

## Genus TOTANUS.

GEN. CHAR. *Beak* moderate, often slightly recurved, rounded, hard, and pointed; the upper mandible sulcated, and having the tip arched and curving over that of the lower one. *Nostrils* basal, lateral, linear, and longitudinally cleft in the furrow of the mandible. *Legs* long, slender, naked above the tarsal joint. *Toes* three before and one behind, the former united at the base by a small membrane, hind toe short; front of the tarsus and toes scutellated.

## SPOTTED REDSHANK.

*Totanus fuscus*, *Leisl.*

Le Chevalier arlequin.

THE ornithologist cannot but be gratified and greatly interested in the study of the family of which the present species forms an example. Independently of the graceful form which this elegant bird possesses, it is characterized by a change of colouring as singular as it is chaste and becoming. We allude to the contrast of its summer and winter dress, as well as to that which distinguishes the young of the year, in which stage the whole of the upper plumage has the margins of the feathers thickly spotted with white, as is found in the wing-feathers of the birds in the present Plate, more particularly like that of the olive-coloured bird, which is figured in a particular stage, partly that of winter and partly that of immaturity, the uniform colouring of the back, which in perfectly adult birds extends over the wings, being the usual characteristic of the winter dress. The dark-coloured bird in the foreground of our Plate is in a stage of plumage common to both sexes during the breeding-season, in which state they are extremely rare, their breeding-places being in the northern regions of Europe, and the examples we occasionally obtain are consequently in general more or less imperfect: notwithstanding this, we have had frequent opportunities of examining this bird in all its changes; it is, however, one of those irregular visitants whose appearance is not to be depended on. It traverses an extensive range of country, being abundant in many parts of Asia, whence we have received examples strictly identical with those of Europe. Its favourite places of residence are the borders of rivers, lakes, and morasses, where it feeds on freshwater mollusca, insects, and worms. On the neighbouring parts of the Continent it appears to be as scarce and irregular in its visits as it is in the British Islands. Of its nest and eggs nothing has been correctly ascertained.

The plumage of summer may be thus detailed: Head, neck, back, and under parts dark greyish black; the rump white; wing-coverts and scapularies dark greyish black, with their edges spotted with numerous dots of white; upper tail-coverts barred with black and greyish white; quills black; bill black at the tip and red at the base; legs orange red.

In winter the whole of the upper surface is brown, with a tinge of olive; the under surface is pure white; the legs, beak, wings, and tail being the same as in the summer plumage.

The sexes offer no difference except in size, the female being somewhat the largest.

The Plate represents two birds, the one in the plumage of summer, the other a bird between youth and maturity, assuming its winter dress.