## PHASIANUS SŒMMERRINGII, Temm.

## Sæmmerring's Pheasant.

Phasianus Sæmmerringii, Temm. Pl. Col. 487, 488.—Sieb. Temm. et Schleg. Fauna Japonica, p. 104—Sclat. Proc. Zool. Soc. 1863, p. 117.—Gray, List of Spec. of Birds in Coll. Brit. Mus., part iii. p. 24.—Id. Gen. of Birds, vol. iii. p. 497, Phasianus, sp. 6.

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Graphephasianus Sæmmerringii, Reichenb.—Gray, Cat. of Gen. and Subgen. of Birds in Brit. Mus., p. 104. Graphophasianus Sæmmerringii, Bonap. Compt. Rend. de l'Acad. des. Sci., tom. xlii. séance du 12 Mai 1856.

Our first knowledge of the existence of this fine Pheasant is due to Dr. von Siebold, who was so long a resident at the Dutch factory at Decima, in Japan. The venerable Temminck took advantage of the Doctor's mission, and obtained, through his instrumentality, numerous specimens of this and many other rare birds. The collection thus obtained formed the nucleus, if not the entirety, of the celebrated 'Fauna Japonica,' in the production of which, Von Siebold, Temminck, Schlegel, and De Haan united their labours from 1833 to 1846. From 1830, when Siebold left Japan, until that island was thrown open to the world at large, few, if any, additional specimens of this bird were transmitted to Europe, until about 1860; since that date, however, not only have numerous skins been brought thence, but several attempts have been made to introduce the living bird, some of which resulted in failure, while others were attended with success; and the bird now adorns our aviaries and has even bred in the Gardens of the Zoological Society of London and in those at Antwerp. In a note received from Mr. Bartlett, the Society's Superintendent, dated from their Gardens in the Regent's Park, April 11, 1867, he says "Sæmmerring's Pheasant bred here in June 1865. The female laid about ten eggs; but only three or four birds were hatched, and these died in a few days. The bird also bred in the Gardens at Antwerp, under the care of M. Vekemauns; but I am unable to say if the young arrived at maturity. In both places the males exhibited a strong inclination to destroy the females; and we came to the conclusion that this species is illadapted to breed in captivity." The extreme pugnacity of the male has also reached me from another source, whence I learn that not only do they fight with each other, but destroy their own females. We have yet to ascertain if this disposition would continue to be exhibited were the bird allowed to roam at large: the experiment ought to be made; and this is a subject which should receive attention from the Acclimatization Society. That the bird is very numerous in Japan is certain; for Mr. Whitely had no difficulty in obtaining as many examples as he required in the markets of Nagasaki.

The sexes differ even more considerably from each other in outward appearance than do those of *Phasianus Colchicus* and its near allies.

It will be seen that I have not adopted Dr. Reichenbach's generic name of *Graphephasianus* for this bird, though I might have done so with propriety, since these Copper Pheasants, as they are called, differ in many respects from the more typical members of the genus *Phasianus*.

The reasons given by Temminck for naming this bird Sæmmerringii are embodied in the following passage from the 'Nouveau recueil de planches coloriées des Oiseaux' of that celebrated ornithologist.

"Cette espèce remarquable et nouvelle, de l'ordre des Gallinacés, nous fournit une occasion favorable de présenter l'expression de notre hommage empressé à un homme célèbre, à un vieillard respectable, à un anatomiste distingué, qui, par ses travaux scientifiques et par l'aménité de sa vie privée, répandit le goût de l'étude, et fait chérir son commerce agréable. Puisse la dédicace de cette espèce offerte à M. le professeur de Sœmmerring, être accueillie par ce doyen des naturalistes, comme l'expression de la haute estime qu'il inspire aux amis des sciences, qui s'empressèrent de fêter à Francfort, le 7 Avril 1828, le jubilé donné en son honneur, à l'occasion du cinquantième anniversaire de sa carrière doctorale!"

The male has the whole of the upper surface and throat of a fine coppery brown, with a lighter border to each feather, which in some lights appear of a purple hue, in others rich coppery red, and in others, again, bright but deep flame-colour, this latter tint being especially conspicuous on the lower part of the back and upper tail-coverts: this is the general appearance. On examining each feather singly, it is found to be grey at the base, dark rich brown in the middle, with a broad stripe down the centre and on each side of dark coppery brown, with a lustrous stripe on each side of the tip; wing-coverts the same, but devoid of the lustre at the tips; a few of the greater coverts with a narrow bar of creamy white at the tip, within which is a still narrower one of black; primaries dark brown, crossed by irregular broken bands of a tawny hue; secondaries dark brown, freckled near the tip with tawny, and with a large patch of deep rufous near the end of the outer web, becoming much paler at the extremity, on the tips at the inner webs of several of them the double mark of white and black as on the greater coverts; tail rich chestnut red, with black shafts, and