

CYRTONYX MASSENA.

Massena's Partridge.

SPECIFIC CHARACTER.

Cyrt. pectore abdomineque medio castaneis, lateribus corporis nigrescenti-griseis, maculis albis guttatis, plumarum dorsi rachis longitudinaliter fulvo striatis.

Male.—Head ornamented with a full crest inclining backwards, and forming a thick tuft at the occiput of a uniform buffy brown; feathers of the crown buff, transversely marked with black; sides of the head white, interrupted by a narrow stripe of black, which, commencing at the base of the bill, passes upward and curves over the eyes; another stripe of black takes its rise from the same point, passes beneath the eye, and then descends abruptly down the side of the neck; ear-coverts, centre of the throat and a crescent-shaped mark bounding the white below, black; upper surface sandy brown, transversely barred with black, each feather with a narrow stripe of buff down the centre; wing-coverts and tertiaries buffy brown, barred transversely with broad oblong spots of black; primaries dark brown, the outer webs crossed with markings of buff; centre of the chest and abdomen deep chestnut; flanks for their entire length sooty black, each feather ornamented with a double row of nearly round spots of white; vent, thighs and under tail-coverts black; upper mandible black; under mandible horn-colour; legs bluish flesh-colour.

Female.—All the upper surface sandy brown, transversely barred with black, and a conspicuous stripe of buff down the centre of each feather; throat dull white; an indication of the black crescent-shaped mark on the lower part of the neck; under surface vinaceous; flanks in some specimens uniform, in others crossed by minute zigzag markings and freckles of black.

Total length, $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches; bill, $\frac{1}{2}$; wing, $4\frac{1}{2}$; tarsi, $1\frac{1}{4}$; middle toe and nail, $1\frac{3}{8}$.

Ortyx Massena, Less. Cent. de Zool., p. 189.—Ib. Ill. de Zool., texte de pl. 52.

—— *Montezumæ*, Vig. in Zool. Journ., vol. v. p. 275.—Jard. and Selb. Ill. Orn., vol. iii. pl. 126.—Bonap. in Proc. of Zool. Soc., Part V. p. 114.—Natt. MSS.

Odontophorus Meleagris, Wagl. Isis, 1832, p. 277.

Perdix perspicillata, Licht. in Mus. Berlin.

SEVERAL years have now elapsed since I became possessed of a collection of birds from Mexico, among which were specimens of what I conceive to be both sexes of this extraordinarily marked species, and I have since seen others in the Royal Museum of Berlin, and in that of the Prince Massena at Paris. The first-mentioned specimens now form part of the collection of the Zoological Society of London, in whose aviary in the Regent's Park another individual was living for some time.

No account whatever has yet reached us of the habits and economy of this species, which, judging from the comparative shortness of its toes and the great development of its claws, we may expect to be different from those of the other members of the family.

The male is rendered exceedingly conspicuous by the singular disposition of the markings of the face, which are very strongly contrasted, and forcibly remind one of the painted face of the clown in a pantomime; the female on the other hand is very different in colour, and in the markings of the upper surface closely resembles the Common Quail of Europe.

Habitat, Mexico.

I am indebted to the kindness of Prince Massena for the loan of a fine specimen of this bird, from which my figure of the male was taken.

The Plate represents a male and a female of the natural size.