIRIE TITLARK, vol. v. p. 449.

Hind claw longer than the toe, slightly arched, and very slender. Male, in winter plumage, with the bill dusky, the legs and claws deep greenish-brown; upper parts greyish-olive, tinged with green, and obscurely streaked with dusky; a whitish band over the eye, cheeks brown; lower parts brownish-white, the throat white, the sides and lower part of the neck, fore part of breast, and sides of body marked with elongated, distinct, blackish-brown spots; quills and tail-feathers dusky, margined with greenish-grey, the lateral tail-feathers half white, the next obliquely white at the end. Female similar. Male in summer with the bill black, the upper parts olive-brown, tinged with grey; a greyish-white line over the eye, cheeks greyish-brown; lower parts light yellowish-grey, the fore neck and breast often deeply tinged with red, and marked with short, slender, brownish-black spots, the sides streaked; quills and tail-feathers as in winter with the pale margins less distinct. Young more tinged with green above, the bill paler, with a great part of the lower mandible yellowish-red, the lower parts pale yellowish-grey, with an obscure lunule of brownish-black on the fore neck,

the lower part of which and the sides are streaked with dark brown, and tinged with reddish-brown.

Male, $6\frac{1}{2}$, $10\frac{1}{2}$.

Throughout the Western and Southern Districts during autumn and winter. Breeds in Labrador and the Fur Countries. Abundant.

FAMILY XIV. ALAUDINÆ. LARKS.

Bill rather short, or of moderate length, somewhat conical, compressed toward the end; upper mandible with its dorsal line sloping and slightly convex, the edges sharp and overlapping, the notches generally obsolete; the tip narrow and a little deflected; lower mandible with the angle of moderate length and narrow, the dorsal line ascending and nearly straight, the edges slightly inflected, the tip acute; gape-line straight. Nostrils elliptical or oblong, basal. Head oblong, of moderate size; neck rather short; body ovate. Feet of moderate length, or rather long; tarsus compressed, with eight anterior scutella; toes slender, compressed; the hind toe elongated, second and fourth about equal, third much longer. Claws rather long, arched, slender, much compressed, laterally grooved, acute, that of the hind toe very long, straightish, tapering. Plumage generally soft and blended. Wings rather long, broad, the inner secondaries tapering, and one so elongated as nearly to equal the longest primary, when the wing is closed. Tail of twelve feathers, generally emarginate. Roof of the upper mandible concave, generally with three prominent lines; tongue slender, thin, flat, tapering to a slit and bristly tip; œsophagus of uniform width; stomach a very strong muscular gizzard of a roundish form and compressed, its lateral muscles very large, its epithelium dense and rugous; intestines short, of moderate width; cœca very small, cylindrical. Nest on the ground. Eggs five or six, oval, spotted.

Ammodramus Lepidus or Titlark.
Male 1. Female 2.

Audubon, John James. 1841. "American Pipit or Titlark, *Anthus ludovicianus*, Lichtenstein [Pl. 150]." *The birds of America : from drawings made in the United States and their territories* 3, 40–43. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.319263>.

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