RED-BREASTED WOODPECKER.

+PICUS RUBER, *Gmel.*

PLATE CCLXVI.—MALE AND FEMALE.

Several specimens of this Woodpecker, which were procured by Mr. TOWNSEND on the Columbia river, are in my possession; but I regret that I have no other information to communicate respecting its habits than what is contained in the following note from my friend THOMAS NUTTALL, Esq., who says, "This species, seen in the forests of the Columbia and the Blue Mountains of the same country, has most of the habits of the common Red-headed species. It is, however, much less familiar, and keeps generally among the tall fir-trees, in the dead trunks of which it burrows out a hole for a nest, sometimes at a great elevation. On approaching one which was feeding its young in one of these situations, it uttered a loud reverberating *t'rr t'rr*, and seemed angry and solicitous at my approach. The same species also inhabits Upper California as well as the north-west coast up to Nootka. It is found eastward as far as the central chain of the Rocky Mountains." An egg taken from a nest which contained four, is an inch and a quarter in length, three-fourths in breadth, smooth, equally rounded at both ends, though somewhat elongated, and pure white.

PICUS RUBER, *Gmel. Syst. Nat.*, vol. i. p. 429. *Lath. Ind. Ornith.*, vol. i. p. 228.

RED-BREASTED WOODPECKER, *Picus ruber*, *Aud. Orn. Biog.*, vol. v. p. 179.

Male, 8, 14. Female, 8; wing, $5\frac{2}{12}$.

Upper California. Columbia river. Nootka. Common. Migratory.

Adult Male.

Bill about the length of the head, straight, strong, angular, compressed toward the tip, which is slightly truncate and cuneate. Upper mandible with the dorsal line very slightly convex, the ridge very narrow, the sides sloping, concave at the base, slightly convex toward the end, the lateral angle farther from the ridge than from the margin at its commencement, and terminating on the edge about half-way, the edges sharp, direct, overlapping. Lower mandible with the angle short and rather wide, the crural outline straight, the dorsal ascending and straight, the sides sloping outwards and slightly convex, the tip narrow. Nostrils linear-oblong, basal, concealed by the feathers, and placed much nearer the margin than the ridge.

Head rather large, ovate; neck rather short; body full. Feet very short; tarsus very short, feathered anteriorly one-third down, in the rest of its extent covered with a few large scutella; sharp-edged and having internally small scutella behind; toes four; first toe small; fourth slightly longer than third; second and third united at the base; claws large, much curved, compressed, laterally grooved, very acute.

Plumage very soft, full, and blended. A tuft of reversed stiffish feathers on each side of the base of the upper mandible, concealing the nostrils; the feathers at the angle of the lower mandible also stiffish. Wings rather long; the first quill very small, being only ten-twelfths long, the second nine-twelfths shorter than the third, which is two-twelfths shorter than the fourth, the latter being the longest, and exceeding the fifth by a twelfth and a half; secondaries rounded, and somewhat emarginate. Tail of moderate length, cuneate, of twelve feathers, of which the lateral is only eleven-twelfths long, and one inch five and a half twelfths shorter than the next, which is eleven-twelfths shorter than the middle, and slightly worn, the rest having the tip slit, the shaft terminating abruptly.

Bill bluish-grey, dusky toward the end. Feet bluish-grey, claws brown. The upper part of the head, the neck all round, and a portion of the breast deep carmine; the tufts over the nostrils yellow, and from them a white band to beneath the eye; the feathers of the eyelids black; the middle of the breast and the abdomen yellow; the feathers of the sides of the body and rump, with the lower tail-coverts, barred, or marked with a pointed dusky spot, their edges yellowish-white. The upper parts are black, the middle of the back spotted with yellowish-white, the rump and upper tail-coverts white on the inner webs and toward the tip on both. There is a large patch of white on the wing, formed by some of the smaller coverts, the first row of small coverts and the terminal portions of the outer webs of the secondary coverts. The quills are black, the three longest with eight spots on the outer and five on the inner web, the second with four on the inner web and two on the outer, the first with two on the inner web; the secondaries more or less tipped with white, but several of them without spots on the outer web. The tail-feathers are black, the two middle with three or four white spots on the inner web, or white, with several black bands. Sometimes the lateral feathers are spotted on the outer edge, and several have a terminal white edging.

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

Adult Female.

The female differs only in having the tints somewhat fainter, the white markings on the back smaller, and the yellow of the lower parts duller.

Length to end of tail $8\frac{1}{4}$ inches; bill along the ridge $\frac{11}{12}$; wing from flexure $5\frac{2}{12}$; tail $3\frac{7}{12}$.

THE YELLOW-BELLIED WOODPECKER.

+PICUS VARIUS, *Linn.*

PLATE CCLXVII.—MALE AND FEMALE.

This beautiful species returns to Louisiana and the other Southern States about the beginning of October. It remains there during the winter, and takes its departure before the beginning of April, after which period I have never observed it in these districts. It is seen in Kentucky, and a few breed there; but the greater number return to the middle and especially the northern parts of the Union. During the winter months, it associates with the Hairy, the Red-bellied, and the Downy Woodpeckers. Its notes, which are extremely plaintive, differ widely from those of any other species, and are heard at a considerable distance in the woods.

The Yellow-bellied Woodpecker prefers the interior of the forest during spring and summer, seldom shewing itself near the habitations of man at those seasons. It is a sly and suspicious bird, spending most of its time in trees which have close branches and dense foliage. It generally bores its nest at a considerable height, and usually in the trunk of an undecayed tree, immediately beneath a large branch, and on its southern side. The hole is worked out by the male as well as the female, in the manner followed by other species, and to the depth of from fifteen to twenty-four inches. The aperture is just large enough to admit the birds, but the hole widens gradually towards the bottom, where it is large and roomy. The eggs, which are from four to six, and pure white, with a slight blush, are deposited on the chips without any nest. The young seldom leave the hole until they are fully fledged, after which they follow their parents, in a straggling manner, until the approach of spring, when the males become shy towards each other, and quarrel whenever they meet, frequently erecting the feathers of the head and fighting desperately.

A. V.

Red-breasted Woodpecker.

1. Male. 2. Female.

Audubon, John James. 1842. "Red-Breasted Woodpecker, *Picus ruber*, Gmel. [Pl. 266]." *The birds of America : from drawings made in the United States and their territories* 4, 261–263. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.319381>.

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