

EUSPIZA MELANOCEPHALA.

Black-headed Bunting.

- Emberiza melanocephala*, Scop. Ann. Nat. Hist., tom. i. p. 142.—Sykes, Proc. of Comm. of Sci. and Corr. of Zool. Soc., part ii., 1832, p. 93.—Jerd. Madras Journ. of Lit. and Sci., vol. xi. p. 29.—Blyth, Journ. of Asiat. Soc. Beng., vol. xiii. p. 957.—Burg. Proc. of Zool. Soc., part xxii., 1854, p. 160.—Bree, Hist. of Birds of Eur. not obs. in Brit. Isles, vol. iii. p. 24, and pl.
- Tanagra melanicteria*, Lath. Ind. Orn., vol. i. p. 123.—Güld. Nov. Comm. Petrop., tom. xix. p. 465, tabs. 13, 14.
- Xanthornus Caucasicus*, Pall. Zoog. Rosso-Asiat., tom. i. p. 428. no. 74.
- Fringilla crocea*, Vieill. Hist. Nat. des Ois. Chant., p. 51, tab. 27.
- Passerina melanocephala*, Vieill. Encyc. Méth. Orn., part iii. p. 940.
- Emberiza granativora*, Ménétr. Cat. des Objets de Zool. du Caucase, tom. i. p. 40. no. 99.
- Euspiza melanocephala*, Bonap. Consp. Gen. Av., tom. i. p. 468, *Euspiza*, sp. 1.—Tristr. Proc. Zool. Soc., 1864, p. 446.—Id. Ibis, 1867, p. 368.—Jerd. Birds of Ind., vol. ii. part i. p. 378.
- *simillima*, Blyth, Journ. Asiat. Soc. Beng., vol. xxiii. p. 811.—Id. Cat. of Birds in Mus. Asiat. Soc. Calc., p. 128.—Horsf. & Moore, Cat. of Birds in Mus. East-Ind. Comp., vol. ii. p. 486.
- Granativora simillima*, Bonap. Compt. Rend. de l'Acad. Sci., 1853.

WIDELY spread, indeed, is this fine and showy species of Bunting; for, although a native of Western India, it is especially abundant in Asia Minor, Greece, Italy, and other parts of Southern Europe, and we know that it has even been killed in England; for I have at this moment before me a female specimen that was shot by Mr. Robert Brazener in the neighbourhood of Brighton, as recorded by me in 'The Ibis' for 1869, p. 128. This individual is now the property of T. J. Monk, Esq., of Mountfield House, Lewes, the proprietor of many of the *rare aves* which have made Sussex so famous in the eyes of British ornithologists. Having said thus much, I shall now proceed to give the details which have been published by those who have had opportunities of observing the bird in a state of nature, a privilege I have not myself enjoyed; and, in a work on the Birds of Asia, I naturally commence with Mr. Jerdon.

"In India," says this gentleman, "the Black-headed Bunting is only found in the North-western Provinces, where it is most abundant in the Deccan, and thence extends into the Upper Provinces of Hindustan. It usually makes its appearance in the Deccan about the end of November, in immense flocks, which are very destructive to the crops of jowaree and other grains. It leaves early in March, and certainly does not breed in any part of India."

The Rev. H. B. Tristram, in his "Notes on the Ornithology of Palestine," states that it is there a very common and conspicuous bird in spring and summer, and says:—"On reference to my note-book, I find I did not observe it before the first week in May; and its plumage is too brilliant for it easily to escape notice. Its note is varied and powerful, more like a Linnet's than a Bunting's; and it resorts to scrub, forests, and cultivated ground, affecting particularly olive-yards and, in the north, apricot-orchards, where it sits pouring forth its song from the topmost twig of some tall tree. The nest is placed either on the ground, in a tuft, or in a low bush, sometimes in the clump at the root of a shrub; it is more compact than that of most Buntings, lined with fibres of roots and hair; and the eggs, often six in number, are of a pale blue, powdered all over their surface, sometimes thickly, at others sparsely, with brown spots."

Dr. Bree, speaking of the bird in his valuable contribution to ornithological literature, 'A History of the Birds of Europe not observed in the British Isles,' says:—

"The Black-headed Bunting is an inhabitant of the southern parts of Europe and Asia Minor. It inhabits the Caucasus, and is very common in Georgia, about Tiflis, and in Greece, and is not rare in Dalmatia. It is common throughout the Levant, and is sufficiently so, according to Temminck, in Istria, in the neighbourhood of Trieste, in the bushes and slopes of the hills which border the Adriatic. It has occasionally, but accidentally, been found in Lombardy, Provence, Saxony, and, in Germany, in the neighbourhood of Vienna.

"It sings very agreeably, preferring, while so engaged, to perch on some post in the open country.

"It nests upon shrubs, particularly, according to Degland, on 'the *Bariurus aculeatus*, and not far from the ground. It lays from four to five whitish eggs, covered with very small spots and dots of a more or less ashy grey; some specimens are of greenish white, with spots of a rust-brown at the largest end.'

"Count Mühle says it comes into Greece at the end of April. On a clear bright morning in spring, the