

A BRIEF REVIEW OF THE LAGOPODES BELONGING TO THE GROUP ATTAGEN KAUP.

By LEONHARD STEJNEGER.

(Plate V.)

When examining the Ptarmigans from the different islands of the Aleutian Chain a short time ago I was compelled to go over an extensive series of these birds in order to decide upon their mutual relationship.

This group of birds is more difficult than perhaps any other on account of the peculiarity of the almost continuous moulting, by which the different plumages usually are blended and mixed to such a degree, that specimens in this full plumage of a certain season — except the winter-plumage — are rather scarce even in very extensive collections. It is also of the greatest importance, that the specimens should be accurately labelled as to locality and date, as birds from the different habitats will have to be compared while in absolutely corresponding plumages. Only the most serious mistakes will result — and have indeed resulted — by making conclusions from a specimen in spring-plumage of one form as compared with one in autumnal dress of another form.

I present the following notes particularly for the reason that I have had a comparatively rich material at hand, especially of American birds. It is, however, by far less complete than could be desired, and I would be very obliged for specimens of adult males in summer-plumage from any locality.

It is but expected that some over-zealous ornithologist will sneer at the author for belonging to «C. L. Brehm's family» or for »splitting hairs». If sound and correct the views, expressed in the following revision, will survive the sneers; in the mean time I will be very glad by having them thoroughly tested.

1. *Lagopus muta*¹ (MONTIN) COLL.

1758. — *Tetrao lagopus*, LIN., Syst. Nat. 10 ed. p. 159 (part).
 1776. — *Tetrao mutus* MONTIN, Physiogr. Sölsk. Handl I (p. 155).
 1807. — *Tetrao rupestris* BECHST., Gem. Naturg. Deutschl. III p. 1358.
 1817. — *Tetrao alpinus* NILLS., Orn. Sv. I (p. 311).
 1874. — *Lagopus alpinus* var *scandinavica* SUNDEV., Öfr. Sv. Vet. Ac. Handl. 1874, n. 3, p. 19.
 1874. — *Lagopus mutus* var *mutus* RIDGW., in B. BR. RIDGW. Birds N. Amer. III p. 456 (part).
 1877. — *Lagopus mutus* COLLETT, N. Mag. Naturw. XXIII, p. 163.

The Scandinavian Ptarmigan may be distinguished from the South-European form by being slightly smaller, and by having, on the average, the white at the base of the exterior tailfeathers more developed. The differences in color are slight, but perceptible, especially in the postästival plumage which is purer gray.²

This form inhabits the high mountains and northern parts of Norway and Sweden, and is said to occur eastwards through southern Siberia in high altitudes (cfr. SAUNDERS, Yarr. Brit. Birds 4 ed. III p. 86). Its occurrence in Japan as recorded with query by capt. BLAKISTON (Amend. List B. Jap. 1884 p. 43) on the authority of Mr. SEEBOHM's identification (Ibis 1884 p. 35) seems more than doubtful, as the Japanese birds probably belong to a distinct form. In northern Siberia it is replaced by another form, possibly *L. rupestris* (cfr. SAUNDERS l. c.).

In the 10th edition of *Systema Naturalis* Linneus knows but one species of ptarmigan (*Tetrao lagopus*) the description being equally applicable to both the European species, but in *Fauna Svecica* 2 ed. (1761) and in the 12th edition (1766) he recognizes a «*Alpina varietas minor*», thus restricting *Tetrao lagopus* particularly to the species afterwards known

¹ The grammatical gender of *Lagopus* is either masculine and both are correct. Plinius (X. 68.) uses it as feminine, but most conclusive is that Brisson, the founder of the modern name follows his example. «*Lagopus* BRISS.» is certainly feminine!

² I use the opportunity for correcting a mistake of Mr. TURNER in his valuable memoir «On *Lagopus mutus*, Leach, and its allies» (P. U. S. N. M. 1882. pp. 227 and 232), where Nr. 33546 is given as killed in Norway in July. It is from Oberhasli in Switzerland, and killed in June.

as albus.¹ It is therefore not correct when GRAY (Handl. II p. 278) quotes *T. lagopus* L. under *mutus* as have so many authors both before and after. In 1769 SCOPOLI (Ann. I. Hist. Nat. p. 118) refers *T. lagopus* to the South-European form: «*rostro maculaque inter oculum et rostrum atris*» and about its summer-plumage which he describes as a variety; he remarks «*hoc est alterum Lagopodis Genus in Helvetiae montibus*». Aldrov. L. 13, C. 21. GMELIN in 1788 follows him herein although fully aware of the fact that MONTIN in 1776 had distinctly disposed of «*Tetrao lagopus*» for the Willow Ptarmigan, naming the Skandinavian form of the *T. mutus*.

1.a. *Lagopus muta vulgaris* (VIEILL.) STEJNEGER.

