

SHORE LARK.

Alauda alpestris, *Linn.*

L'Alouette à hausse col noir.

THIS beautiful and singular species of Lark has lately made its appearance in Britain, and some of our museums, as well as private collections, can boast of possessing species obtained in our own country: it may, however, be considered as strictly a northern species, inhabiting the higher latitudes of Europe, Asia and America, in which latter portion of the globe it especially abounds. Wilson informs us that it is one of the summer birds of passage of that continent, arriving in the North in the fall, and usually staying the whole of the winter: it frequents sandy plains and open downs, and is numerous in the Southern States as far as Georgia. During that season they fly high, in loose scattered flocks, and at these times have a single cry, almost like the Skylark of Britain. It is, however, not improbable that this species is spread over the whole of the American continents; at least we have received it from the Straits of Magellan, where it was found by Captain King. M. Temminck states that it appears as a bird of passage in Germany, and never ventures into the southern continental provinces. The regions of the polar circle appear to be its native habitat; it also incubates and rears its young in the marshy and woody districts of the eastern portions of the fur countries of North America, according to Dr. Richardson, who quotes Mr. Hutchins as his authority for stating that its nest is placed on the ground, and that it lays four or five white eggs spotted with black. On the advance of winter, it retreats to the southwards, and is common in the United States throughout that season.

It appears to frequent wild and barren districts adjacent to the shore, situations in which it particularly delights, and more especially sandy elevations covered with scanty tufts of herbage, never perching on trees, but gaining its subsistence from the seeds of grasses and the shoots and buds of dwarf shrubs.

The male and female of this beautiful species differ in the brilliancy of the plumage. In the male, the whole of the upper surface is of a vinous ash colour, each feather having a central wash of brown; the forehead is yellow, whence a slender stripe passes over the eye; above the yellow of the forehead a broad patch of black extends across the head, terminating above each eye in a tuft of elongated black feathers, like the egrets of some of the *Strigidae*, capable of being elevated or depressed at pleasure; from the base of the bill extends a black mark, which covers the cheeks; throat and sides of the neck yellow, succeeded by a black gorget; sides vinous ash, becoming whitish on the under surface; the two middle tail-feathers brown, the rest black, the edge of the outermost being white; bill brown; tarsi black.

In the female, the black band on the head and the egrets are not very apparent, the yellow is circumscribed and dull, and the gorget small, in which respect the young are similar.

We have figured a male and female of the natural size.