SYRRHAPTES TIBETANUS, Gould.

Tibetian Short-toed Sand Grouse.

Syrrhaptes Tibetanus, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., May 14, 1850.

To Lord Gifford, who has just returned from India, we are indebted for a knowledge of this new species of Sand Grouse, which cannot fail to be of interest to the naturalist, since it forms the second species of a remarkable division of the family, of which only one, the Syrrhaptes paradoxus, was previously known. His Lordship informed me that the specimen here represented was killed by him on the banks of the Tsumureri Lake in the country of Ladakh, and that only one other example had come under his observation. It is very much to be regretted that no information whatever has been obtained respecting the habits and economy of this fine bird, or those of its near ally, the S. paradoxus; especially as from the structure of the feet, being very different from that of the other members of the family, we may reasonably infer that some diversity also occurs in their habits. The Syrrhaptes Tibetanus may be readily distinguished from S. paradoxus by its much larger size, by the form of the first primaries, which are not extended into the filamentous form so remarkable in that species, and by the absence of any black colouring on the breast.

The bird, which appears to be an adult male, has the face hoary; front and sides of the neck ochreous yellow; feathers of the head and nape brown at the base and alternately barred at the tip with black and white; upper part of the back, front and sides of the breast buffy white, crossed by narrow irregular bars of dark blackish brown; all the upper surface and wings buff penciled all over with dark brown, the pencilings being conspicuous on the back, and so minute on the wings as to be almost imperceptible; the scapularies largely blotched on their inner webs with black; primaries and secondaries slaty black, the fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth primaries with an oblique mark of brownish white at the tip; basal half of the two centre tail-feathers buff penciled with brown, their apical half narrow, filamentous and black; lateral tail-feathers sandy red, crossed by three widely placed irregular bands of black, and tipped with buffy white; under surface buffy white, minutely penciled on the breast with brown; legs of the same hue, but the feathers banded with faint bars of brown; bill and nails black.

The Plate represents the specimen mentioned above, which, together with many other interesting species, has been kindly lent to me by Lord Gifford for illustration in the present work.

The figure is of the natural size.