

MICROPALLAS.

Micrathene, Coues, Pr. Ac. Phil. 1866, p. 15 (nec Sundevall); Sharpe, Cat. Birds Brit. Mus. ii. p. 224.

Micropallas, Coues, Auk, 1889, p. 71.

Micropallas contains two closely allied species, which are the smallest of the Striges. One of these is found in the South-western States of North America, Texas, and Lower California, and in Mexico as far as Guanajuato and Puebla. The other has as yet only been noticed on the island of Socorro. The genus is closely allied to *Glaucidium*, but has a tarsus longer in proportion to the middle toe, scantily haired instead of densely feathered, and a shorter more even tail.

Dr. Coues's name *Micrathene*, first proposed for this genus, being subsequently found by its author too much like *Micrathena* of Sundevall, he substituted *Micropallas* for it, and under that title it has since passed.

1. *Micropallas whitneyi*.

Athene whitneyi, Cooper, Pr. Cal. Ac. Sc. ii. p. 118 (1861) ¹.

Micrathene whitneyi, Coues, Pr. Ac. Phil. 1866, p. 51 ²; Elliot, Birds N. Am. i. t. 29 ³; Ridgw. in Baird, Brew., & Ridgw. N. Am. Birds, iii. p. 87 ⁴; Ferrari-Perez, Pr. U. S. Nat. Mus. ix. p. 165 ⁵; Herrera, La Nat. (2) i. pp. 178, 321 ⁶.

Micropallas whitneyi, Bendire, Life Hist. N. Am. Birds, i. p. 411, t. 12. f. 13 ⁷; Fisher, Bull. U. S. Dep. Agr. no. 9, p. 200 ⁸.

Supra griseo-brunnea, fulvo maculata; torque cervicali albido, scapularibus in pogonio externo albis; alis fulvo et albo maculatis, cauda fasciis maculosis sex notata; superciliis et macula utrinque menti albis, oculorum ambitu fulvo: subtus griseo-albida, fusco et fulvo irregulariter variegata et fasciata. Long. tota circa 5.5, alæ 4.4, caudæ 2.0, tarsi 0.75. (Descr. maris ex Tucson, Arizona. Mus. nostr.)

Hab. NORTH AMERICA, Texas, Arizona, Southern and Lower California.—MEXICO, Guanajuato (*A. Dugès* ⁵), Valley of Mexico (*Herrera* ⁶), San Salvador el Verde (*Ferrari-Perez* ⁵).

First discovered near Mojave, California, in 1861, by Dr. J. G. Cooper ¹, the Elf-Owl, as this little species is called, has since been found to inhabit an extended area stretching from near the mouth of the Rio Grande in Texas to Arizona and Lower California. In Texas it is apparently rare, but we have two specimens from that State sent us by Mr. F. B. Armstrong from Hidalgo. In Arizona it is said to be the commonest Owl of the district, whence most of the specimens that have been obtained have been sent. Here, too, it breeds in numbers, Mr. F. Stephens and Mr. W. E. D. Scott having found more than a dozen nests in about six hours near Tucson. The nest is almost invariably placed in a deserted Woodpecker's hole in the giant cactuses which abound in that country. The birds are nocturnal in habit and become active shortly after sundown. Their food is chiefly coleoptera and a few other insects, and occasionally small mammals. Capt. Bendire gives a full account of the