

# THE AUK:

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A REMARKABLE PLUMAGE OF THE PRAIRIE HEN  
(*TYMPANUCHUS AMERICANUS*).

BY WILLIAM BREWSTER.

*Plate II.*

THE Prairie Hen figured in this number of 'The Auk' is one of four specimens known to me which possess the same remarkable coloring to a greater or less degree. Of these specimens one (the bird which furnished the subject for the plate) is preserved in the American Museum of Natural History of New York, two are in the Green Smith collection of the Museum of Comparative Zoölogy at Cambridge, and the fourth is in my own collection.

Three of these birds show but little variation with respect to the depth and extent of the reddish brown or chestnut coloring. In the specimen represented by the plate, as well as in both of the Green Smith birds, the upper parts are strongly suffused with reddish brown, while most of the lower parts are clear, plain, reddish or rusty chestnut, the usual blackish, transverse bars being nearly or quite wanting save on the sides. My bird, of which a detailed description has already appeared (Bull. N. O. C.,



A. Sisson & Co. Lithographers, Philadelphia.

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PRAIRIE HEN ( *TYMPANUCHUS AMERICANUS* ).  
RED PHASE.

Vol. VII, Jan. 1882, p. 59), is much less richly colored than the others, especially on the lower parts where the dark markings are but little obscured by chestnut save on the breast and the middle of the abdomen. This specimen, however, has one peculiarity not shared by any of the others; viz., a band or collar of broad, elongated, stiffened feathers which extend continuously around the neck in front crossing the lower portion of the jugulum about in a line with the neck tufts and forming a conspicuous ruff which is mainly black mixed with reddish chestnut.

All four of these singularly colored Grouse are males. As all of them were obtained in the markets, nothing positive is known as to the localities where they were killed. This is unfortunate for definite knowledge on this point is almost essential to any satisfactory explanation of their peculiarities. It seems probable, however, that they represent merely a color phase of *Tympanuchus americanus* (with which all but the bird last mentioned agree perfectly in every respect excepting color); or, in other words, that the Prairie Hen is subject to a form of what is known as erythrism. In any case the rufous plumage must be either of very rare or very local occurrence, for since obtaining my bird I have examined several thousand Prairie Hens in the Boston markets without finding a second specimen.

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## THE FULMARS OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA.<sup>1</sup>

BY A. W. ANTHONY.

SOME time about the last of September the first of the Fulmars make their appearance off the coast of southern California, the exact date being somewhat uncertain and due in a measure to the food supply, and quite possibly also to the weather.

The first arrivals are met with well off shore, with the flocks of Shearwaters, *Puffinus gavia*, *creatopus* and *griseus*, from ten to thirty miles at sea.

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<sup>1</sup> An author's edition of 125 copies of this paper was issued March 16, 1895.—ED.