

POËPHILA PERSONATA, *Gould.*

Masked Grass Finch.

Poëphila personata, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., February 8, 1842.

THIS beautiful and well-marked species of Grass Finch is also a native of the north-west coast of Australia, where several specimens were shot by Mr. Gilbert during an excursion from Port Essington towards the interior of the country, who states that it inhabits grassy meadows near streams, feeding on grass-seeds, &c. It was tolerably abundant, being congregated in flocks of from twenty to forty. When on the wing it utters a very feeble cry of *twit, twit, twit*, but at other times pours forth a drawn-out mournful note, like that of the Estreldas.

The sexes are scarcely to be distinguished by their outward appearance, both possessing the masked face; the female is, however, rather less in size, and her markings are not quite so brilliant or decided as those of the male.

Base of the bill surrounded by an irregular ring of deep velvety black; crown of the head, upper surface and wings light cinnamon-brown; lower part of the abdomen banded with deep velvety black; lower part of the rump and under tail-coverts white; upper tail-coverts white, striped longitudinally with black on the outer side; tail deep blackish brown; irides of the old birds red, of the young birds dark brown; bill bright orange; legs and feet fleshy red.

In some specimens the upper and lower ridges of the bill are black, while in others the basal half only is orange, the remaining portion being brown.

The figures are those of a male and a female of the natural size.