

Natterer of Vienna, the Prince Massena, the Earl of Derby, the Baron de la Fresnaye, the Zoological Society of London, the Viscomte DuBus, the Directors of the Royal Museums of Berlin, Leyden and Paris, and the Museums of Neufchâtel and the Academy of Sciences of Philadelphia; all of whom have, where necessary, most liberally lent me even unique specimens for illustration, besides which my own collection has been from time to time enriched by the addition of several new and undescribed species.

All the members of this group are strictly American, and by far the greater number of them are natives of that portion of the continent lying between the 30th degree of North latitude and the Equator. Four species are now included in the fauna of North America, and four have been discovered in Brazil; some few extend their range to the larger of the West Indian Islands; the late researches among the Andes, particularly in Peru, Bolivia, and the neighbourhood of Santa Fé de Bogota, have made us acquainted with several others; and it is in the countries contiguous to that vast mountain range that additional species may most probably yet be found.

That the members of this group are of very general interest to ornithologists, is evidenced by the fact that several writers have given a synoptical list of the species with which they were acquainted. Not more than two appear to have been known to Linnæus, by whom they were included in his genus *Tetrao*. Latham, in the eighth volume of his "General History of Birds," published in 1823, enumerates nine species, two of which being synonymous with others, the number is reduced to seven. At the first Scientific Meeting of the Zoological Society of London, held on the 9th of November, 1830, Mr. Vigors stated that nine species were then known, to which he added *Ortyx neovenus* and *O. affinis*, at the same time expressing his doubts as to whether they might not prove to be females or young males of *Ortyx Sonnini* or *O. cristatus*; and it has since been ascertained that his *O. neovenus* is the female of *O. cristatus*; but his *O. affinis* will, I believe, prove to be a distinct species. M. Lesson was the next author who gave a list of the species of this group, of which he only enumerates nine; and the last writers who appear to have given a general revision of the subject are Messrs. Jardine and Selby, who in the Synopsis Specierum published in the first and third volumes of their "Illustrations of Ornithology," increase the number to eleven. By most of these authors, some mistakes have been made as to the identity of the species and the synonyms having reference to them; and in more than one instance, the old *Perdix Falklandicus*, a bird belonging to a totally different group, is included in the genus *Ortyx*. Few of my readers will, I apprehend, be prepared to learn that not less than thirty-five species are now known; of these, several have been lately described by myself in the "Proceedings of the Zoological Society," and others by Messrs. Lichtenstein, Lesson and Natterer in various continental publications. Vieillot was the first author who perceived the propriety of separating one of the members of this group from *Tetrao* and *Perdix*; proposing the term *Odontophorus* for the *Tetrao Guianensis* of Gmelin; a fact, with which Mr. Stephens must have been unacquainted when he proposed the term *Ortyx* for the American Partridges collectively, with *O. Virginianus* for the type. These two