GENUS II.—EMBERIZA, *Linn.* BUNTING.

Bill short, robust, tapering, somewhat compressed; upper mandible with its dorsal line declinate and slightly convex, the ridge indistinct, the sides convex, the edges a little inflected, ascending to beneath the nostrils, then descending or direct, with a slight notch close to the narrow tip; lower mandible with the angle short and wide, the dorsal line ascending, and very slightly convex, the ridge broad at the base, the sides convex, the edges inclinate, their outline ascending for a third or more of its length, then direct, the tip narrow. Nostrils basal, roundish. Head large, ovate; neck very short; body rather stout. Feet of moderate length, rather strong; tarsus of ordinary length, compressed, with seven anterior scutella; toes rather large; the hind toe strong, and longer than the lateral, which are equal, the third much longer, and united to the fourth at the base. Claws long, arched, much compressed, acute. Plumage soft and blended, but firm. Bristles feeble. Wings rather long, with the second and third quills longest. Tail of moderate length, emarginate.

BLACK-THROATED BUNTING.

+EMBERIZA AMERICANA, *Gmel.*

PLATE CLVI.—MALE AND FEMALE.

Although this handsome Bunting may be said to be abundant in our middle Atlantic districts, it is there much less so than in the vast prairies of the south-west; and I consider those of the Texas to afford the localities best adapted to its habits. There, as my companions and I were returning from the capital of the infant republic, we were surprised to see how very numerous the Black-throated Buntings were in every open piece of ground

R. J.

Black-throated Bunting.

1. Male 2. Female.

Thalaris arundinacea and *Oulirrhinum Linaria.*

covered by tufts of tall grass. They are also abundant on the open lands of Missouri and Illinois; but rarer in Ohio, and scarce in Kentucky. They are rarely observed to pass over South Carolina, but in Pennsylvania they are plentiful, and there breed in every field covered with grass or grain. I have also met with them in Massachusetts, but beyond this they are not seen to the eastward.

At the approach of the period of their removal from our Middle States southward, the Black-throated Buntings congregate in particular localities, as if to consult regarding their future proceedings. At this season I once went from Philadelphia in search of them, accompanied by my friend EDWARD HARRIS, and my son JOHN WOODHOUSE. Having reached Salem in New Jersey, we rambled some time in the neighbourhood, and found an elevated piece of ground, closely covered with high rank weeds, among which a great number of these birds had assembled. It being late in July, the males were moulting, or had already acquired their new plumage; the young, although full grown, had not yet assumed their second clothing, in which the sexes are distinguished; and the females were generally ragged. The birds were at first quite gentle, but after we had fired a few times they all flew off to a considerable distance, from which, however, they soon returned. On our continuing to harass them, they rose high in the air, and flew out of our sight in a southwardly direction. They had then undoubtedly begun migrating. These birds are very partial to particular localities. Sandy soil, unmixed with clay or earth, is not favourable to them; and it is probably for this reason that none are found in any purely sandy part of the State of New Jersey.

The Black-throated Buntings reach our Middle States about the 10th or 15th of May, and at once betake themselves to the dry meadow lands and grain fields, where they soon after begin to breed. The males are often observed perched on the top branches of the shade trees found in those places, and engaged in delighting their mates with their simple ditty, which, according to Mr. NUTTALL, resembles 'tic 'tic-tshě tshě tshě tshe, and tship tship, tschě tschě tschě tschē. To my ears the notes of our Black-throated Bunting so much resemble those of the Corn Bunting of Europe, *Emberiza miliaria*, that I have often been reminded of the one by hearing the song of the other. These unmusical notes are almost continuously uttered from sunrise to sunset, and all this while the female is snugly seated on her eggs, and listening to her beloved. He often visits her, alighting within a few yards of where she is concealed, and then cautiously proceeding toward the spot on foot, through the grass. When the bird leaves the nest, it creeps along to some distance, and then flies off low over the ground.

About the first of June the nest is formed. It is constructed of fine grass

neatly woven in a circular form, and is partly imbedded in the soil, and sheltered or concealed by a tuft of herbage. The eggs, usually five, are six and a half eighths in length, four and three-fourths in breadth, of a sullied white, generally sprinkled with faint touches of different tints of umber. In Pennsylvania, it seldom rears more than one brood in the season; but in the Texas, I have reason to believe that it raises two.