1758. — *Tetrao lagopus* LIN., Syst. Nat. 10. ed. p. 159 (part.)
 1769. — *Tetrao lagopus* SCOP., Ann. I. Hist. Nat. p. 118.
 1816. — *Lagopus mutus* LEACH, Cat. M. et B. Br. Mus. (p. 27).
 1817. — *Lagopus vulgaris* VIEILL., N. Dict. d'Hist. Nat. XVII, p. 199 (part.)
 1817. — *Lagopus mutans* FORSTER, Synopt. Cat. Br. B. p. 19.
 1823. — *Tetrao montanus* BREHM, Lehrb. Eur. Vög. p. 448.
 1835. — *Tetrao rupestris* JENYNS, Man. Brit. Vert. An. (171).
 1837. — *Lagopus cinereus* MAEGILL., Hist. Brit. Birds I p. 187.
 1860. — *Lagopus alpinus minor* BREHM, J. f. Orn. 1860, p. 393.
 1874. — *Lagopus alpinus var meridionalis* SUNDEV., Öfr. Sv. Vet. Ac. Handl. 1874, n. 3, p. 19.
 1874. — *Lagopus mutus var. mutus* RIDGW. in B. Br. and RIDGW. Birds N. Amer. III. p. 456 (part.)

The chief differences from the foregoing form, of which it is only a subspecies, are indicated under the head of the latter.

Having had no specimens from Great Britain I am unable to say with certainty, if the Ptarmigan, which resides in the Scotch mountains is absolutely identical with that inhabiting Southern Europe.

Hab: The Alps of Southern Europe, the Pyrenean Mountains, and it is probably the same form which inhabits Scotland.

¹ This species will therefore have to stand as *Lagopus lagopus* (LINN.).

2. *Lagopus ridgwayi* STEJNEGER.

(Plate V.)

1883. — *Lagopus albus* STEJNEGER, Pr. U. S. Nat. Mus. 1883 p. 72 (nec Gmel) (cfr. «The Auk» 1884 p. 82).

1884. — *Lagopus ridgwayi* STEJNEGER, Pr. Biol. Soc. Washingt. II p. 98.

A well circumscribed form, characterized by its blackish prepectus in preästival plumage, its saturated ferrugineous-brown color, the lack of whitish or grayish edgings to the feathers, and the blackish color of abdomen and tibia in the postastival plumage. Bill proportionally larger than in the allied forms.

At present only known as an inhabitant of the Commander Group of the Aleutian Islands, and is most likely only an isolated insular species not at all occurring on the neighbouring Kamtschatka.

The figure represents a male in perfect postastival plumage, Nr. 89062 U. S. Nat. Mus., collected by me at Lissenskovaja, Bering Island, August 23, 1882, one of the types of the species, and is the result of Mr. J. L. Ridgway's skill. I am indebted to the authorities of the National Museum for permission of having it published in connection with the present paper.

3. *Lagopus hyperborea* (SUNDW.) MALMGREN.

1827. — *Tetrao lagopus* ROSS, in PARRY, Att. read. Northpole (p. 193) (nec Lin).

1843. — *Lagopus alpinus* var. *hyperborea* SUNDEV., in GAIMARD, Voy. Scandin., livr. 18 pl.

1858. — *Lagopus hemileucurus* GOULD, P. Z. S, 1858 p. 354.

1863. — *Lagopus hyperborea* MALMGREN., Ofv. Sv. Vet. Ac. Handl. 1863 p.

1874. — *Lagopus rupestris* var. *hyperborea* SUNDEV, Ofv. Sv. Vet. Acad. Handl. 1874, n. 3. p. 19.

The Spetsbergen Ptarmigan may be regarded as a distinct species on account of its superior size, and the distinctness of the color of its summer-plumage, together with the large amount of white on the tail-feathers. It also seems as it only assumes one summer-plumage.

Only known from Spetsbergen.

4. *Lagopus islandorum* (FABER) BP.

1786. — *Tetrao lagopus* MOHR, Isl. Naturh. p. 49 (nec Lin.)
 1822. — *Tetrao islandorum* FABER, Prodr. Isl. Orn. (p. 6.)
 1823. — *Tetrao islandicus* BREHM, Lehrb. Eur. Vög. p. 440.
 1844. — *Tetrao lagopus islandicus* SCHLEG., Rev. Crit. p. LXXVI.
 1856. — *Lagopus islandorum* BONAP., Catal. Parzud. p. 13.
 1862. — *Lagopus rupestris* β *islandorum* BLAS. List. Eur. B. p. 16.
 1871. — *Lagopus mutus* α *islandorum* DUBUS, Consp. Av. Europ. p. 21.

Having no material at hand at present, I am unable to point out the characters and affinities of the present form with certainty. It is therefore kept as a species provisionally until it can be satisfactorily demonstrated, whether it is specifically or only subspecifically distinct, and in the latter case to what species it really belongs. It is said to be distinguished by a heavier bill, larger size and browner plumage than its next allies. A not unimportant character seems to be that the females in the winter-plumage have a very broad black transocular stripe, fully as large as the males.

Inhabits Iceland, as its name indicates.

5. *Lagopus rupestris* (GM.) LEACH.

