

Genus FRANCOLINUS.

GEN. CHAR. *Beak* strong, middle size, convex above, and incurved towards the tip. *Nostrils* basal, lateral, half closed by a naked arched membrane. *Tail* moderate, very slightly rounded, and consisting of twelve feathers. *Feet* four-toed, naked; the *tarsi* of the male with strong blunt spurs. *Wings* short.

EUROPEAN FRANCOLIN.

Francolinus vulgaris.

Le Francolin à collier roux.

It is delightful to examine the series of affinities by which the natural groups of animated nature are connected; and although we cannot at all times clearly trace this connexion, yet we must believe the deficiency to exist in ourselves, and not in those laws of relation which the Creator appears to have impressed upon all his works. In the bird before us we trace, or fancy we can trace, one of those unions through which the splendid-coloured Pheasants of the East are united to the sober-coloured Quails and Partridges of the European Continent; its form and habits connecting it with the latter, while its colouring manifests a relationship to the beautiful Oriental genus *Tragopan*, of which many examples have recently come under our immediate inspection. The near relationship which we fancy exists between the genera *Francolinus* and *Tragopan*, consists in their general style of colouring, in their short spurs, and in the conformation of the beak. Another section of the genus *Francolinus*, peculiar to Africa, exhibits also a form differing from these in the structure of the beak, in which particular, as well as in the uses to which it is applied in obtaining food, it assimilates to the Oriental genus *Lophophorus*: still between these groups we may yet expect to find others, harmonizing with each, so as to form a complete concatenation.

Of the genus *Francolinus*, the present is the only species indigenous to Europe. Unlike its African congeners, which feed on bulbous roots, for procuring which their beak is expressly adapted, our European bird differs little in its food and form of beak from the true Partridge. It however exhibits a preference for moist and humid districts, and perches on trees. In Europe, its habitat appears to be exclusively confined to the southern regions, as Sicily, Malta, and the Neapolitan territories; but it is also found in the North of Africa, and over the greater portion of the Asiatic Continent, and we have also received it in collections from the Himalaya Mountains.

Respecting its habits and nidification we have nothing to communicate. Like most gallinaceous birds, its flesh is very delicate, and much esteemed in India.

In the male, the feathers on the top of the head are black with a margin of yellowish brown; ear-coverts white; circle round the eyes, lower part of the cheeks, sides of the head, and throat of a deep black; below which a broad chestnut collar extends round the neck; wings and back yellowish brown, each feather having a dark reddish brown centre, except those of the quills which are barred with this colour; rump and tail-coverts white, barred with black, as are also the middle tail-feathers, the outer ones being entirely black; breast and lower parts black; sides blotched with black and white; thighs brownish barred with black; under tail-coverts chestnut; beak black; legs reddish flesh-colour; tarsi spurred.

In the female, the general ground colour of the plumage is a yellowish brown, darker on the cheeks and quill-feathers, and becoming paler on the under parts; the feathers of the back and wings are marked as in the male; the breast and under surface irregularly crossed with barb-shaped marks of dark brown; the rump and tail-coverts barred alternately with broad marks of obscure brown and narrow lines of white; under tail-coverts chestnut; beak brownish; legs reddish; tarsi unarmed.

We have figured a male and female of the natural size.