

## MEALY REDPOLL LINNET.

†LINARIA BOREALIS, Temm.

PLATE CLXXVIII.—MALE.

Whilst in Newfoundland, I procured four specimens of this curious bird, all of which were shot while feeding on the berries of the *summer apple*. It was in the month of August, and I well remember the pleasure I felt when at the same moment several Indian boys approached and offered me their waterproof bark baskets filled with those delightful berries equally pleasing to my taste and that of the Mealy Redpoll. One of the birds appeared to me to be an adult, but to have already changed its spring livery for the plainer one exhibited in the Plate. The others were evidently younger, as none of them shewed the least appearance on the forehead, cheeks, breast or rump, of the red colour that existed on the same parts of what perhaps was their parent.

In their habits I could see no difference between them and the Common Redpoll; but their notes, although in some degree similar, as is usually the case in all birds of the same family, differed sufficiently to induce me to believe that this mealy-coloured bird is quite distinct from the species above mentioned, although very nearly allied to it. I wish it were in my power to describe this difference of modulation, which seems to me still vibrating in my ear; but I cannot, and therefore must be content with assuring you, that the notes of the two birds are as nearly the same, and yet as distinct, as those of the American Gold-finch and the European bird of the same name.

Removing from one spot to another with the peculiar activity and capriciousness of the Linnet family, they would fly from one portion to another of the wild natural meadow on which I watched them nearly an hour before I shot them, alight here and there, peck at the berries a few moments, and suddenly, as if affrighted, rise, perform various wide and circling flights, in deep undulations, and at once alighting repose for a short while.

Like Titmice, and often with downward inclined head, they fed, chattered to each other, and then resting for an instant plumed themselves. These occupations they would have continued much longer had not the trigger of my gun been touched at a favourable moment, on which I walked to the spot and picked up the little flock, all of them having been killed at one shot.





*Mealy Redpoll Linnet.*  
Male.





I and my party had procured a good number of Common Redpolls in the rugged country of Labrador, but not a single bird of this species; which yet removes during winter to our middle districts. A specimen in my possession was procured near Moorestown, in the State of New Jersey, by my valued friend EDWARD HARRIS, Esq., and I have seen several others that were obtained near Baltimore in Maryland.

That the Mealy Redpoll becomes a richly coloured bird at the approach of the breeding season I feel quite confident, and I will now venture to give you some idea of its appearance at that happy period of its life. Then, I would say, the cheeks and the whole under part of the body, excepting a large black patch on the throat, are of a rich carmine, as is the rump. The spots seen on the sides of the breast, and along the lower parts of the body, almost to the femorals, disappear, and the upper parts, or the shoulders and back, become almost of a uniform rich brown, as those parts are in the Common Linnet of Europe.

The present species is rather larger than the Common Redpoll. The colour of its bill even during winter differs in being of a rich yellow, and its legs, feet, and claws at that season are pure black, instead of reddish-brown.

On two occasions I have seen the Mealy Redpoll associated with the American Siskin, in the beginning of October, in the province of New Brunswick. They were then feeding on the seeds of neglected sun-flowers.

Accidental in New Jersey and New York. More common from Maine northward. Labrador and Fur Countries. Columbia river.

GROSBEC BOREAL, *Fringilla borealis*, Temm. Man. d'Orn., vol. iii. p. 264.

MEALY REDPOLL, *Fringilla borealis*, Aud. Orn. Biog., vol. v. p. 87.

#### Adult Male.

Bill short, strong, conical, much compressed toward the end, extremely acute; upper mandible with the dorsal line straight, the ridge narrow, the sides convex, the edges sharp and overlapping, without notch, the tip acuminate; lower mandible with the angle short and semicircular, the dorsal line straight, the ridge narrow, the sides convex, the edges sharp and inflected, the tip very acute. Nostrils basal, roundish, covered by stiffish reversed feathers.

Head of moderate size, roundish; neck short; body moderate. Feet of moderate length, rather slender; tarsus short, compressed, anteriorly covered with a few scutella, of which the upper are blended, posteriorly with two longitudinal plates meeting at a very acute angle; toes rather stout, the first



with its claw as long as the third with its claw; the lateral toes equal; claws large, moderately arched, much compressed, acute.

Plumage soft, blended. Wings rather long; the first three quills almost equal, but the second longest; the second, third, and fourth cut out on the outer web toward the end; the outer secondaries emarginate. Tail rather long, deeply emarginate or forked, the middle feathers being half an inch shorter than the outer.

Bill yellow, with the ridge of the upper mandible dusky; iris brown; feet and claws black. The upper part of the head crimson, the feathers of the cheeks, sides of the body and hind part of the rump pale carmine. A band edging the forehead, the loreal space, and the throat, black. The upper parts are dusky, streaked with brownish-white, the margins of the feathers being of the latter colour, and the former gradually disappearing on the hind part of the back and rump, which are nearly white, tinged with rose-colour; the lower parts greyish-white, the sides streaked with dusky. The wings and tail are dusky, with greyish-white edges, and two transverse bands of the same on the tips of the first row of small coverts and the secondary coverts.

Length to end of tail  $5\frac{1}{4}$  inches; extent of wings 9; bill along the ridge  $\frac{5}{12}$ ; wing from flexure  $3\frac{2}{12}$ ; tail  $2\frac{5}{12}$ ; tarsus  $\frac{7}{12}$ ; hind toe  $\frac{3\frac{1}{2}}{12}$ , its claw  $\frac{4\frac{1}{2}}{12}$ ; third toe  $\frac{4}{12}$ , its claw  $\frac{3\frac{1}{2}}{12}$ .

The female, which is somewhat less, has the black of the forehead and throat tinged with brown, the crimson patch on the head of less extent, the sides and rump destitute of red.

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## LESSER REDPOLL LINNET.

†LINARIA MINOR, *Ray*.

PLATE CLXXIX.—MALE AND FEMALE.

When I was in Labrador, my young companions and my son one day (the 27th of July, 1833), procured eight individuals of this species, of different sexes and ages. Next morning I went to the place where they had been shot, and found a good number remaining. The first observation I made had reference to their notes, which, instead of resembling those of the Goldfinch, as alleged by an American writer, are very similar to those of the





*Mealy Redpoll Linnet.*  
*Male.*



Audubon, John James. 1841. "Mealy Redpoll Linnet, *Linaria borealis*, Temm. [Pl. 178]." *The birds of America : from drawings made in the United States and their territories* 3, 120–122. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.319291>.

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