The flight of this bird, when it has settled in a place, is usually of short extent. The male, while passing to and from the nest, exhibits a quivering motion of the wings. The female seldom shews this, unless when her property is in danger from intruders. While travelling, which they always do by day, they pass high over the trees, in flocks of thirty or forty, which suddenly alight at the approach of night, and throw themselves into the most thickly-leaved trees, where they repose until dawn. I have surprised them in such situations both in Kentucky and in Louisiana, and on shooting into the place to which they had betaken themselves, although I could not see them, have procured several at one discharge; which proved in one instance to be males, and in the other females, thus shewing that the sexes travel separately. On such occasions, the survivors would sally forth, make a few rapid evolutions, and alight on the same tree.

In spring, I have found them, on two or three occasions, near Natchez, in the State of Mississippi, in meadows, in company with Bob-o-links, *Dolichonyx oryzivora*. On the ground they leap or hop, but never walk. Their flesh is good, especially that of the young birds.

Breeds abundantly in Texas and all the Western Prairies; less so from Virginia to Massachusetts. Rare in Ohio and Kentucky. Migratory.

BLACK-THROATED BUNTING, *Emberiza Americana*, Wils. Amer. Orn., vol. i. p. 411.

FRINGILLA AMERICANA, Bonap. Syn., p. 107.

BLACK-THROATED BUNTING, Nutt. Man., vol. i. p. 461.

BLACK-THROATED BUNTING, *Emberiza Americana*, Aud. Orn. Biog., vol. iv. p. 579.

Bill very stout; tail-feathers acute. Male with the upper part of the head, the cheeks, and the hind neck dark ash-grey, faintly streaked with dusky; loreal space whitish, a band over the eye, and a patch below the cheek, yellow; the fore part of the back greyish-brown, with longitudinal streaks of brownish-black, the hind part brownish-grey; the smaller wing-coverts bright chestnut; chin white, throat black; the lower neck and part of the breast, yellow, the rest of the breast and abdomen, white. Female similar to the male, but paler, and without the black patch on the throat.

Male, $6\frac{1}{2}$, $10\frac{3}{8}$.

In an adult male, the roof of the mouth has anteriorly three longitudinal

ridges, and two lateral grooves; the palate descends obliquely, and at its anterior part has a distinct prominence of a softish texture; from which there passes backwards and outwards, a large soft ridge on each side of the nasal aperture, which is linear and papillate. The tongue is $5\frac{1}{2}$ twelfths long, narrow, deep, trigonal, deeply emarginate and papillate at the base, soft for half its length, convex and hard towards the end, which terminates with bristly points. The œsophagus, *a b c d*, is $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches long, dilated along the greater part of the neck into a kind of crop, *b*, 5 twelfths in diameter, lying on the right side along with the trachea. The proventriculus, *c d*, is not much enlarged. The stomach, *e f*, is a strong gizzard, of a broad elliptical form, $7\frac{1}{2}$ twelfths in length, $6\frac{1}{2}$ twelfths in breadth. Its contents are small hard seeds, a few remains of insects, and some particles of sand. The epithelium is very tough, longitudinally rugous, and of a dark reddish-brown colour. The intestine, *f g h*, is $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches long, its greatest diameter 2 twelfths. The rectum, *j k l*, is 9 twelfths long; the cœca, *j*, extremely small, being $1\frac{1}{2}$ twelfths long and $\frac{1}{2}$ twelfth in diameter.

The trachea, which is 1 inch 10 twelfths long, is rather wide, flattened, of uniform diameter, measuring $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches across, the rings about 55, and ossified. The contractor muscles are of moderate strength; the sterno-tracheal slender; and there are four pairs of inferior laryngeal. The bronchi have about 15 half rings.

In its habits, this bird closely resembles the Common or Corn Bunting of Europe, its flight and notes being almost the same. Like it, our bird alights on walls, fences, detached rocks, or eminences of any kind, where it is often seen even in the immediate neighbourhood of our cities. Indeed, I have found it in full song perched on the trees that ornament the squares of Washington city. In the form of its bill it also agrees with the Buntings, although that organ is proportionally longer and less attenuated toward the end. If, on the principle of minute division, it is not admitted into the genus *Emberiza*, it must at least occupy a place in its immediate proximity.

The plants represented are the *Phalaris arundinacea* and *Antirrhinum linaria*, both common in many parts of the United States, as well as in Europe; the former growing in wet meadows and by the sides of rivers, the latter in fields and waste places, a troublesome weed, very difficult to be extirpated.

R. J.

Black-throated Bunting.

1. Male 2. Female.

Thalaris arundinacea and *Oulirrhinum Linaria.*

Audubon, John James. 1841. "Black-Throated Bunting, *Emberiza americana*, Gmel. [Pl. 156]." *The birds of America : from drawings made in the United States and their territories* 3, 58–61. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.319269>.

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