1788. — *Tetrao rupestris* GM., Syst. Nat. I. p. 751.
 1817. — *Lagopus rupestris* LEACH, Zool. Misc II p. 290.
 1818. — *Tetrao lagopus* SABINE, Trans. Lin. Soc. XII (p. 530).
 1831. — *Tetrao (Lagopus) mutus* RICH. Faun. Bor. Amer. II p. 350 (part).
 ? 1839. — *Lagopus americanus* AUD. Syn. (p. 207).
 1874. — *Lagopus rupestris* var. *occidentalis* SUNDEV., Ofr. Sv. Vet. Ac. Handl. 1874 n. 3 p. 19.
 1874. — *Lagopus mutus* var. *rupestris* RIDGW., in B. Br. and Ridgw. Birds N. Amer III p. 462.

No European Ptarmigan in preästival plumage will match the same plumage of *rupestris*, nor will the postästival garb of the latter ever assume a color like that of the autumnal dress of its European relatives.

In *rupestris* the prepectus is never uniform blackish, but is, on the contrary, always distinctly barred.¹

The Rock Ptarmigan inhabits Arctic America and is presumed to be the form occurring on the Siberian tundras as far west as Yenisey.

5a. *Lagopus rupestris reinhardti* (BREHM) BLASIUS.

1780. — *Tetrao lagopus* FABRIC., Faun. Groenl. p. 114. (nec LIN).
 1823. — *Tetrao reinhardi* BREHM, Lehrb. Eur. Vög. p. 440.
 1826. — *Tetrao reinhardti* BREHM, Oken's Isis 1826 p. 930.
 1855. — *Lagopus groenlandicus* BREHM, Naum. 1855 p. 287.
 1862. — *Lagopus rupestris* γ *reinhardti* BLAS. List Eur. B. p. 16.
 1871. — *Lagopus mutus* β *reinhardti* DÜBUS, Consp. Av. Eur. p. 21.
 1874. — *Lagopus rupestris* var. *occidentalis* SUNDEV., Ofv. Sv. Acad. Handl. 1874. n. 3. p. 19 (*part.*)

This is the Eastern or Greenlandic race of the Rock Ptarmigan. So far I can detect, this form offers the peculiarity that the females are easier distinguishable from the mainland race than the males. They are much more narrowly banded, and present a much darker and less orange colored appearance.²

It has been shown by Mr. TURNER, that it is the Greenland Ptarmigan which breeds at Cumberland Gulf, a conclusion which seems to me fully correct. I have based my judgement upon the same material.

5b. *Lagopus rupestris nelsoni* STEJNEGER.

1858. — *Tetrao lagopus* v. KITTL, Denkw. Reise I, p. 289.
 1873. — *Lagopus albus* DALL, Notes Avif. Aleut. Isl. from Unal. eastw. p. 4, (nec GMEL).
 1883. — *Lagopus rupestris* NELSON, Cruise Corwin p. 81 no 79.
 1884. — *Lagopus rupestris nelsoni* STEJNEGER, the Auk 1884 p.

¹ Mr. TURNER l. c. remarks that U. S. Nat. Mus. Nr. 34120 from Lapland and No. 43686 from the Barren Grounds of Arctic America are identical in plumage. The difference pointed out above is very plainly visible, however.

² The Greenland form has two very distinct summer-plumages. Nr. 20347 (U. S. Nat. Mus.) the sex of which TURNER (l. c.) doubts is really a male in the finely vermiculated postästival plumage, and it is not killed in July, the label indicating it as obtained in the «fall» (autumn).

A fairly recognisable race of the Rock Ptarmigan, characterised by its dark brown color. With the following it shares the peculiarity, that the preästival plumage is scarcely barred but only finely vermiculated with black, thus resembling the postastival plumage of allied forms. Postastival plumage not known.

5c. *Lagopus rupestris atkhensis* (TURNER) NELSON.

1874. — *Lagopus albus* DALL, Avif. Aleut. Isl. from Unal. westw., p. 5, (nec GMEL.)

1882. *Lagopus mutus atkhensis* TURNER, Pr. U. S. Nat. Mus. 1882. p. 230.

1883. — *Lagopus rupestris occidentalis* NELSON, Cruise, Corwin, p. 82. (nec SUNDEV. 1874).

1883. — *Lagopus rupestris atkhensis* NELSON, Cruise Corwin p. 56 ϵ + β 82.

Like the foregoing but much paler. Has a similarly finely vermiculated preästival plumage as *L. r. nelsoni*, closely resembling the autumn plumage of other *Lagopodes*. I have, however, examined the specimens myself and have found them to be in the first plumage following the white one. Only the preastival plumage is known.

Of very restricted distribution, as it only occurs in Atkha and probably the other western Aleutian Islands belonging to the United States.

6. *Lagopus leucurus* SWAINS.

1831. — *Lagopus leucurus* SWAINS, in Sw. and Richards, Faun. Bor. Amer II. pl. 63.

This species is easily distinguished from all its congeners by having all the rectrices white at all seasons. Owing to this striking character and its comparatively restricted range of distribution it has escaped the fate of being burdened with synonyms like the other members of the genus *Lagopus*.

Habitat. Rocky Mountains and Cascade Mountains, North America.
Smithsonian Institution.

Washington D. C. April 1884.



Lagopus ridgwayi Stejneger

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