

MARSH BUNTING.

Emberiza palustris, *Savi*.

THIS rare species, which offers so close a resemblance in general colouring and habits to our well-known Black-headed Bunting, (*Emberiza melanocephala*, Scopoli,) exhibits nevertheless, in the robust structure of its beak, a departure from the typical characters of the genus, and either forms its extreme limits, or may be regarded as the representative of another genus ; but its affinities are at present but little understood, the bird itself being very rare, and only to be met with in the southern and eastern provinces of Europe.

The best account of this bird is to be found in Professor Savi's "*Ornitologia Toscana*," according to which eminent author it dwells in the marshes of Tuscany, but he has not yet been able to obtain a sight of its nest and eggs ; if, however, we may judge from analogy, we may consider its habits and manners as very much resembling those of the Common Reed Bunting. Professor Savi further informs us that it inhabits the vicinity of stagnant waters covered with reeds and bulrushes, and that it feeds to a great extent upon the insects which lodge upon the culmens of the reeds.

The sexes offer the same relative differences that are observed in the Reed Bunting, the black head of the male being exchanged in the female for brown blotched with dashes of black.

In the male, the upper part of the head, cheeks, and throat are black ; a white stripe begins near the angle of the beak, and extends round to the back of the neck ; the whole of the upper surface is of a rich chestnut brown, the centre of each feather being largely blotched with black ; the under surface is white, the flanks being marked with longitudinal lines of brown ; bill black ; tarsi brown.

The female, which closely resembles the male in her general plumage, is distinguished by the colouring of the head already alluded to ; by the absence of the white stripe round the neck ; and by the dull brownish white of the under surface, which is thickly dashed with longitudinal spots of deep brown.

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