# EXCALFACTORIA MINIMA, *Gould.*

## Minute Quail.

*Excalfactoria minima*, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., part xxvii. (1859) p. 128.

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The oldest known species of this peculiar form of Gallinaceous birds is the *Tetrao chinensis* of the earlier authors—a species whose range of habitat at least extends from China to the peninsula of India, but not, as was formerly believed, to Australia, the bird there found proving to be distinct and having been characterized by me as such under the specific term of *australis*. A supposed third species, believed to inhabit New Guinea, has, like the Australian bird been named after the country it is said to inhabit. In support of the belief in its existence, I may mention that Mr. Wallace obtained on the island of Gilolo a female (with its egg) which probably is that sex of the New Guinea bird; but it may be the female of a species the male of which is unknown to us. In Africa, a bird of this form occurs which is quite distinct from the others, and which has been named *Adansoni* by M. Verreaux. These are all very closely allied to *Coturnix* on the one hand, and *Synoicus* on the other, but, in my opinion, have been very properly separated from both under the generic title of *Excalfactoria*, which will doubtless be hereafter retained for them.

On comparing the bird represented on the accompanying Plate, of which Mr. Wallace brought several specimens from Macassar, with the other members of the genus, it was found to be so very different that I had no alternative but to regard it as distinct; and I therefore assigned to it the specific name of *minima* as expressive of its diminutive size. It is, in fact, the very smallest of the Gallinaceæ that has yet been discovered; at the same time it is very similar in its general contour and markings to the other *Excalfactoriæ*.

The male has the forehead and sides of the head grey; crown of the head, all the upper surface, and wing-coverts reddish brown, conspicuously spotted and minutely freckled with brownish black; a line of buff down the crown and nape, and a narrow line of brownish white down the centre of the feathers of the upper surface, changing to broad conspicuous stripes of buff on the lower part of the back and tail-coverts; wings pale brown; chin and throat black, within which on each side is an oblong patch of white; below the black a broad crescent of white, fringed on the sides with black, and bounded below by a narrow semicrescent of deep black; under surface grey, spotted on the flanks like the upper surface; line down the centre of the abdomen, thighs and under tail-coverts chestnut-red; bill black; feet yellowish.

The female is very similar in the colouring and markings of the upper surface, but has the forehead and stripe over the eye buff; the chin creamy white, gradually deepening into a gorget of buff on the breast; the remainder of the under surface pale buff, each feather crossed by three or four narrow, somewhat curved bars of brownish black.

The Plate represents the two sexes, of the natural size.