CALIFORNIA QUAIL.

See also the California Quail, p. 100.

Illustrated by H. S. Gifford.

CALLIPEPLA PICTA.

Plumed Partridge.

SPECIFIC CHARACTER.

Call. capite, plumis duabus elongatis, et gracilibus cristum pendentem nigram efficientibus ornato; gulâ saturatè castaneâ, ad latera albo marginatâ, pectore cinereo; abdomine splendide castaneo fasciis nigris et fulvis transversim notato.

Head ornamented with two long slender arched black feathers, rising from the vertex and inclining towards the back; crown of the head, back of the neck and chest deep ash-grey; throat deep chestnut, bounded on the sides by a line of white, and immediately beneath the eye by a smaller streak of black; lores dull white; all the upper surface olive-brown; tail brown, freckled with a darker tint; primaries brown, margined with a lighter tint; sides and abdomen deep chestnut, the outer line of feathers above edged with white; on each side of the abdominal line the feathers are strongly and elegantly marked with alternate bands of black and white.

Total length, $9\frac{3}{4}$ inches; bill, $\frac{3}{4}$; wing, $5\frac{1}{4}$; tail, $3\frac{1}{4}$; tarsi, $1\frac{3}{4}$; middle toe and nail, $1\frac{3}{4}$.

Ortyx picta, Doug. in Linn. Trans., vol. xvi. p. 167.—Vig. in Zool. Journ., vol. iv. p. 490.—

Less. Ill. de Zool., texte de pl. 52.—Jard. and Selb. Ill. Orn., vol. i. Gen. *Ortyx*.

Ortyx plumifera, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., Part V. p. 42.—Ib. in Icones Avium.

Perdix plumifera, Aud. Birds of Am., vol. iv. pl. 422. figs. 1 and 2.—Ib. Orn. Bio., vol. v. p. 226.

Plumed Partridge, Aud. Birds of Am., 8vo, vol. v. p. 69. pl. 291.

For the discovery of this highly ornamental species we are indebted to the researches of the late Mr. David Douglas, in whose baggage three specimens were found after his lamented and untimely death. It will be seen by the synonyms given above, that I some years since characterized this bird under the name of *Ortyx plumifera*, not being at the time aware that Mr. Douglas had previously described a bird of this genus (from the notes made during his first journey) in the sixteenth volume of the "Linnean Transactions" under the appellation of *Ortyx picta*, which in all probability is identical with the present species. Although his description does not accord in every particular with the birds characterized by me, and which are in the collection of the Zoological Society, little doubt remains on my mind that his description is intended for the present bird: I therefore retain his name of *picta*, and allow that of *plumifera* to sink into a synonym.

"From October until March," says Mr. Douglas, "these birds congregate in vast flocks, and seem to live in a state of almost perpetual warfare; dreadful conflicts ensue between the males, which not unfrequently end in the destruction of one or both combatants, if we may judge from the number of dead birds daily seen plucked, mutilated and covered with blood. When feeding they move in compact bodies, each individual endeavouring to outdo his neighbour in obtaining the prize. The voice is *Quick-quick-quick*, pronounced slowly, with a gentle suspension of the voice between each syllable. At such times, or when surprised, the crest is usually thrown forward over the beak, and the reverse when retreating, being brought backwards and laid quite close on the back. Their favourite haunts are dry upland or undulating gravelly or sandy soils in open woods, or coppice thickets of the interior; but during the severity of winter, when the ground is covered with snow, they migrate in large flocks to the more temperate places in the immediate vicinity of

the ocean. Seeds of *Bromus altissimus*, *Madia sativa*, and a tribe of plants allied to *Wedelia*, catkins of *Corylus*, leaves of *Fragaria*, and various insects are their common food. Nest on the ground in thickets of *Pteris*, *Aspidium*, *Rubus*, *Rhamnus*, and *Ceanothus*, neatly built with grass and dry leaves, secreted with so much caution, that without the help of a dog they can hardly be found. Eggs 11 to 15, yellowish white, with minute brown spots; large in proportion to the bird. Pair in March. Common in the interior of California, and during the summer months extending as far northward as 45° north latitude, that is, within a few miles of the Columbian valley. Several pairs, male and female, which I prepared with great care in the interior of California, in November 1826, I had the misfortune (too painful to dwell upon) to lose, with a multitude of treasures, botanical and zoological, crossing one of the rapid tributary streams of the river *Multnomah*, near its source in the mountains, on my return northwards. On this occasion I lost the labour of fifty-four days of fatigue and anxiety, the too frequent attendants of such undertakings."

Mr. Douglas states that the female differs from the male in having the head and breast light fuscous brown, the middle of the feathers black; the crest half an inch long; the throat whitish or light grey; the belly light grey waved with black, less bright than the male, and the under coverts of the tail foxy-red; but after due consideration of the subject I am of opinion that this must be the description of the female of some other bird, or that the *O. picta* of Mr. Douglas must be distinct from the birds here represented, the smaller of which I am induced to regard as a female, in consequence of her being less brilliant in all her markings, and having a much shorter crest; indeed it is only my desire to secure to this gentleman, who has done so much in the cause of science, all the merit that may be due to him, that induces me to treat his *O. picta* as identical with my *O. plumifera*, and to retain his name in preference to my own.

Habitat, California.

The figures are of the natural size.

Gould, John. 1850. "Plumed Partridge, *Callipepla picta* [Pl. XV]." *A monograph of the Odontophorinae, or, Partridges of America* –.

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