

CHESTNUT-CROWNED TITMOUSE.

PARUS MINIMUS, *Towns.*

PLATE CXXX.—MALE AND FEMALE.

My friend NUTTALL's account of this Titmouse is as follows. "We first observed the arrival of this plain and diminutive species on the banks of the Wahlamet, near to its confluence with the Columbia, about the middle of May. Hopping about in the hazel thickets which border the alluvial meadows of the river, they appeared very intent and industriously engaged in quest of small insects, chirping now and then a slender call of recognition. They generally flew off in pairs, but were by no means shy, and kept always in the low bushes or the skirt of the woods. The following day I heard the males utter a sort of weak monotonous short and quaint song, and about a week afterwards I had the good fortune to find the nest, about which the male was so particularly solicitous as almost unerringly to draw me to the spot, where hung from a low bush, about four feet from the ground, his little curious mansion, formed like a long purse, with a round hole for entrance near the summit. It was made chiefly of moss, down, lint of plants, and lined with some feathers. The eggs, six in number, were pure white, and already far gone towards being hatched. I saw but few other pairs in this vicinity, but on the 21st of June, in the dark woods near Fort Vancouver, I again saw a flock of about twelve, which, on making a chirp something like their own call, came around me very familiarly, and kept up a most incessant and querulous chirping. The following season (April 1836) I saw numbers of these birds in the mountain thickets around Santa Barbara, in Upper California, where they again seemed untiringly employed in gleaning food in the low bushes, picking up or catching their prey in all postures, sometimes like the common Chickadee, head downwards, and letting no cranny or corner escape their unwearied search. As we did not see them in the winter, they migrate in all probability throughout Mexico and the Californian peninsula at this season."

According to Mr. TOWNSEND, "the Chinooks name it *a-ha-ke-lok*. It is a constant resident about the Columbia river; hops about in the bushes, and frequently hangs from the twigs in the manner of other Titmice, twittering all the while with a rapid enunciation resembling the words *thshish*, *tshist*, *tsee*, *twee*. The irides are bright yellow."



R. T.

Chestnut-crowned Titmouse

1. Male. 2. Female and Nest.

PARUS MINIMUS, *Chestnut-crowned Titmouse*, Towns. Jour. Acad. Nat. Sc. Philadelphia, vol. vii. p. 190.

CHESTNUT-CROWNED TITMOUSE, *Parus minimus*, Aud. Orn. Biog., vol. iv. p. 382.

Adult Male.

Bill short, strong, compressed; upper mandible with its outline arched, the sides sloping and convex; the edges sharp, the tip descending, acute, and considerably exceeding that of the lower; which has the angle short, the dorsal line ascending and very slightly convex, the edges sharp, the tip acute. Nostrils round, basal. Head rather large, broadly ovate, convex in front; neck short; body slender. Feet of moderate length, tarsus proportionally longer than in any other American species, stout, compressed, with seven anterior scutella, and two lateral plates, forming a very sharp edge behind. Toes moderately stout, the first with its claw equal to the third, the anterior united as far as the first web. Claws rather large, arched, compressed, acute.

Plumage soft and blended. Wings short, very broad, concave, rounded; first quill half the length of the second, which is a quarter of an inch shorter than the outer secondaries. Tail very long, being half the entire length of the bird, slightly arched, much rounded, and a little emarginate.

Bill black; feet and claws dusky or blackish-brown. Upper part of the head and hind neck dull greyish-brown; upper parts brownish-grey; wings and tail dusky brown, tinged with grey, the margins of the quills and tail-feathers greyish-white. Cheeks of a paler tint than the head; all the lower parts brownish-white, the sides tinged with reddish.

Length to end of tail $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches; wing from flexure $1\frac{10\frac{1}{2}}{12}$; tail $2\frac{2}{12}$; bill along the ridge $\frac{4\frac{1}{2}}{12}$; tarsus $\frac{7}{12}$; hind toe $2\frac{3}{2}$, its claw $\frac{2\frac{3}{2}}{12}$; middle toe $\frac{4}{12}$, its claw $\frac{2}{12}$.

Adult Female.

The female is rather smaller, and its colours are somewhat paler.

A nest presented to me by Mr. NUTTALL is of a cylindrical form, nine inches long and three and a half in diameter. It is suspended from the fork of a small twig, and is composed externally of hypna, lichens, and fibrous roots, interwoven so as to present a smoothish surface, and with a few stems of grasses, and some feathers of *Garrulus Stelleri* intermixed. The aperture, which is at the top, does not exceed seven-eighths of an inch in diameter; but for two-thirds of the length of the nest, the internal diameter is two inches. This part is lined with the cottony down of willows, carefully thrust into the interstices, and contains a vast quantity of soft feathers, chiefly of Steller's Jay, with some others, among which can be distinguished those of *Tetrao urophasianus*, *Columba fasciata*, and *Tanagra ludoviciana*. The eggs, nine in number, are pure white, $\frac{4\frac{1}{2}}{8}$ of an inch in length, by $\frac{3\frac{1}{2}}{8}$ broad, and are rather pointed at the small end.



R. T.

Chestnut-crowned Titmouse

1. Male. 2. Female and Nest.



Audubon, John James. 1841. "Chestnut-Crowned Titmouse, *Parus minimus*, Towns. [Pl. 130]." *The birds of America : from drawings made in the United States and their territories* 2, 160–161. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.319243>.

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