ROCK OR SHORE PIPIT.

CONTRACTOR OF THE PARTY OF THE

Anthus aquaticus, Bechst.

Le Pipit spioncelle.

In the British Islands this species of Pipit is strictly stationary, inhabiting the rocky and elevated portions of the coast during summer, and the lengthened and muddy shores of the sea during autumn and winter. It rarely leaves the neighbourhood of the coast unless when following the indentations of bays or the course of large rivers, particularly those influenced by the tide. Marine insects and worms appear to constitute its sole food, in the capture of which it displays the address and agility which characterizes all the members of this group. Its call-note and song are very similar to those of the Common Pipit, from which it may be always distinguished by its larger size, and by the dusky and more obscure colouring of its plumage. It is an early breeder, and mostly selects the clefts and ledges of rocks for the site of its nest, which is composed of various marine grasses, lined with hair and fine vegetable substances; the eggs are four or five in number, of a light yellowish grey, with reddish brown specks over the larger end, and sometimes distributed over the whole surface.

We have some reason to believe that there are two species of Rock Pipits nearly allied to each other, as we have never been able to find in any of the examples killed in the British Islands that uniform vinous tint we have observed to pervade the breast of the continental examples; neither have we been able to meet with any specimens in continental collections that strictly accord with the dull and indistinct markings of those of the British Islands; to this point we would therefore beg to direct the attention of those naturalists who may possess opportunities of investigating the subject.

Crown of the head, all the upper surface, wings, and tail dark greenish olive, the feathers of the two latter margined with paler olive; throat whitish; stripe between the bill and the eye, and all the under surface pale greenish olive; the sides of the neck and breast ornamented with large spots of dark brown; the outer tail-feather on each side white; upper mandible and the tip of the lower black; the base of the latter yellowish brown; legs and feet brown.

Our figure is of the natural size.