

RED-AND-WHITE-WINGED TROOPIAL, OR MARSH BLACKBIRD.

†*AGELAIUS TRICOLOR*, *Aud.*

PLATE CCXIV.—MALE.

How delightful, I have often exclaimed, must have been the feelings of those enthusiastic naturalists, NUTTALL and TOWNSEND, while traversing the ridges of the Rocky Mountains! How grand and impressive the scenery presented to their admiring gaze, when from an elevated station they saw the mountain torrent hurling its foamy waters over the black crags of the rugged ravine, while on wide-spread wings the Great Vulture sailed overhead watching the departure of the travellers, that he might feast on the salmon, which in striving to ascend the cataract had been thrown on the stony beach! Now the weary travellers are resting on the bank of a brawling brook, along which they are delighted to see the lively Dipper frisking wren-like from stone to stone. On the stunted bushes above them some curious Jays are chattering, and as my friends are looking upon the gay and restless birds, they are involuntarily led to extend their gaze to the green slope beneath the more distant crags, where they spy a mountain sheep, watching the movements of the travellers, as well as those of yon wolves stealing silently toward the fleet-footed animal. Again the pilgrims are in motion; they wind their pathless way round rocks and fissures; they have reached the greatest height of the sterile platform; and as they gaze on the valleys whose waters hasten to join the Pacific Ocean, and bid adieu, perhaps for the last time, to the dear friends they have left in the distant east, how intense must be their feelings, as thoughts of the past and the future blend themselves in their anxious minds! But now I see them, brother-like, with lighter steps, descending toward the head waters of the famed Oregon. They have reached the great stream, and seating themselves in a canoe, shoot adown the current, gazing on the beautiful shrubs and flowers that ornament the banks, and the majestic trees that cover the sides of the valley, all new to them, and presenting a wide field of discovery. The melodies of unknown songsters enliven their spirits, and glimpses of gaudily plumed birds excite their desire to search those beautiful thickets; but time is urgent, and onward they must speed. A deer crosses the stream, they pursue and capture it; and it being now evening, they land and soon form a camp, carefully concealed

from the prying eyes of the lurking savage. The night is past, the dawn smiles upon the refreshed travellers, who launch their frail bark; and as they slowly float on the stream, both listen attentively to the notes of the Red-and-White-winged Troopial, and wonder how similar they are to those of the "Red-winged Starling;" they think of the affinities of species, and especially of those of the lively birds composing this beautiful group.

This beautiful species was discovered in Upper California by my friend THOMAS NUTTALL, Esq., from whom I received the specimen represented in the plate, together with the following account. "Flocks of this vagrant bird, which, in all probability, extends its migrations into Oregon, are very common around Santa Barbara in Upper California, in the month of April. Their habits are similar to those of the Red-winged Starling, (*Agelaius phœniceus*), but they keep in large flocks apart from that species, which also inhabits this country as well as Mexico. They are seldom seen but in the near suburbs of the town, feeding at this time almost exclusively on the maggots or larvæ of the blow-flies, which are generated in the offal of the cattle constantly killed around the town for the sake of the hides. In large whirling flocks they are seen associated with the Cow-birds, Common Grakles, Red-wings, and a small species with an orange-yellow head, flitting about in quest of food, or perching on the orchard trees in the town, where they keep up an incessant chatter and discordant confused warble, much more harsh or guttural than the note of the Cow-bird. They are also common around Monterey. With the female, and the circumstances of breeding, I am not acquainted."

RED-AND-WHITE-WINGED TROOPIAL, *Icterus tricolor*, Aud. Orn. Biog., vol. v. p. 1.

Male, 9; wing, 5.

North California. Abundant. Migratory.

Adult Male.

Bill nearly as long as the head, conical, straight, moderately stout, tapering to a fine point; upper mandible with the dorsal line nearly straight, being a little convex at the base, the ridge a little flattened toward the base, where it runs into a short tapering process, the sides rounded, the edges inflected, the tip a little depressed; lower mandible higher at the base than the upper, with the angle rather short and wide, the sides rather flat at the base, convex toward the end, the edges inflected, the tip acute; the gap-line straight, but at the base deflected. Nostrils oval, in the fore part of the short nasal depression.

Head of moderate size, ovate, with the forehead flattened; neck short; body moderately stout. Feet of ordinary length; tarsus rather stout, com-

pressed, with seven large anterior scutella, of which the upper are blended, and two lateral plates meeting at an acute angle behind; toes rather large, compressed, the first much stronger, the outer a little shorter than the inner; claws large, arched, compressed, acute.

Plumage soft, blended, glossy, the feathers ovate and rounded. Wings of ordinary length, the second and third quills longest and equal, the first shorter than the fourth; the outer secondaries abrupt, and slightly repand. Tail of twelve broadly rounded feathers, rather long, almost even, the lateral feathers being only two-twelfths of an inch shorter than the longest.

Bill and feet black, iris hazel. The general colour of the plumage is glossy bluish-black; the smaller wing-coverts deep carmine, their lower row white.

Length to end of tail 9 inches; bill along the ridge $\frac{11}{12}$; wing from flexure 5; tail $3\frac{7}{12}$; tarsus $1\frac{2\frac{1}{2}}{12}$; hind toe $\frac{6\frac{1}{2}}{12}$, its claw $\frac{7}{12}$; second toe $\frac{8}{12}$, its claw $\frac{4\frac{1}{2}}{12}$; third toe $\frac{10\frac{1}{2}}{12}$, its claw $\frac{5}{12}$; fourth toe $\frac{7\frac{1}{2}}{12}$, its claw $\frac{4}{12}$.

CRIMSON-WINGED TROOPIAL, OR RED-AND-BLACK-SHOULDERED MARSH BLACKBIRD.

+AGELAIUS GUBERNATOR, *Wagler*.

PLATE CCXV.—MALE AND FEMALE.

Of this species, which appears to be abundant about the Columbia river, I have received two specimens from Mr. TOWNSEND, who procured them there. Having seen individuals from Mexico, I think it probable that it returns to that country to spend the winter. Of its habits however I regret that I am entirely ignorant.

PSAROCOLIUS GUBERNATOR, *Wagler*, Syst. Avium.

CRIMSON-WINGED TROOPIAL, *Icterus gubernator*, Aud. Orn. Biog., vol. v. p. 211.

Male, 9; wing, $5\frac{7}{12}$.

California.

Adult Male.

Bill shorter than the head, conical, straight, stout, compressed toward the end, tapering to a fine point; upper mandible with the dorsal line nearly



Red-and-white-shouldered. Marsh-Blackbird
Male.



Audubon, John James. 1842. "Red-and-White-Winged Troopial, or Marsh Blackbird, *Agelaius tricolor*, Aud. [Pl. 214]." *The birds of America : from drawings made in the United States and their territories* 4, 27–29.

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