

Genus GLAREOLA.

GEN. CHAR. *Beak* short, hard, convex, curved for upwards of half its length, and compressed towards the point. *Nostrils* at the sides of the base, oblong, and obliquely cleft. *Legs* feathered nearly to the knee; toes three before and one behind, the outer united to the middle one by a short membrane; claws long and drawn to a fine point. *Wings* very large, the first quill-feather the longest. *Tail* more or less forked.

COLLARED PRATINCOLE.

Glareola torquata, *Briss.*

Le Glaréole à collier.

THE genus *Glareola* appears to be strictly confined to the Old World, no Transatlantic example having ever been discovered; nor, indeed, are we aware of any form in the ornithology of America which at all approaches the present. Three species are all that are as yet discovered. Of these, two (the *G. grallaria* and the *G. lactea*) are peculiar to the eastern provinces of Asia and Africa; the other, the bird now before us, is spread throughout the warm and temperate regions, not only of these continents, but Europe also: hence it would seem as if Nature endeavoured to make up by extent of habitat for the limitation of species. Still, however, although thus diffused, the Pratincole may be said to be truly a native of the eastern provinces of Europe, on the Asiatic borders, and especially Hungary, where wide tracts of morass and flatlands, abounding in lakes both fresh and saline, and traversed by mighty rivers, afford it food and security. "In Hungary," says M. Temminck, "among the immense morasses of the lakes Neusidel and Balaton, I have been in the midst of many hundreds of these birds;" and we may add, that it is no less abundant in Western Tartary. In England it is only an occasional visiter; but in Germany, France and Italy it is a bird of periodical occurrence.

With the long wings and forked tail of the Swallow, the Pratincole possesses that rapidity and power of flight for which that bird is so remarkable. It takes its food, which consists of insects, and especially such as frequent marshes and the borders of rivers, while on the wing, darting along in the chase with the rapidity of an arrow; nor is it less distinguishable for celerity on the ground, and often catches its prey as it nimbly runs along.

This elegant and graceful bird incubates in the concealment afforded by reeds, osiers and tall herbage, laying three or four white eggs.

As it respects their plumage, the sexes offer no difference. The young are more obscure in their tints, the upper parts being clouded with dull brown, and the throat being dirty white.

The adult plumage may be thus detailed. Head, back of the neck, and whole of the upper surface greyish brown, except the secondaries, which are tipped with white, and the upper tail-coverts and the lower portion of the tail-feathers, which are white; quills and remaining portion of the tail-feathers blackish brown; throat and sides of the cheeks white with a wash of buff, and bordered by a narrow black band, which takes its origin beneath the eye; under wing-coverts deep ferruginous; chest brownish grey passing into pale fawn or white; abdomen dull white; beak black, except the base, which with the irides and circle round the eye are reddish brown; tarsi brownish ash colour.

Our Plate represents a male and female of their natural size.