UROCYNCHRAMUS PYLZOWI, Prjev.

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Pylzoff's Rose Bunting.

Urocynchramus pylzowi, Prjevalsky, Birds of Mongolia, in Rowley's Orn. Misc. ii. p. 309, pl. vii.

The travels of Colonel Prjevalsky through the unknown regions of Mongolia and Thibet have arrested the attention of naturalists during the whole time that this adventurous traveller has been pursuing his dangerous journeys; and an additional interest has been bestowed on the countries which he has been exploring, as they were known to trench upon the boundaries of those districts which the energy of Père David had opened up to scientific research. Colonel Prjevalsky has not only made us acquainted with the breeding-homes of many rare and little-known species, but he has also discovered several very interesting forms of birds, which I hope to be able ere long to figure in the present work. While writing on this subject, however, it would be ungracious to omit all mention of the great obligation under which English ornithologists labour towards the late Mr. Dawson Rowley for having translated the ornithological writings of Colonel Prjevalsky into the English language; without this assistance it would have been impossible for the majority of ornithological students to become acquainted with the notable facts which that explorer brought to light. I am in consequence enabled to present my readers with the following account of the present species, as given by Colonel Prjevalsky. It will be noticed that he has bestowed upon the bird a new generic title (Urocynchramus) on account of the peculiar shape of the bill, which is like that of a Bunting, while in the tail the species resembles the Siberian Grosbeak (Uragus sibiricus). From an examination of the specimen I consider that the proper place for the bird in the natural system will be in close proximity to the latter bird, notwithstanding its Bunting-like bill. Colonel Prjevalsky writes:—

"The long graduated tail and the rose of the plumage, which is not found in any other species of *Cynchramus*, form the principal characteristics of the present species, which I have named after my travelling companion, M. A. Pylzoff, who has been so useful to our expedition by his untiring energy.

"We first met with *U. pylzowi* on the sources of the river Tetung, during the autumn migration, early in October 1872; and in the spring of the following year we again fell in with these birds there, early in April; and, as before, they kept singly or in small companies in plains and valleys near rivers, usually about the low thick bushes of *Potentilla tenuifolia*.

"Then, again, during our stay of more than a month in the mountains south of the central course of the Tetung we did not meet with these birds, nor in the preceding year, and found them breeding only towards the end of May, in the alpine region of the mountain north of the Tetung. Here, as also in the former locality, the birds kept almost exclusively in the bushes of *Potentilla tenuifolia*. In Kan-su it occurs only sporadically, and finds there its northern limit of distribution.

"The voice of *U. pylzowi* very much resembles that of *Cynchramus schæniclus*; and the flight reminds one of *Uragus sibiricus*, for which the first bird I shot was mistaken when on the wing."

The following diagnosis of the species is also taken from Colonel Prjevalsky's work:—

"Adult male.—Above fulvous, streaked with blackish; throat, chest, cheeks, and abdomen rosy; wing-coverts dusky, edged with rufous; tail long and graduated; the outer tail-feathers rosy, bordered with a white tip, the four middle ones brown, margined with fulvous.

"Female.—Underneath buffy white, streaked with blackish, the three outer tail-feathers orange or margined with orange."

Mr. Henry Seebohm, in whose collection was one of these birds, received in exchange from the St. Petersburg Museum, has been so good as to lend it to me for the purpose of the present work. The figures in the Plate represent two males, in different positions, and a female, of the natural size, the drawing of the latter having been made from description.

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