ERYTHROSPIZA GITHAGINEA.

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Trumpeter Bullfinch.

Fringilla githaginea, Licht. Verz. Doubl. p. 24 (1823).

Pyrrhula payraudæi, Audouin, Expl. Egypte, Explic. Planches, p. 286, pl. 5. fig. 8 (1825).

Pyrrhula githaginea, Temm. Man. d'Orn. iii. p. 249.—Id. Pl. Col. iii. pl. 400.—Werner, Atlas, Granivores, Suppl. pls. 7, 8.—Bolle, Naumannia, 1858, p. 369.

Erythrospiza githaginea, Bonap. Comp. List B. Eur. & N. Amer. p. 34 (1838).—Gould, B. Eur. iii.—Bp. Faun. Ital. Ucc. pl. 35. fig. 3.—Id. & Sch. Monogr. Loxiens, pl. 33.—Shelley, B. Egypt, p. 155.—Dresser, B. Eur. pt. 35.

Carpodacus crassirostris, Blyth, J. A. S. B. xvi. p. 476 (1847).

Carpodacus payraudæi, Gray, Gen. B. ii.

Bucanetes githagineus, Cab. Mus. Hein. i. p. 104 (1850).—Heuglin, Orn. N.O.-Afr. i. p. 656.

Carpodacus githagineus, Brehm, Vogelf. p. 91 (1855).

Though this bird is as often called the Trumpeter Bullfinch, it is also known by the name of the Desert-Bullfinch, an appellation which conveys at once an intimation of the habitat affected by the bird. To call it a Bullfinch appears to me somewhat of a misnomer when one recalls the gay plumage which is generally characteristic of the latter group of birds; and it has been rightly separated under the heading of a distinct genus, *Erythrospiza*. It is essentially a bird of the Desert region, or of what is usually known to naturalists of the present day as the Mediterraneo-Persic Subregion; and it ranges from the Canary Islands, throughout the whole of North-western Africa, Egypt, Nubia, and Arabia, extending to Palestine and eastwards as far as Scinde.

Captain Shelley, in his 'Birds of Egypt,' observes:—"This pretty little bird, rendered so conspicuous by its bright red bill, is very plentiful in Upper Egypt and Nubia, where it may be met with in pairs and flocks along the confines of the desert. It invades the cultivated land for its food, which consists entirely of small seeds, and at such times may be seen clustered in groups upon the mustard- and other plants, which wave to and fro under the weight of the birds as they busily peck away at the seeds. In flight it closely resembles the Linnet; but its pale roseate tints easily distinguish it from any other Egyptian Finch." Its habits in Scinde appear to be very similar, according to Mr. Hume, who writes:—"It was met with only at comparatively short distances from the lower slopes of the hills which divide Sindh from Khelat. They were seen exclusively on small patches of cultivation which here and there occur, oases in the barren waste which fringes the skirts of the mountains. They were always in small flocks, feeding on a kind of mustard, very tame, but difficult to shoot, because invariably, when in the least disturbed, they run in amongst the mustard-plants along the ground, with which their upper surfaces are almost absolutely unicolorous."

Of the peculiar song, from which the species gets its name of Trumpeter, Mr. Dresser has collected several accounts. He observes respecting this feature:—"The song of the male is by Dr. Bolle said to closely resemble the low note of a small penny trumpet, sometimes loud and clear, and at others long drawn out and harsh. A note frequently used is a rather harsh $k\ddot{a}$ - $k\ddot{a}$ - $k\ddot{a}$; and they frequently call to each other, using a cackling note like kekek, kekeek; and the alarm-note, or note of astonishment at any thing unusual, is a loud schak, schak. Von Heuglin says that the call-note is a wooden ter-ter; and its song is very poor, resembling the sound produced by blowing into a child's wooden trumpet."

The following description of the adult male is given by Captain Shelley:—"The feathers round the beak are brightly tinted with rosy red; top of the head, ear-coverts, and sides of the neck delicate ashy grey, shading on the nape and back into soft pinkish brown; rump and upper tail-coverts pink, the feathers edged with carmine; tail brown, with a similar edging towards the base of the feathers; underparts pink, with the ends of the feathers carmine; beak bright orange-red; legs brownish flesh-colour; iris brown. In winter plumage pink takes the place of the carmine."

The female differs (as stated by Mr. Dresser) from the male in being much duller, and in having scarcely any red in the plumage; upper parts dull dust-brown, the underparts similar but lighter; wings paler than in the male, the quills with only the faintest wash of pink on the edge of the outer web; tail dull brown, the feathers edged with pale red at the base; upper tail-coverts slightly tipped with rosy red.

The figures in the accompanying Plate represent the two sexes of the natural size, the female being in my own collection, while the male bird was very kindly lent to me by Captain Shelley.

THE CANON TO M.O. W. O. M. O. W. O.