

## CIRL BUNTING.

*Emberiza Cirlus*, Linn.

Le Bruant zizi.

For the discovery of this beautiful species of Bunting in our island, we are indebted to the industry and research of the late Colonel Montagu. It is now much more numerous than it formerly was ; but unlike its ally the well-known Yellowhammer (*Emberiza citrinella*, Linn.), which is distributed through the whole of our island, the Cirl Bunting is extremely local in its habitat, being seldom seen in the midland and northern counties. It is common in Devonshire, and all along our southern coast. In Sussex we have ourselves seen it in abundance, particularly in the neighbourhood of Chichester, where it annually breeds. It is much more shy and retiring than the Yellowhammer ; its song is also different, more resembling that of the Chaffinch. It frequents nearly the whole of the southern provinces of Europe, and is especially abundant along the shores of the Mediterranean as well as in Italy and the southern parts of France. In general habits, manners, and nidification it closely resembles the Yellowhammer. Its nest is generally placed either beneath a low bush or at the foot of a large tree ; it is composed of dried grass intermingled with vegetable fibres, and lined with hair. The eggs are in general more round than those of the Yellowhammer ; in colour they are grey, marked with those peculiar zigzag lines of dark brown which are so characteristic of all the Buntings' eggs. Its food consists of various kinds of grain, to which insects are largely added, of which Montagu informs us grasshoppers are the greatest favourites.

The sexes offer a contrasted difference in the colour of the plumage, the male being adorned with a gorget of black and distinct facial markings.

The adult male has the crown of the head and back of the neck olive grey, the former exhibiting longitudinal dashes of black ; a yellow stripe from the base of the beak encircles the eye, and terminates on the side of the head ; the throat is black in summer, but as winter approaches it becomes obscured with olive grey ; below this black a yellow band extends across the throat ; the whole of the upper surface is reddish brown, each feather having a greyish margin ; quills blackish brown ; the breast, below the yellow gorget, is greenish olive ; sides of the chest washed with ferruginous under fine yellow ; two outer tail-feathers white for the greatest part of their inner web ; bill brown ; legs brownish flesh colour.

The adult female, which differs little from the young male of the year, wants the black throat and gorget of yellow ; the head is olive green with dashes of brown ; the chest is yellowish grey streaked with brown ; the under surface dull pale yellow ; and the upper plumage is less vivid than in her more ornamented mate.

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