

SYNOÏCUS DIEMENENSIS, Gould.

Van Diemen's Land Partridge.

Synoïcus Diemenensis, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., March, 1847.
Greater Brown Quail of the Colonists.

DURING my visit to Van Diemen's Land I was frequently informed that there were two kinds of Quail besides the stubble and painted Quails, the former of which is a true *Coturnix* and the latter a *Hemipodius*, while the two birds referred to belong to neither of those genera, but to that of *Synoïcus*. They are distinguished as the greater and lesser Brown Quail, and sometimes the name of Partridge was given to the bird here figured, doubtless from its going in coveys and resembling the Common Partridge of Europe in many of its actions: I failed in my endeavours to obtain examples, but I was fortunate enough to procure its nest and eggs, which differed so much from those of the common species as to convince me that they had been laid by a different bird: on a late visit to Paris, I found at the house of M. Verreaux several specimens of the bird itself, which had been sent to him by his brother direct from Van Diemen's Land, and which being placed at my disposal enable me to give figures of both species. It is fully a third larger in size than the *S. Australis*, and has the markings of the upper surface more numerous and varied; the situations it affects appear to be low marshy grounds covered with dense masses of herbage. The eggs I procured were found in the swamps immediately below New Norfolk; they are more green than those of *S. Australis*, are sprinkled all over with minute spots of brown, and are from twelve to eighteen in number, one inch and seven-sixteenths long by one inch and an eighth broad. I feel more than ever convinced, that the birds of the form to which the generic term *Synoïcus* has been applied, constitute many more species than has hitherto been supposed.

Forehead, lores and chin greyish white tinged with buff; crown of the head dark brown, with a line of buff down the centre; all the upper surface irregularly marked with beautiful transverse bars of grey, black and chestnut, each feather with a fine stripe of greyish white down the centre; primaries brown, mottled on their external edges with greyish brown; all the under surface greyish buff, each feather with numerous regular somewhat arrow-shaped marks of black, and many of them with a very fine line of white down the centre; bill blue, deepening into black at the tip; irides orange; feet dull yellow.

The Plate represents the two sexes rather less than the size of life.