ERYTHROSPIZA INCARNATA, Serr.

J. Gould & W. Hart del et lith.

Walter imp.

ERYTHROSPIZA INCARNATA, *Sev.*

Rosy Finch.

Erythrospiza incarnata, Severtzow, Turkest. Jevotn. pp. 64, 117.—Dresser, Ibis, 1875, p. 245.
Carpodacus mongolicus, Swinhoe, Proc. Zool. Soc. 1870, p. 447.

JUDGING from the numerous specimens that have come under my notice during the last few years, this bird must be a very common species on the great tableland of Central Asia. Capt. Biddulph appears to have found it plentiful at Cashgar, and the Russian traveller Severtzow in the countries more to the northward. Having received a visit from the latter gentleman during his late sojourn in London, he discovered, among other species of Asiatic Finches in my collection, his *Erythrospiza incarnata*, under which name I had prepared my Plate for the 'Birds of Asia;' but further research convinced him that the *Carpodacus mongolicus* of Swinhoe was the same bird, and that his (Severtzow's) name ought to be placed as a synonym. I greatly regret that this confusion should have occurred; but it may be set right by any future ornithologist who may be writing on the birds of this group. I received the following note from M. Severtzow, written after a visit to Mr. Swinhoe:—

"SIR,—I went from you to Mr. Swinhoe and saw the original types of his *Erythrospiza mongolica*. It is quite identical (alas!) with my *C. incarnata*, and different from your specimen shot at Kalgan which you showed me.

"The types of *E. mongolica* have faint rosy superciliary streaks, but no rose-colour on the crown, middle of the abdomen white, and white-edged tail-quills—all characters of my *E. incarnata*.

"Your *E. mongolica* differs from the type, (1) by the purplish rose-shaded crown, (2) by the rosy abdomen, (3) by the absence of white edges on the tail; the rump-feathers are wanting.

"Accordingly, the bird of Kalgan appears to be undescribed.

"Yours, very truly,

"N. SEVERTZOW."

Ornithologists are much indebted to Mr. Dresser for his translation of Severtzow's book, without which the original work would have been inaccessible to the student; and we are therefore able to give the following note of Dr. Severtzow's on the present species:—

"This bird is a resident in Turkestan, and is found after the breeding-season in flocks of from 50 to 100 individuals. It was killed at the end of September on the Issik-kul, in August and October on the Upper Narin, at an elevation of from 9000 to 10000 feet; in winter, however, it is not found higher than 2000 feet. In the steppes, everywhere, in summer as well as in autumn and winter, we found this bird only near stony or clayey places. In autumn and spring it moves about very much, feeding on small seeds, and avoids the woods and even the bushes. It runs very fast, although it has such short legs; and it flies swiftly and well." Dr. Scully, who identifies the species with *Carpodacus mongolicus*, writes as follows:—"This species is only a winter visitant to Eastern Turkestan, and even then is not common; it is said to migrate eastwards, towards China, in the spring. Near Yarkand it frequents a sort of desert-bush called *kamghak*, on the seeds of which it appears to feed. It is rather a favourite cage-bird with the Yarkandis, on account of its sweet song; and to this circumstance I am indebted for my specimen, purchased in June in Yarkand. The Turki name for this species is *Tagh tumochuk* ('the mountain-tumochuk'), the latter being the name of *Erythrospiza obsoleta*; so that the Yarkandis would appear to be *d'accord* with M. Severtzow as to the genus to which the bird belongs."

Mr. Swinhoe described his *C. mongolicus* in the 'Proceedings' of the Zoological Society for 1870; and in the same Journal for the year 1871 (p. 387) he further writes concerning the species:—"On the western hills near Pekin. Resident in Ordo (*David*)."

The following description of Dr. Severtzow's is copied from Mr. Dresser's paper (*l.c.*):—

"Adult male in autumn dress. Crown, back, and shoulders greyish sandy brown, with lighter edges and dark central lines; hind neck and cheeks similar, but without dark lines; superciliary

region, throat, breast, and flanks carmine, with grey edges to the feathers; abdomen and under tail-coverts white, with a carmine tinge; quills blackish brown, with light edges, which latter are grey on the lesser wing-coverts, and on the larger coverts are very broad, white, tinged with carmine towards the tips; on the median coverts the margins are white, but the carmine is less developed; hence on the wing are two white patches divided by carmine; the primaries have whitish margins, which in a few are washed with carmine. The tail-feathers are blackish brown, with grey edges. The upper mandible is yellowish brown, the lower mandible light yellow; legs are light brown; iris dark brown.

"In spring all the rose-coloured feathers have become bright blood-red, and the whitish has changed to a snowy white colour, except the stomach and the under tail-feathers, which are protected from the sun. The rose-colour is brightest on the wings, paler on the throat, breast, superciliary region, flanks, and rump, where only the edges of the feathers are of that colour. The dark lines on the crown- and back-feathers change in spring to a darker colour; and the edges of the grey feathers are lost by that time. The female is, in spring and autumn, of the same colour as the male, and differs from it only in not having the rose-colour on the flanks, the breast, and the median coverts; also the white spots on the wings are smaller.

"The young male in the first autumnal plumage is like an old female; but it has no white edges on the large wing-coverts, which are of a brownish red colour; on the median coverts are only very narrow white edges which do not form a white spot when the wing is closed.

"The young female bird in first autumn plumage has scarcely any red colour at all, it being replaced by light grey, which is faintly shaded with red on the breast.

"Measurements. Male—length 6 in. 3-6 lin., extent 10 in. 5 lin. to 11 in.; female—length 6 in. 2-4 lin., extent 10 in. 4-5 lin., wing 3 in. 5 lin., tail 2 in. 1 lin., culmen $3\frac{1}{2}$ lin., middle toe $5\frac{1}{2}$ lin., tarsus $6\frac{1}{2}$ lin."

On the eve of going to press, Captain T. Biddulph kindly forwarded me the accompanying note on the species:—"Erythropsiza incarnata was first met with by us (during the Yarkand Expedition) at Jankse, between Leh and the Pangong lake, in September, in small numbers. It was observed at intervals, generally in pairs, in the Karakash valley; and on our first arrival in the plains of Turkestan, in October, I saw it in large flocks of several hundreds; later on I only observed it in smaller numbers."

The figures in the Plate are of the size of life.

Gould, John. 1877. "Rosy Finch, *Erythrospiza incarnata*, Sev. [Pl. 30]." *The Birds of Asia* 5(XXIX), -. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.323194>.

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