

MELANETTA FUSCA (LINN.) IN ALASKA.

By ROBERT RIDGWAY.

Among the birds collected by Mr. C. L. McKay, U. S. Signal observer at Bristol Bay, Alaska, is a fine adult male of the European Velvet Scoter, obtained at Allokknagik Lake, July 20, 1882 (Nat. Mus. No. 92149, collector's No. 104).

This species may be readily distinguished from its American representative, *M. velvetina* (Cass.) Baird, by the longer culmen, the distance from the tip of the bill to the frontal feathers being greater than from the same point to the most anterior loreal feathers; the relative measurements being reversed in *M. velvetina*. This character holds good in both sexes, and also in young birds. In the adult male of *M. fusca* the side of the base of the maxilla (near the rictus) is much more swollen than in *M. velvetina*, but at the same time the base of the culmen is decidedly less elevated. The colors of the bill are much the same in the two species, but *M. fusca* has a distinct black line running on each side of the nail, connecting the upper and lateral black areas.

This is the second known occurrence of *M. fusca* in America, the first record being that of Dr. Reinhardt in *Vid. Medd. Nat. For. Kjöbenhavn*, 1869, p. 1, where a specimen from Southern Greenland is reported. It is true that Mr. Nelson, in his "Birds of Bering Sea and the Arctic Ocean" (Arctic cruise of the revenue steamer Corwin in 1881, published in 1883, p. 102), gives *M. fusca* as the Alaskan species, but he, in common with some other writers, does not distinguish the two species. All Mr. Nelson's specimens which I have had the opportunity of examining in this connection, are *M. velvetina*, as are all other Alaskan examples that have come under my notice, except the one above referred to. *M. fusca* is the species of Eastern Asia, and may, therefore, like some other Palearctic birds, straggle more or less frequently to the American side.

DESCRIPTION OF A NEW SNOW BUNTING FROM ALASKA.

By ROBERT RIDGWAY.

Plectrophenax hyperboreus Ridgw. *McKay's Snow Bunting*.

SUBSP. CH.—*Adult* ♂ *in spring* (No. 78551, Saint Michael's, Alaska, April, 1879, E. W. Nelson): Entirely pure white, except the terminal portion of the five outer primaries, which are chiefly black, for the space of about 1.40 inches from the tip of the longest quill. Tail pure white, the middle rectrices with a very small blackish spot near the end of the inner web (almost obsolete on one feather). Bill dull brownish,