

MIDDLE SPOTTED WOODPECKER.

Geopelia striata

1871

The present bird is more intimately allied to the Yellow-bellied than to any other species yet discovered: it is, however, entirely distinct from the Carolina Woodpecker of England, known under the name of *Geopelia striata*, with the genus of which the present species has often been confounded; this error has arisen from the circumstance of the young individuals of the *G. striata* having the whole of the crown of the head marked with black, the plumage which characterizes both species of that species for the first four or five months of their existence would answer equally to that of the present species when mature, with the exception of the longitudinal black line on the breast, which is wanting in *G. striata*, and which is always present in *G. striata* and *G. striata*. It is somewhat singular that the female of the present bird, unlike most others of its genus, is nearly as large as the male, as in most instances to be scarcely distinguishable except by external examination.

The present species inhabits the borders of woods, parks, and gardens, and, although never found in the British Islands, is very abundant in many parts of the Continent, especially the southern provinces. Mr. Townsend states that it is very common in Holland, and we have never seen it from the North of Europe; neither have the collections from Africa or Asia, as far as we have examined, afforded a single example of this bird. It feeds on insects, which it takes solely from the sides or trunks of trees, the manner of which it differs from that of *Geopelia striata* in that it also feeds during the season on various fruits and berries. It breeds in holes, which are of a globose shape, in the holes of trees.

The colouring of the plumage is as follows: A frontal band of red extends across the space between the bill and the crown of the head; which is marked the crown being furnished with somewhat elongated feathers of the same colour; the neck and sides are white, with the exception of an obscure band, which passes down the sides of the neck; the back and wings are black, the scapulars being white, and the quills marked with bands of the same colour; the flanks are white, with longitudinal blotches of black occupying the centre of each feather; under surface of tail white; the middle feathers of the tail black; the outer ones white, marked with black; irides reddish brown, encircled by a light ring; tarsi lead colour.

The male represents a male and female of the natural size.