

MIDDLE SPOTTED WOODPECKER.

Picus medius.

Le Pic mar.

THE present bird is more intimately allied to the *Picus leuconotus* than to any other species yet discovered: it is, however, although a third smaller than the Common Woodpecker of England, known under the name of *Picus major*, with the young of which the present species has often been confounded; this error has arisen from the circumstance of the young individuals of the *P. major* having the whole of the crown of the head scarlet. In fact, the plumage which characterizes both sexes of that species for the first four or five months of their existence would answer minutely to that of the present species when mature, with the exception of the longitudinal dashes on the breast, which are wanting in *P. major*, and which are always present in *P. leuconotus* and *P. medius*. It is somewhat singular that the female of the present bird, unlike most others of its genus, so nearly resembles the male, as in most instances to be scarcely distinguishable except by internal examination.

The *Picus medius* 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. M. Temminck states that it is very seldom found 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. Its food consists of insects, which it takes solely from the sides or trunks of trees, the crevices of which it diligently examines in search of them: besides insects, it also feeds during the season on various fruits and berries. It lays its eggs, which are of a glossy white, in the holes of trees.

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

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