

## Genus PASTOR, Temm.

GEN. CHAR. *Bill* conical, elongated, cutting, very compressed, slightly curved, the point notched. *Nostrils* basal, ovoid, partly closed by a membrane and clothed with small feathers. *Feet* robust. *Toes* three before and one behind, the external toe united at its base to the middle one. *Tarsi* longer than the middle toe. *Wings* having the first *quill-feather* very short, or almost obsolete, the second and third equal and longest.

## ROSE-COLOURED PASTOR.

*Pastor roseus*, Temm.

Le Martin roselin.

THE birds composing the genus *Pastor* are exclusively inhabitants of the older-known portions of the globe, and especially its more eastern and warmer regions. The species are pretty numerous: the only one, however, which is known to visit the more temperate countries of Europe is the present beautiful and elegant example, the true habitat of which appears to be the western parts of Asia and the North of Africa, particularly Egypt and along the course of the Nile. From these districts it migrates regularly into the southern provinces of Italy and Spain; seldom occurring further northward, and visiting our Island only occasionally at uncertain intervals; but from the circumstance of its having been shot some few times in the British Islands, it has a claim, with many others equally scarce and equally peculiar to the warmer portions of the Continent, to a place in our Fauna. Several well authenticated accounts of the capture of this bird have appeared from the pens of Mr. Selby, Pennant, and Bewick; but the only example within our personal knowledge was one shot in the month of May by our esteemed friend Mr. John Newman, of Iver Court near Windsor, in whose possession it now remains, exhibiting that beauty and richness of plumage which we have endeavoured to convey in our illustration.

In its manners it closely resembles our Common Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*), congregating in the same manner in flocks, and frequenting pasture-lands for the sake of the grasshoppers and other insects which there abound; often attending flocks and herds, and even perching upon the backs of cattle for the purpose of disengaging the larvæ which are bred beneath the skin. We are also informed that it abounds in Egypt, particularly those parts which are subject to the overflow of the Nile, attracted doubtless by the myriads of insects, locusts, &c., which the heat and moisture call into life; and for the services it thus renders to the natives it is held by them in great esteem. In addition to insects, it also feeds upon fruits and berries.

We are informed that the *Pastor roseus* chooses holes in trees, rocks or old buildings for the place of nidification, laying five or six eggs, the colour of which we have not been able to ascertain.

The only difference of the sexes in plumage consists in the more obscure tints of the female, and her rather smaller size; the crest also is less silky and flowing; the young, however, differ much,—and we would here point out another circumstance which indicates the close relationship between the present bird and the Starling. We have mentioned above, the great similarity in their habits, manners and food; we now find an analogous and similar change of plumage in the young: and we would here suggest to those who are more especially interested in the Ornithology of Great Britain, whether the Solitary Thrush of Bewick, which has hitherto been taken for the young of the Starling, may not be that of the Rose-coloured Pastor? We mention this as a query, because there are characters detailed in Bewick which the young of the Starling does not possess in any state, and which more nearly agree with the young of the present bird.

The colour of the Rose-coloured Pastor is very rich and delicate; the beak and legs more or less flesh-coloured; the head, throat and crest, together with the neck, black with violet reflections; back and under parts of a delicate rose-colour; wings and tail black with greenish reflections; irides brown.

The young in the first autumn have the whole of the upper parts of the body of a uniform yellowish brown; the wings and tail rather darker; the throat and under surface whitish; the former being marked longitudinally with brown blotches, and the head offering no indication whatever of a crest.

We have figured a male in full plumage, and a young bird of the year before its autumn moult;—both of the natural size.